



**INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE  
LEARNING CONFERENCE  
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# RURAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS: ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND TEACHERS

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# THE PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION IS TO

- Spotlight the challenge to provide contemporary professional development for teachers in rural communities to acquire the needed instructional practices to better educate English language learners (ELs)
- Reveal the impact in a yearlong professional development (Rural Education Development Opportunities) project changes teachers' perceptions of their preparation to teach English language learners and engage culturally and linguistically diverse families.





# CONTEXT: IDAHO RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 115 school districts
- 75% are in rural locales and half of those are considered remote
- 37.8% of students are served in those rural districts/charters
- 37.8% of teachers work in rural schools
- Seven percent of rural children are emergent bilinguals (EMs) or ELs- only five states have a higher percentage of rural EMs (Strange et al., 2012)
- More than 17% of the state's public elementary and secondary school students are identified as Latinos (Hispanic), 4% are classified as ELLs
- Highest arrivals are from Central and Latin America, Iraq, Congo, Bhutan, Burma, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Afghanistan (Idaho Office for Refugees)

# WHO ARE THE EDUCATORS

- Teachers were predominantly female (93%) and white (79%)
- The total years of teaching experience ranged from less than one to 17
- Nine were novice teachers who entered the program with two or fewer years of teaching experience

# **RURAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (REDO)**

- Increase the pool of highly qualified culturally responsive teachers in Idaho
- Increase participants' use of evidence-based interventions to improve English learner's progress in reading and writing
- Increase participants' knowledge and use of modeling strategies and co-teaching with colleagues
- Improve participants' engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse parents, families, and communities

# RATIONALE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- REDO is grounded in socio-constructivist theory, arguing that a prerequisite for change in teacher practice is direct engagement in active learning
- REDO employs an approach consistent with the elements of effective professional development identified by Darling-Hammond and colleagues —it is content-focused; includes active learning, collaboration, modeling, and coaching and expert support; and provides opportunities for feedback and reflection
- The REDO curriculum is designed with a deep conceptual understanding of second language acquisition (multilingual)

Additional related frameworks inform program design: culturally responsive teaching; culturally sustaining pedagogy; the translanguaging literacies framework; the dual-capacity building framework, and the community cultural wealth construct



# METHODS

- How do program participants perceive their preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students and related classroom practices after participating in REDO?
- To what extent do school principals and other instructional leaders perceive REDO to be effective in developing teacher capacity to instruct culturally and linguistically diverse students?
- To what degree do program participants perceive that REDO is effective in preparing them to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families?
- How do teacher participation in REDO and teacher ESL certification impact English learner students' English language proficiency and achievement in English language arts (ELA) and math?
- How do teacher participation in REDO and teacher bilingual certification impact English learner students' English language proficiency and achievement in ELA and math?

# OUTCOMES

## CONFIDENCE AS TEACHERS AND ADVOCATES

*My role has evolved to one of social/cultural/linguistic advocate for my students. I better understand the legal and political issues that impact the educational context of many culturally and linguistically diverse students. Armed with this new knowledge, I am able to advocate more effectively for these students and their families.*

