Rural Community and Career Connected Learning: Impacts of High School Internships Prioritizing People and Place

Allison L. Ricket
Ohio University

Jacqueline Yahn
Ohio University

Emily Bentley
Building Bridges to Careers

This study examines the outcomes of non-school internships hosted by two Appalachian Ohio organizations: Rural Action and Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C). As intermediary organizations, these entities work outside the boundaries of formal schooling to address issues of youth outmigration and sustainable community development through high school internships. This qualitative study, guided by the conceptual framework of community and career connected learning (CCCL), seeks to fill a gap in the literature where existing studies favor a distinctly urban-centric vantage point or focus on optimizing social mobility and developing skills needed to maintain a globalized, unrooted workforce. Previous program participants (2016–2020) between one to three years post-high school graduation (n = 25) were interviewed and data were analyzed using generalized issue focused analysis. Findings reveal impacts on participants' (a) perceived role within their rural communities, (b) career pathways, and (c) social capital acquisition. Participants indicated the internship positioned them to establish an initial career trajectory, while also leading them to reconsider their role within the community.

"I'm thinking the actual purpose of our internship program is to help students build social capital, and another main purpose is to give them opportunities to find their place in the community. Even though we started this to create pathways to employment, I think we've realized it's not quite the main focus" (J. Brehm, 2022, November 4). Joe Brehm, Chief Operating Officer of Rural Action, is speaking about the high school internship program his organization

codesigned with their partner, Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C). The two intermediaries implement the program in rural Appalachian Ohio and designed it to counter the dual challenges familiar to many other rural communities: population loss associated with economic downturns or underdevelopment and limits to population growth that relate to geographic remoteness (Garcilazo, 2021). As Brehm indicates, Rural Action and BB2C now see the internship program as focused on outcomes that build individual and community-level social capital—prioritizing people and place (BB2C, n.d.-b; Rural Action, n.d.-b). This evolution in thinking was precipitated by the findings of the study presented here.

In the spring of 2021, our research team was commissioned to examine the lingering impacts of Rural Action and BB2C's high school internship programs on the young adults who completed the program from 2016–2020. Both intermediaries wanted to learn how participants connected the internship experience to their current career choice and life path/experience. Twenty-five participants who completed internships during this period agreed to be interviewed for the study. What immediately follows is the background of the intermediary organizations and the rural Appalachian Ohio communities in which they work.

This description is followed by an overview of community and career connected learning (CCCL), the learning theory that informs their internship program design and therefore the research design of this study. The second half of the article focuses on the study's methods and findings. It concludes with a discussion of how this study joins a body of literature on rural youth and social capital focused on ties and connectedness of an individual student (especially with respect to familial ties or inherited social networks), which influence academic performance and life decisions (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Petrin et al., 2014). Our findings prompt rural education stakeholders to see the potential for internships that factor "place" into their design, while also drawing attention to the need for more community-engaged research where rural schools and community organizations drive the research questions.

Background

In rural places, schools are one of the few social institutions with the capacity to meet intergenerational community needs through the magnitude and duration of contact with community members both in formal (traditional schooling) and informal (e.g., sporting events, community events) ways (Tieken, 2014). As a result, rural schools have an increased need for partnerships with intermediary organizations that work to support the viability of both the school and the community. Rural Action and BB2C—intermediary organizations located in Appalachian Ohio—embrace this role through programs they facilitate in coordination with schools in their service region. This study focuses on their high school internship program, which is unattached to career technical education (CTE) or formalized school-centric work-based learning (BB2C, n.d.-b; Rural Action, n.d.-b). The internship program design is informed by the learning theory *community and career connected learning* (CCCL). CCCL is a form of learning developed to disrupt the well-documented phenomenon of rural schools inadvertently, and times even intentionally, educating students to "learn to leave" (Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Corbett, 2020; Howley, 2006; Sherman & Sage, 2011).

Rural Action and BB2C Origin Stories

Rural Action is a nonprofit sustainable development organization founded in 1991. Rural Action's work is concentrated in rural Appalachian Ohio where the organization works to diversify rural economies, previously marred by the boom-and-bust cycles of extraction industries, by connecting youth to local environmentally sustainable jobs (Rural Action, n.d.-a). Rural Action's headquarters is in Athens County, Ohio, in The Plains, and they have five offices in Appalachian Ohio. The organization serves approximately 59 Ohio counties in various capacities and collaborates with similar organizations in nearby states such as West Virginia, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. In addition to 28 full-time staff, 70 AmeriCorps members, 10 AmeriCorps VISTA members, and more than 600 members are in their network. Rural Action's scope of work includes areas such as sustainable agriculture, forestry, and energy, and outreach related to environmental education, social enterprise, and resilient communities. Their theory of change is focused on "[facilitating] change by supporting communities to understand, map, and control their assets; build appropriate and accessible infrastructure, and; connect those assets and infrastructure to markets both within and outside of the region" (Rural Action, n.d.-a).

BB2C, also a nonprofit in Appalachian Ohio, was founded in 2012 and incorporated in 2017. BB2C focuses on addressing employer needs and reversing outmigration trends by partnering with local schools to increase community engagement with career awareness (BB2C, n.d.-a). The organization began through the collaboration of education, community, and businesses leaders in Washington County, Ohio, who sought to close career-readiness gaps for local students. BB2C's headquarters, known as the Epicenter, is in the county seat—Marietta, Ohio—and the executive director supervises 10 staff members dedicated to the work of the Epicenter, Makerspace, and BB2C Network. It is through the Network that BB2C provides outreach services to Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties. These programming supports typically focus on job shadowing, high school internships, career awareness days, career mentoring, and professional development for educational professionals. Their mission is rooted in building cross-sector relationships and focuses on "[fostering] student, business, and community relationships to inspire career choice through experience, entrepreneurship, and education" (BB2C, n.d.-b).

Rural Action and BB2C see the rural orientation of community as "the small understandable world of our daily experience": the people, places, and social groups anchored in the physical landscape where we live (Heilman, 2021). Both organizations are described as intermediary organizations (Penuel et al., 2011; Russell et al., 2013) because they operate at the boundaries of other organizations and systems, enabling cross-sector relationships for collaboration and action (Hecht & Crowley, 2019). As nonprofits they operate outside the formal education system and provide structured in-school and out-of-school learning opportunities directly to students. The high school internship program is one example of how they facilitate transitions from the formal school environment to out-of-school learning situations with business and community partners.

Rural Actions: Creating a High School Internship Program

The genesis of the high school internship program at Rural Action and BB2C resulted from cross-sector convenings around rural community issues. The internship program emerged as one solution to resolve the paradox between local business and community needs and students' deficit perception of opportunities for the future in their rural, Appalachian communities (Ricket et al., 2021). Both organizations developed their internship programs around the same time and in collaboration with one another. Through a shared initiative the intermediaries facilitate high school internship experiences in the local community that are unattached to work based learning facilitated by public schools (BB2C, n.d.-b; Rural Action, n.d.-b). Although the internship program follows a structure, the internships coordinated by the intermediaries are deformalized, meaning they are not attached to graduation requirements, predetermined credentials, or other outcomes necessitated by school or state mandates.[1] Instead, the program uses CCCL to frame its rural, and asset-based approach. Interns are positioned through their interactions with employers to learn about and engage with community capitals (Flora et al., 2016) important to rural community viability. Flora et al. (2016) identify seven community capitals—built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural—that thriving rural communities leverage to sustain local economies, as well as a local ecosystem and broader forms of social inclusion. All interns are placed with businesses and organizations integral to sustaining one or more of these capitals in their respective rural communities.

Through this approach, businesses and organizations in the local community that host interns are engaged in the process of workforce development and are positioned to educate participants on community assets. What is unique about these internships is the way the intermediary organizations use their capacity to work beyond the boundaries of formal schooling to support the viability of both the school and the community (Giovannitti, 2021). This internship program further diverges from other workforce pipeline models that seek to connect primarily to large employers or employment opportunities associated with the trades. BB2C and Rural Action emphasize rural community viability through connecting students to small and medium-sized businesses and community organizations run by local residents. With this emphasis, the internships have the potential to build social entrepreneurial infrastructure
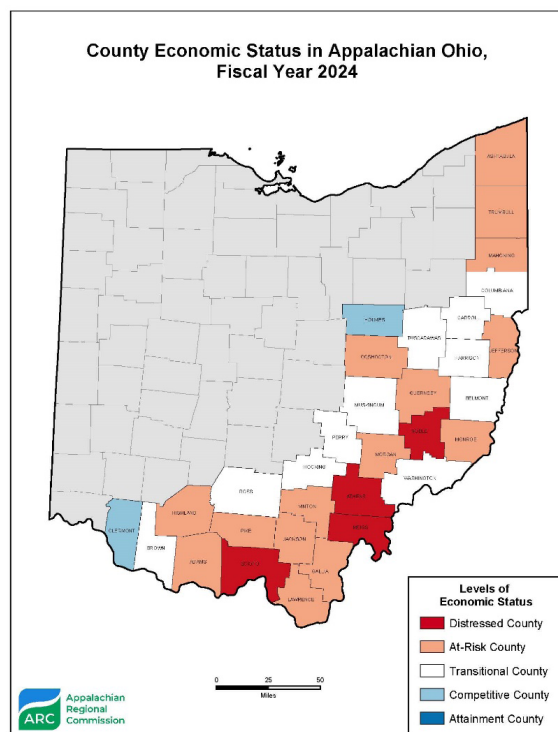
integral to the rural Appalachian communities they serve and are one disruptor to rural youth outmigration (Ricket et al., 2022).

Appalachian Ohio

BB2C and Rural Action act as the connective tissue between sector leaders, building relationships and facilitating collective action based on those relationships. Their aim is to create place-based school-community-business partnerships that simultaneously impact and benefit students, schools, families, community organizations, businesses, and the wider socio-political spheres. The majority of this work is taking place in Appalachian Ohio—32 Ohio counties that make up over one third of the state, covering 16,011.5 square miles (see Figure 1). The 32 counties are contiguous, but their economics, terrain, and demographics do vary. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) ranks most of the region as economically distressed or at risk, 10 counties are transitioning between strong and weak economies, and two counties are competitive (ARC, 2023). Five counties match or exceed labor force participation in comparison to non-Appalachian Ohio counties. Furthermore, while the organizations' work skews rural, the broader Appalachian

Figure 1
Map of Appalachian Ohio

Note. Image from ARC (2023).