*Cohort 1 participant*

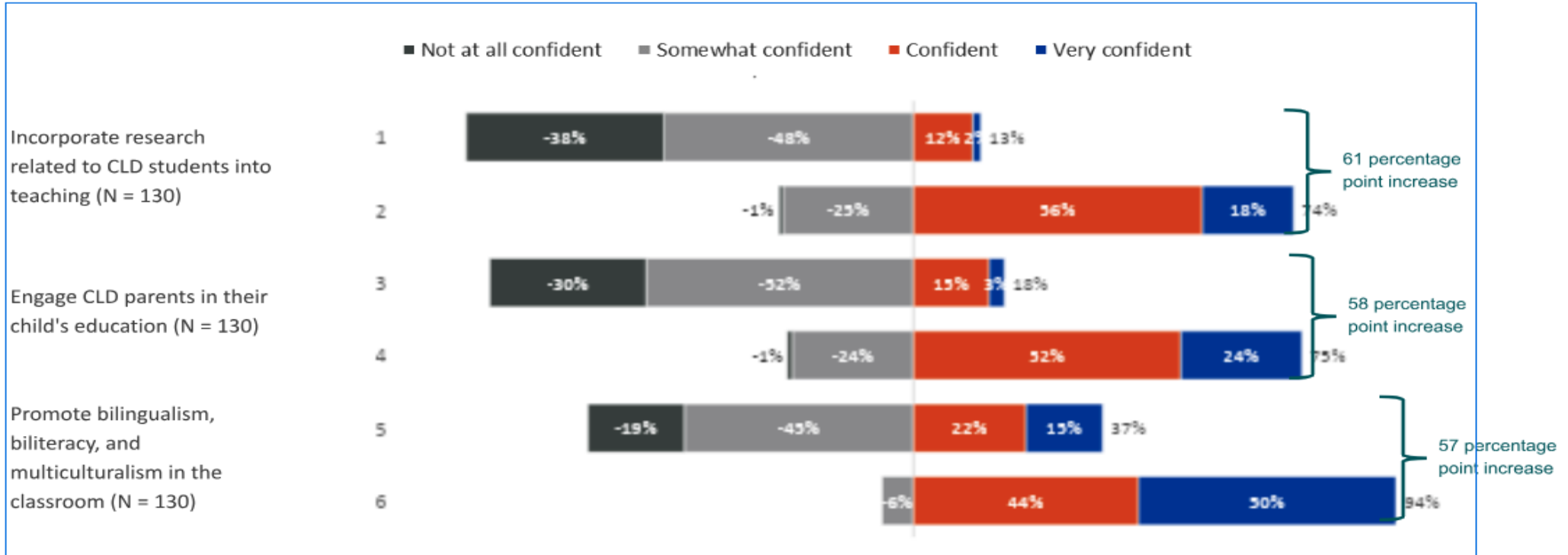
# INCORPORATING RESEARCH

*I am more aware of how I can help teach my emerging bilingual students. I have incorporated more translanguaging into my classroom and have had parents become more involved.*

*Cohort 1 participant*

# OUTCOMES CONT.

Figure 5. Participants reported large increases in their confidence related to culturally and linguistically diverse students



Note: CLD is culturally and linguistically diverse. Totals may not add up because of rounding.

# OUTCOMES CONT.

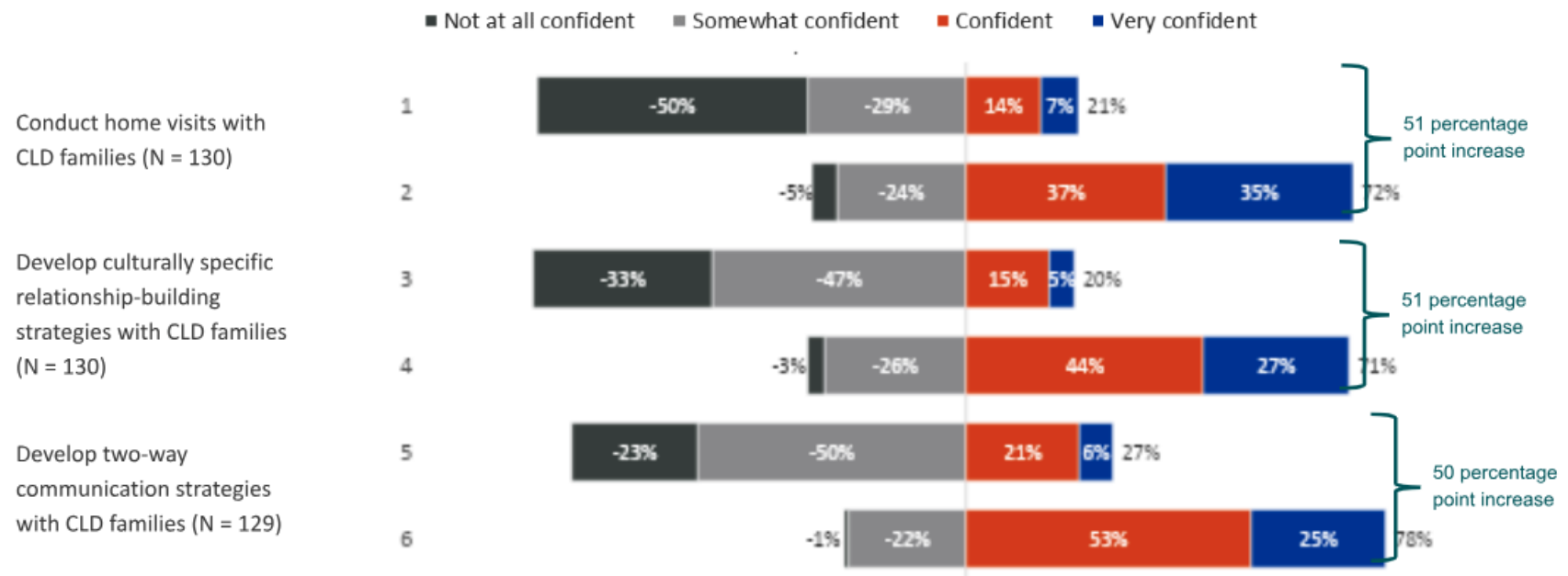
*I'm more aware of the connections that need to be made. I've increased the diversity of my classroom library not just in content but also to include dual-language books for students.*