---

[1] Although the structure does not explicitly connect to formal school requirements, BB2C and Rural Action have facilitated the use of internship hours to meet formal school requirements such as credit recovery for at-risk students where the need arose.

Ohio region they serve is not a rural monolith and includes four cities with populations over 20,000 (Youngstown, Zanesville, Athens, and Chillicothe). However, most of the region has low population density (124 people per square mile), 58% of the region is forested, and the region is underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of the state (ARC, 2022). The 32 counties also share a history of economic booms and busts associated with the coal, steel, and manufacturing sectors (ARC, 2022), and this context is regularly factored into Rural Action and BB2C's work.

When the region is compared to the rest of the state, higher poverty, population decline, and gaps in labor participation are identified as challenges (ARC, 2022). The high school internships that are the focus of this study took place across a cluster of southeast Appalachian Ohio counties, and Wood County, West Virginia. Most of the Ohio districts are designated as either *rural* or *small town*, with small student populations and poverty levels that range from average to high in comparison to the rest of the state (Ohio Department of Education, 2015). The Athens City School District is the one exception and is labeled as suburban. This typology is likely related to Ohio University's location in Athens, but it also fails to capture the number of students attending Athens High School who commute from rural areas. Including Athens High School, only three of the districts are considered to have average size student populations in comparison to the rest of the state. It is also important to note that all participants were living and attending schools in counties that have lower labor force participation in comparison to the rest of the state and are considered part of the economic gap.

Community and Career Connected Learning

CCCL refers to a learning system that integrates community partnerships and career awareness into experiential, place-based learning (Ricket, 2022; Ricket & Werry, 2020). CCCL is an overarching framework, drawing together disparate approaches (e.g., connected learning, authentic learning) to seek the same goal: to strengthen the fabric of community to support learners. This learning system springs from ecological development theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Epstein, 2011) by paying special attention to learning occurring at the boundaries of overlapping systems (Hecht & Crowley, 2019). Students learn from community members in both formal and informal spaces, in ways both outside of and connected to school objectives, such as grades or graduation.

CCCL draws from theories in positive youth development, especially the work detailing youth thriving (Benson & Scales, 2009). CCCL creates avenues for the exploration of community assets to catalyze both the drawing out (*educare*) of students' "sparks" (Benson &

Scales, 2009; Scales et al., 2011) and the building of social capital to create opportunities for students to further develop those sparks (R. P. Putnam, 2015). CCCL begins from the foundation of positive youth development, which examines the role of engaging youth in experiences to cultivate or nurture "intense interests" (Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014, p. 76; Benson & Scales, 2019) or sparks: "a passion or self-identified interest, skill or capacity that metaphorically lights a fire in the adolescent's life, providing energy, joy, purpose, and direction" (Scales et al. 2011, p. 264). The development of sparks is further connected to an individual's ability to enter a "flow state" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008), an optimal state of performance and wellbeing that creates a sense of purpose. Although research around sparks has concluded that community connections can strengthen, intensify, and create future opportunities for youth, CCCL combines the work in positive youth development with social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 2019; Lent et al., 1994) to consider the ways in which students might develop, explore, and identify their sparks in the first place (Ricket, 2022).

CCCL Is Rural by Design

CCCL arises from a rural context and is asset-based, relational, and place-based (Bauch, 2001; Siskar & Theobald, 2008; Theobald, 1997, 2009; Zuckerman, 2019). A key facet of CCCL is learning experiences that extend to audiences beyond the classroom and teacher (Allen, 2000; Almeida & Steinberg, 2001; Christensen, 2015; Cartun et al., 2017; Freire, 1970/2000; Mather, 2020). Importantly, students participate in an active learning process involving a community member(s)—such as a businessperson, staff member from a community organization, or a government official)—also as an active participant (Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014; Ito et al., 2020). This learning process intentionally incorporates multiple capitals and assets from the local community, including its land and culture (Bauch, 2001; Getting Smart et al., 2017; Kretzmann et al., 2005; Montessori, 1948/2007). By learning in both formal and informal school spaces, students engage in a continuum of experiences, from exploration to extended immersion, connected to careers and occupations (Lent & Brown, 2019; Lent et al., 1994; McRae & Johnston, 2016; Williams, 2010)

CCCL Generates Social Capital in the Rural Context

Both individuals and communities need social capital, or access to resources and networks that enhance individual quality of life or community viability (Flora & Flora, 2003). CCCL is unique because it challenges conceptions of social capital which emphasize social capital as a commodity accumulated or distributed by an individual for the sole purpose of social mobility. Instead, CCCL takes an ecological

view of social capital as embedded in a larger community capitals framework (Flora et al., 2016). This perspective is a distinctly rural position where community social capital is foundational to community viability, contributing to the mobilization and success of other community capitals. CCCL creates necessary social infrastructure between and among people, places, and organizations that builds trust and agency within and between communities for whole "community betterment" and thriving (Flora et al., 2016, p. 171).

CCCL as a learning ecosystem within the community capitals framework, connecting students to local assets, knowledge, culture, and opportunities and the adult world of work, ultimately enhancing the entire community (Yahn et al., 2023). In Hecht and Crowley's (2019) learning ecosystem, thriving learners are one indicator of healthy systems—healthy schools, healthy economies, healthy natural spaces, and healthy nonprofit sectors. All entities and contexts are multidirectional influences in the ecosystem of which the learner is a part. For Hecht and Crowley (2019), the *ecotone* is a critical point for learning and overall health of the ecosystem. Ecotone, a term borrowed from biology, describes "transition spaces" between systems (i.e., riparian zones). These transition zones exhibit increased diversity, innovation, and adaptation, as they are a combination of two systems. Therefore, student learning and development in intermediary organizations such as Rural Action and BB2C represent an important space for empirical inquiry. These intermediaries create ecotones through flexible, yet structured, learning experiences in businesses and the community that exist outside of but are still loosely attached to formal learning institutions (Barron, 2006; Russell et al., 2013). The role of family and teacher influence as a form of social capital in developing future aspirations (Crosnoe, 2004; Howley, 2006; Sherman & Sage, 2011) has also received attention, although a deficit view of these ties can be seen in studies that seek to explain why students in rural areas have "lower" (i.e., non-college) aspirations (Beaulieu et al., 2003; Byun et al., 2012; Sharp et al., 2020).

CCCL Creates Youth Sparks and Contributes to Rural Community Viability

A key aspect of the BB2C and Rural Action internships which is not investigated in the literature is how student exposure to a diverse array of people, places, and experiences may encourage the exploration of identities and interests that catalyze the sparks, zest, and "aha moments" which lead to deep engagement and subsequent positive outcomes toward youth thriving (Brown, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Scales et al., 2010). For far too many students, the lack of influence from the external environment, exposure to diverse people from diverse backgrounds, and familial resources may constrain spark identification and future self-identity development (Lent et al., 1994; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Waterman, 1982; Yates & Youniss, 1996).

BB2C and Rural Action use CCCL to not only support students with already identified sparks and zest but also to give other youth the chance to find meaningful connections beyond those available inside traditional school walls. CTE or vocational schools have long incorporated work-based learning as a core of education pathways (Papadimitriou, 2014), and demand for upskilling and workforce development pipelines starting in high school increasingly comes from employers themselves (Mourshed et al., 2012). Yet the literature guiding the design of these internships favors a distinctly urban-centric perspective, focused on optimizing social mobility and developing transferrable skills needed to maintain a globalized workforce that is willing to relocate based on economic trends (Chen & Stoddard, 2020; Corbett, 2020; Fernandez-Repollet et al., 2018; Gómez & Brostoff, 2018; Kana et al., 2019; McLaughlin et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2018; Roth et al., 2009). In contrast, rural communities need internship programs that contribute to community viability.

CCCL as a Lens for Analysis

As a learning system, CCCL works to position the participant to engage in career exploration within the community. This illustration of the conceptual framework makes visible what Miles and Huberman (1994) describe as the "variables—and the presumed relationship among them" (p. 18). Rural Action and BB2C both use CCCL to inform the design of their internships and similar programs. For this study the CCCL framework informed the organizational structure for the interview guide and insight as to what questions should focus on. Importantly, it also informed a priori coding categories the research team could use to initiate data analysis, complementing the use of inductive codes. Finally, the CCCL framework set a baseline for what data units would qualify as conceptually important information because the identified data were beyond the scope of the framework.

Research Design and Methods

The research team included five members: two co-principal (co-PI) investigators and three research assistants (RAs). Both co-PIs conduct community-engaged research and coordinate partnerships and trainings with Rural Action and BB2C. One co-PI was also a network director for BB2C from 2020–2022. The three RAs were assigned to the team as part of their undergraduate and graduate coursework at the university where the co-PIs are employed. The RAs were completing internship work for their respective degrees and

were placed at BB2C during the spring of 2021. The team interviewed 25 young adult participants who completed internships from 2016–2020 to learn how participants related the internship experience to their current career choice and life path/experience. Of specific interest was the extent participants believed the internships shaped their (a) perceived role within their rural communities, (b) career pathways, and (c) social capital acquisition.

Context Overview of the Internship Experience

The internship experience pairs one high school intern with a local business or community organization for 40–80 hours of work for four months. Host sites included small and medium sized businesses (48%); local community foundations, nonprofits, and public works organizations (44%); and large employers (8%). The internship is designed to be as flexible as possible for both the student and the business and is meant to reduce barriers to participation for both. BB2C and Rural Action act as intermediaries and do the legwork of finding and preparing host sites; vetting students; preparing students and parents; facilitating flexible scheduling or credit options with school districts; facilitating initial expectation setting between business, parent, and student; and pivoting when a student's interests change or other issues arise (Building Bridges, n.d.-a; Rural Action, n.d.-b). The program's one explicit goal is that students meet as many adults associated with the business or organization as possible to learn about as many different aspects of the business as possible. Many businesses have benefited from critical work students

completed during their internship period, but this work is considered by program implementers as a secondary benefit to the overall experience of engaging in and developing a larger understanding of community systems. At the end of each internship experience, students share their learning in a professional space such as a Rotary Club meeting, a chamber of commerce meeting, a school board meeting, or other civic space.