*Cohort 4 participant*



# OUTCOMES CONT.

Figure 6. Participants reported moderate increases in their confidence related to culturally and linguistically diverse students



Note: CLD is culturally and linguistically diverse. Totals may not add up because of rounding.

# REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on my observations and visits with community members, students, and family members, there is still so much I would like to know. I am not sure as educators that we will always get the answers to our questions; however, I have learned that we will never get any answers if we do not reach out to the families of our students more often. I'm thankful for the information my students have shared with me, because the information has helped me to plan culturally relevant instruction for them.

*Cohort 3 participant*

# COMMENTS

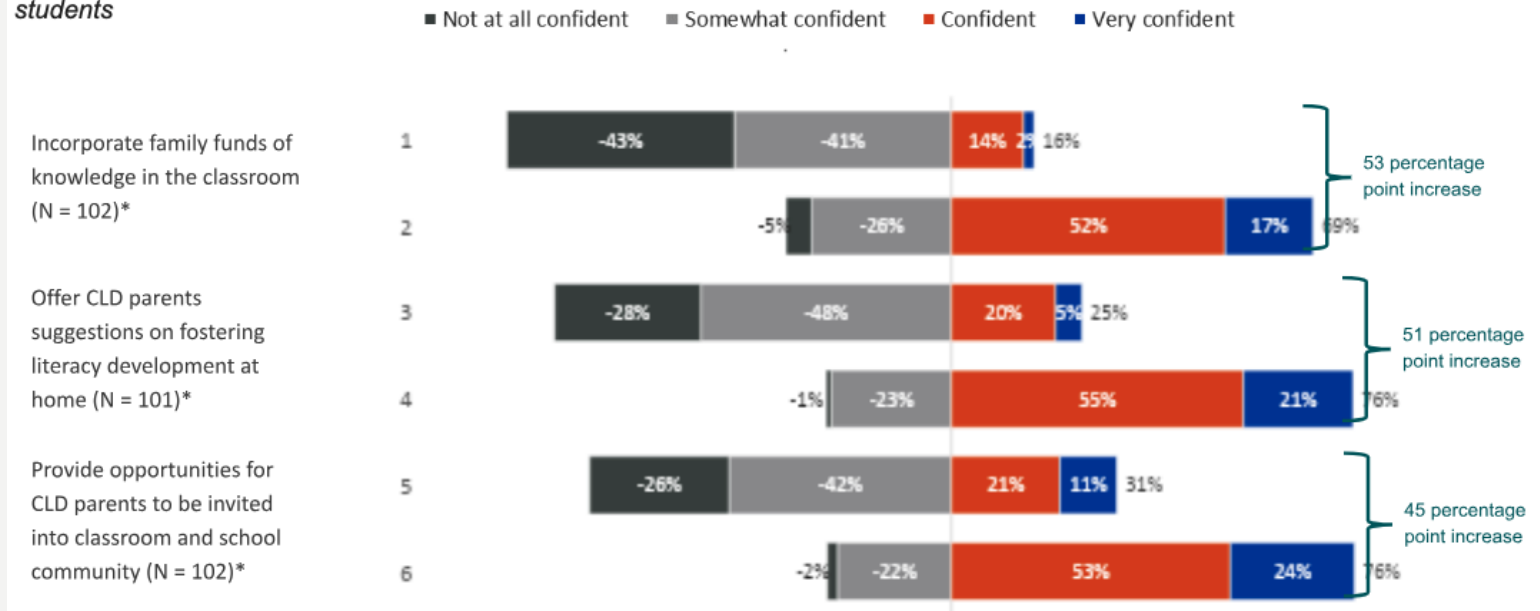
I am glad that I pushed past my fears and went through the home visits. I will never forget them, and I will make a point of doing more of them in the future...