Participants

Our team obtained rosters from BB2C (years 2016–2019) and Rural Action (years 2017–2020) that included contact information, internship location, and completion dates for 46 internship participants. Given the small number of possible participants we decided to contact each participant and interview all willing respondents. The RAs made three contact attempts per participant. Twenty-five of the 46 possible participants responded and agreed to complete phone interviews for the study. Nineteen participants graduated from high schools across a cluster of counties in Appalachian Ohio: Athens ($n = 9$), Jackson ($n = 1$), Ross ($n = 2$), Washington ($n = 7$). Six graduated from high schools in Wood County, West Virginia. The 46 high school students who completed internships from 2016–2020 were in one of 10 fields and graduated from their respective high schools. As Table 1 illustrates that participants in the study are reasonably distributed across internship sectors in comparison to the distribution across sectors for all interns 2016–2020.

Table 1
Internship Sector Distribution

	Number of interns 2016–2020	Number of study participants
Agriculture, food	7	5
Architecture and construction	2	1
Arts, audio/video technology	4	2
Education and training	4	2
Health sciences	4	2
Human services	8	4
Law, public safety	3	1
Manufacturing	6	1
Marketing, sales, service	3	3
Science, technology, engineering	5	4

Participant Bias

The participants in this study were among the first cohorts to complete internships in the program's pilot phase—and as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. BB2C and Rural Action relied on relationships with educational professionals in school districts to identify students who indicated interest in completing internships as a pathway to college and careers. It is important to acknowledge this process can create a form of bias related to educational professionals in rural communities. These professionals may be prone to focusing their efforts on students they perceive as motivated, high-achieving students and more likely to want these opportunities. Professionals may also see the internship as an opportunity that will lead the students to exit rural communities after graduation. However, this view does not mean participants themselves saw the internship as an exit strategy or that they would not be interested in staying in the area if the opportunity to leave arose.

Research Design Alignment with Rural Action and BB2C Timelines

Rural Action and BB2C asked our team to focus on participants from the 2016–2020 internship cycles who were between one to three years post-high school graduation and therefore able to reflect on impacts beyond the immediate experience while possibly identifying gains in social capital (Charania & Fisher, 2020). As intermediaries, BB2C and Rural Action are reliant on a network of stakeholders to carry out their programs, depend on grant and donor funding, and must be attentive legislative and grant cycles. Both intermediaries expressed a need for the quality of data prioritized in academic research but had truncated timelines during which they needed to share results with stakeholders to influence legislative priorities and grant funding. The emphasis on timeframe; geographic distance between participants and researchers; and, most of all, the COVID-19 pandemic health and safety protocols at the time of data collection informed the decision to conduct a qualitative study using interview data. Rural Action and BB2C requested the team use CCCL to design the interview guide and frame the findings. The organizations indicated one salient question of interest, along with two additional questions related to individual and community-level social capital:

1. Salient question: How did participants relate the internship experience to their current career choice and life path/experience?

2. In what ways does an asset-based approach to the internship contribute to the students building and employing social capital?

3. What ways does the internship experience impact the interns' experience of themselves and the community/region?

A Note on Rural Action and BB2C Initial Results

To meet the deliverable timeline for Rural Action and BB2C our team conducted an initial data review and reported preliminary results in a white paper the intermediaries could share throughout the 2021–2022 fiscal year. The white paper focused on orienting internal stakeholders and external partners to how the high school internship program is not merely a career pathway, but rather a possible bridge to youth imagining their future selves as part of the community (Ricket et al., 2021). Following the white paper, the team, Rural Action, and BB2C agreed on the benefits of returning to the data set to conduct the issue-focused analysis outlined below with the intent of adding to the scholarship on rural youth social capital and the influence on academic performance and life decisions (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Petrin et al., 2014).

Instrumentation and Data Collection

A two-part semi-structured interview guide was developed, generating questions closely guided by the theories supporting the concept of CCCL. Part I questions focused on demographic information (e.g., home county, internship site, year of high school graduation) and chronicled the participant's trajectory from the time of their internship to spring 2021 (e.g., current job/occupation and/or degree field and current county of residence). Part II focused on the tenets of CCCL, focusing on career pathways, social capital, and sense of community. See Table 2 for sample questions.

During the interview process research assistants conducted interviews, completed transcriptions, and merged transcriptions into a spreadsheet that was organized by the name of each participant, the series of interview questions, and the respective participant's corresponding answers. Participants who agreed to participate in the study scheduled a 30-60 minute phone interview, consenting to audio recording and interview transcription. Consistency was established through the use of a recruitment pitch, a semi-structured interview, and weekly check-in meetings with one Co-PI. Weekly meetings focused on progress reports,

Table 2
Sample Part II Interview Guide Questions

CCCL focus area	Interview guide questions
Community	Do you still have contact with any of the connections you made during your internship (even via LinkedIn, Insta, etc.)? (Charania & Fisher, 2020)
	Did you have previous networking or career experience provided to you by family and close friends?
Career pathway	Does your current career trajectory relate to your internship/job shadowing experience?
	How did the internship influence your current career or education path? (Probe for skills learned in the internship as impacting career or education path)
Social capital	Did you make any connections or meet anyone during your internship? Yes/No/Maybe
	Did any of those connections give you information that could help you with your career or education goals? Yes/No (Charania & Fisher, 2020)

memoing emerging patterns and outliers in responses, and resolving interviewing dilemmas. Saturation was reached at the conclusion of 25 interviews, at which time the Co-PIs agreed maximum range had been achieved: participants represented sufficient contrasts in independent variables, contexts, and dynamics related to the internship experience Rural Action and BB2C provided during the years of 2016-2020 (Weiss, 1994).

Issue-Focused Data Analysis

The two co-PIs and one RA (with graduate-level coursework) conducted an issue-focused data analysis. Issue-focused analysis begins with coding (line-by-line review of data) and sorting of codes, moves to local integration (summaries of codes and mini-theories supported by coding clusters and the theoretical framework), and ends with inclusive integration (reporting what can be learned from all participants about the experience) (Weiss, 1994). This form of analysis also allows for the capture of conceptually important information that does not fit within or challenges aspects of the conceptual framework (in this case, CCCL) (Weiss, 1994, p. 31).

Step 1: Initial Review

Data analysis began with an initial data review that was both horizontal (a reading of each individual interview) and vertical (a reading of each question and the set of participant responses to that question). Miles et al. (2020) suggest that when researcher skill sets are varied, beginning with a blend of a priori and inductive coding provides a reliable starting point for coding and strengthens the validity of findings. One co-PI and the RA established a preliminary code list and definitions by situating each preliminary code within one of three a priori categories aligned with the interview guide and community and career connected learning: (a) community, (b) career pathways, (c) social capital. The other co-PI responded to the code list with questions and challenges until the team agreed the code list was ready to be applied to line-by-line coding.

Step 2: Coding

One co-PI and the RA used this code list to do line-by-line coding and sorting. During this process additional "outlier" codes that did not match the a priori frames also emerged. The other co-PI provided feedback on the validity of the assignment of codes and challenged data excerpts that did not seem to fit an assigned code. Coding concluded by organizing units of analysis into a spreadsheet organized by code, linked to the respondent and original question.

Step 3: Local Integration

During local integration both co-PIs clustered codes that shared a synergy (an interdependent relationship) into groups that aligned with the CCCL conceptual framework,

while "outlier" codes were regrouped to represent conceptually important information that could not be interpreted from the conceptual framework (Miles et al., 2020; Weiss, 1994). The co-PIs summarized code clusters and linked the summaries to the supporting data in that cluster. The RA's role was to question if the supporting data units belonged in a summary and to challenge the co-PIs to move data units that did not adequately fit a code cluster summary to either another cluster or reassign the unit to the conceptually important data.

Step 4: Inclusive Integration

The two co-PIs used the code cluster summaries to develop mini-theories (Weiss, 1994, p. 159) related to the CCCL. During inclusive integration the co-PIs focused on what can be learned from all participants regarding the impact of the internships on their (a) perceived role within their rural communities, (b) career pathways, and (c) social capital acquisition. This final phase also focused on an analysis of the conceptually important data that did not fit within the three mini-theories. The RA's role was now to agree or challenge the final theories, supporting data, and relevant literature.

Validity

Our research team designed an analysis process sensitive to the impact of potential researcher bias related to the co-PIs' professional relationship with Rural Action and BB2C and the importance of the study to both organizations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The co-PIs recognize that community-engaged research in rural places is often rooted in sustained relationships that risk bias (Gristy, 2014). In addition to building in validity checks to avoid researcher bias during analysis, interviews were conducted by three RAs who did not have these prior relationships with the organizations, nor did they have prior interactions with the participants (Weiss, 1994). Finally, as applicable, in the findings quantitative counts and statistics are included to support the "presence" of a finding in the data set (Weiss, 1994).

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts of internships on participants in the years after they participated in the experience. At the time of data collection 15 participants lived in the region. Five were full-time employed, five were working and completing college/technical training, five were working and completing

college/technical training, and five were completing college/technical training. Ten participants lived outside the region and were completing college/technical training. A finding that is beyond the scope this article and purpose of the initial study is that this group of internship alumni also made a compelling case study of how the rural lifeworld provides a pathway to career identities, with the internship serving as a means for participants to create narratives they used to guide their personal and professional choices (Yahn & Ricket, 2023). Specifically, what the research team did not anticipate was that participants would end up revealing throughout interview responses how the internship related to decisions they made about their current career path in one of four ways: (a) affirmed their intended path ($n = 5$), (b) allowed them to refine their plans ($n = 10$), (c) redirected their career path ($n = 4$), or (d) enhanced their professional dispositions and skills ($n = 6$) (Yahn & Ricket, 2023).

The findings that follow capture how the 25 internship alumni believed the internship experience impacted participants' experience of themselves in the community/region, current career choice and life path/experience, and social capital building and mobilization. The three findings are also important to the broader scholarship about high school internship experiences in rural communities and what might be gained by using CCCL or conceptual frameworks that prioritize rural community viability.