...we left with knowledge about our students that we would never have been able to learn had we not ventured beyond the walls of our school and into the living rooms of our students

Cohort 2 participant

# OUTCOMES CONT.

Figure 7. Participants from Cohort 2-5 reported moderate increases in their confidence related to culturally and linguistically diverse students



\* Cohort 1 participants were not asked this question at baseline, so are excluded from this analysis

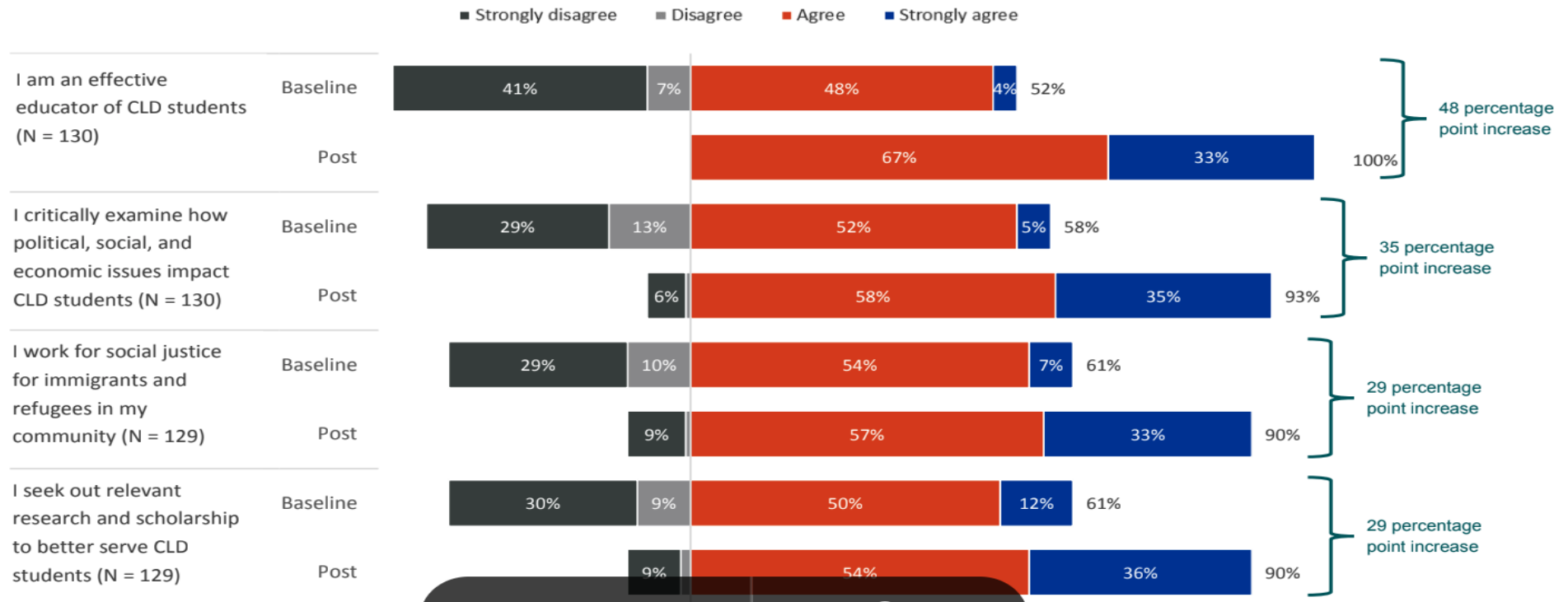
Note: CLD is culturally and linguistically diverse. Totals may not add up because of rounding.

# OUTCOMES CONT.

*I think I'm more aware of the gaps of certain groups' voices within our literature (in ELA classes). It's become a greater priority to find those titles and begin to incorporate them into our curriculum. [Cohort 1 participant]*



**Figure 9.** All REDO participants agreed that they were effective teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and many participants also agreed that they were effective advocates



# CONCLUSION: TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

- After completing REDO, participants reported positive changes in their use of, and confidence in 49 practices and competencies focused on culturally and linguistically diverse students
- Participants reported the largest changes in their knowledge and confidence as effective teachers and advocates of culturally and linguistically diverse students