Community as a Connector to Life Paths

The intermediary organizations seek to connect participants to businesses and organizations in the community through an asset-based approach. This strategy appears to have led participants to more deeply consider how their role in the community is an important connector to the next steps of their life paths. Importantly, both intermediaries recognize CCCL should not be viewed as direct reversal of outmigration, but rather a way to reframe how we learn and work in our communities. The intermediaries recognize that for some rural youth two things can be true: You can care deeply for and feel supported by your rural community, and you might still determine a life elsewhere is the right path for you. The aim of the internship and related programming is not to convince youth to stay, but to let them see the assets in the rural place they live and consider, as Joe Brehm notes, their possible role within the community.

For many participants exploring a career pathway led to a better understanding of how that pathway is situated within the larger community system. As a result, these participants reflected on how this perspective refined or added dimensions to their occupational identity. Participants indicated that while the internship experience opened many

possibilities of specific career pathways, the internship had the simultaneous impact of knitting participants into the fabric of the community. As one participant shared:

> I guess having that internship confirmed to me that I wanted to do something eventually that helps a community on a small scale. I am interested in nonprofit work now, and I guess having this internship confirmed that for me even though it's not going to be in the same field.

The experience of the internship also provided a widening of knowledge and perspective for students; the enlargement of the community context allowed them to create a space for themselves and their future work in relation to it. In the quote that follows, one intern makes this connection visible through their description of using the internship to plot their own pathway into the legal field, and, as a result, realizing a potential future in the community post-graduation:

> So then I got also got to ask them about like their schooling and stuff, because I wasn't sure what I wanted to major in. And the elected county prosecutor in Wood County actually went to Marshall, majoring in criminal justice. And that's a lot of the reason why I ended up here [Marshall] is because he talks so highly about the program… I connected with all the attorneys working in the office and that was very beneficial to me, so if I would ever want to come back to Wood County after I would go to law school and practice in Wood County, they have already told me that I'm more than welcome to come back and they would get me a job eventually.

Participants also explained that through the internship they began to recognize that their future role within the community could be intentional part of their life path. Broadly, many reflected on how the internship reintroduced them to their surroundings or made them aware of community assets to which they were previously oblivious. More specifically, participants, as highlighted in the quote below, explained how the internship led them to engage in changemaking opportunities or important community contributions.

> I think this internship impacted me in a better official positive way. Because over the summer, the topics that we talked about, especially this past summer, in 2020, when there was a high rise of protests and a lot of conversations across the country happening about race. And just having

> these conversations in my hometown I've never really had before publicly, I think it really made me realize, like, what I want to speak out again, and what I think people should know and be educated about.

Crucially, participants to varying degrees pointed to the new connections made at the host site as critical in constructing ideas of what a future would look like in a particular career field. This finding indicates that CCCL, with its intentional focus on the role of community, provides a reasonable framework for designing place-based learning experiences where the organizational agenda does not overshadow individual autonomy to make decisions that build individual social capital.

Intermediary Organizations as Rural Boundary Spanners

Rural schools confront two conflicting truths. First, historically rural schools—especially high schools—have been the hub of community activity. They are a space for community events and socializing and considered integral to ushering rural youth into adulthood, including career pathways (Tieken, 2014). Second, rural schools are *part of* an increasingly centralized public education system (Ravitch, 2010). The consequence of this trend is a waning lack of capacity to provide the myriad of services for which community members have come to rely on the school. Participants seemed keenly aware of this phenomenon, as one reflected:

> Like, it's great to be graduated and have a diploma. But when it came to Building Bridges, it was, "What does this student need?" ... The total basis of their [success with students], at least with students like me, who are relying on those who can give me resources like that. Right? The fact that [they asked], "What does [participant] need to succeed?"

In this study participants emphasized that intermediary organizations—Rural Action and BB2C—offered an alternative to traditional career education provided within the walls of the rural high school. Instead, the intermediary organization filled a role that is nearly impossible for rural high schools working in the highly structured organizational hierarchy of public education. Participants emphasized the importance of the intermediary organization by citing the following benefits of their internship.

1. The internship was asset based and flexible, molding to their needs.

2. Knowledge and skills were gained through experience.

3. The internship was an interaction, not a transaction—what students described as being "real world" with descriptions of interactive and complex experiences.

4. The internship allowed them to build social capital.

The above characteristics of the internship emphasize an embodied knowledge significant to participants. Participants explained that these benefits countered confusing or negative career preparation experiences provided in their high school. As one participant outlined:

> I think it should be definitely offered to people in my high school, I think like, just the area of southern Ohio, there's not a whole lot of opportunity for like young people to like, really figure out what they want to do with their lives, which is kind of scary. And I think having more guidance, and having more opportunities for young people to just get out into the world and meet people that could be their mentors is huge. I think that's kind of lacking in southern Ohio.

Students referred to traditional high school classroom-oriented career exploration as a lack of opportunity and not impactful when choosing a career or pathway for the future. The participants further mentioned their specific rural context, "southern Ohio," to emphasize a perceived lack of opportunity. The place-based nature and the role of the intermediary in matching each participant's interest to a local place in which an embodied experience could take place allowed students from these rural areas to shift beyond a deficit perspective or limiting view of future possibilities.

Community Connections Build Incremental Social Capital

This study also sought to understand impacts to student social capital at the boundaries of overlapping systems in the learning ecosystem. The decline in community-level social capital and the rising opportunity gap are well documented (R. D. Putnam, 2000/2020; R. P. Putnam, 2015; Theobald, 2009) alongside the imperative that social capital built during a student's school-aged years impacts lifelong outcomes (Busette et al., 2020). However, missing from the literature on social capital is a robust understanding of the way in which social capital is created outside of inherited networks (R. P. Putnam, 2015). The Rural Action and BB2C

internships operate with the purpose of the cultivation of students' social capital in place-based community networks. The data showed that the internship experience expanded students' social capital on an individual level and on a community level.

As Table 3 illustrates, the data also indicates it is likely implausible to imagine an internship, or similar experience, where stringent social capital outcomes are realized uniformly amongst participants. Participants in this study, as the table highlights, discussed building social capital in one or more ways. Crucially, they also leveraged the community connections they were making specific to their internship to incrementally build social capital. Upon reflection, it seems participants deemed different types of social capital valuable and that the experiential, place-based nature of the internship allowed for this variation.

Discussion

Key Facets of the Internship for Other Rural Schools and Communities to Consider

Benson and Scales (2009) argue that adolescent thriving is embedded in and enhanced by community social ecologies. Our study finds support for the "bi-directional fusing of self and context that promotes well-being in both the person and the environment" (Benson & Scales, 2009, p. 87). The asset-based approach of the internships to the rural communities in which they take place impacted the participants by (a) shaping the next steps in their life paths, (b) providing opportunities beyond the capacity of the rural high school, and (c) situating interns within the community to build forms of social capital most necessary to that participant.

The exploratory nature of the internship, stemming from both the embodied experience in a rural community and the program's explicit purpose to introduce participants to as many adults connected with the host site as possible, became something participants identified as important to them. Moreover, the findings suggest that a focus on internships in rural places as solely a means to human capital or workforce development, or as a way for businesses and organizations to identify future employees, is not of value to the participants. In contrast, participants indicated the intermediary—in this case, BB2C and Rural Action—was essential to providing a range of opportunities, such as seeing their future selves in the community and building multiple forms of social capital (see Table 3).

For rural schools and communities, an internship program designed similarly to this one could allow a process with the necessary flexibility, responsiveness, and deformalization that allows the internship to work in the rural context. Furthermore, intermediary organizations

Table 3

Aspects of Internship Contributing to Social Capital Building

Aspect of Building Social Capital	Definition	Sample Quote(s)
Bonding with mentors in host site	Students create social capital in a way that resists distinction between bonding and bridging social capital.	"If I did not have the blessing of them in my life, I don't know, I really don't know if I would have made it on the track that I am today." "I talked to [my host site and her family] about my doubts going into the career field that I want to go into in terms of finding a job. She would tell me about everyone that she knows that [went into my field] that have been super successful.… That was really assuring to me as a young 17-year-old not really sure what I wanted to do. I'm really grateful for that and the opportunity that I had to have an internship there."
Many relationships in community ecotones	Students mentioned the impact of smaller, shorter connections made during the internship, even those lasting only one conversation or a brief passing. For many students, these smaller connections persisted beyond the internship.	"I made connections with the court reporters and the clerks and the officers that work in the court and I got to learn a lot about what they do. And then, I also met one of the attorneys [who] moved up to federal court in West Virginia, so I talk to him a lot, and I could always intern in Charleston with him and watch federal prosecution now." "I can't remember his name, but there's a gentleman that was in the room at the time, and he looked at me and said, 'Sell anything. Sell whatever you can.' Me being a sales-oriented type of person, I took that to heart.... I think sales and along those lines is a very large part of my life at the moment."
Soft skill building as necessary for social capital construction	The process of interacting with multiple connections in the internship gave students practice communicating, which built confidence to reinforce those connections or reach out to make new ones.	"I almost didn't go [to the internship]. I was sitting outside the building, and 15 minutes before I was supposed to meet my host site mentor…, I had no idea, what or where to find them. And I was so nervous. And I just remember slowly getting more comfortable with reaching out to people and talking professionally over email, and I definitely think that it built my confidence up a bunch."

may be better able to afford rural high school students an opportunity to build social capital in a supportive space. For this reason, it might be recommended that rural schools seek intermediaries to serve as mediators between systems and to broker relationships that allow students to access adults (host site mentors and adults connected to the host site) and experiences beyond the formal school environment. These intermediaries are better positioned to facilitate internship experiences that are responsive to participants' needs. Specifically, an intermediary can easily shift to accommodate changes in participants' interests as the internship experience reveals what sparks them and what does not. Further, by existing outside of public school systems with rigid accountability structures, the intermediary has the opportunity to reduce barriers to participation, access, and completion faced by both the student and the host site.

Conceptualizing Further Use of CCCL in Rural Places

Flexible, experiential, place-based learning that leveraged the rural community as a connector to careers was, in this study, the necessary catalyst for participants to build forms of professional and personal confidence. In turn, this experience informed career decisions and the ways in which participants mobilized social capital as actionable steps toward those career decisions. These possibilities were realized through an internship experience designed using the tenets of CCCL and contingent upon the assets of the rural community. Figure 2 conceptualizes the internship experience, including the elements uncovered by this qualitative study that created lasting impact for participants.

In this conceptualization, the ecotone in the learning ecosystem is facilitated by the intermediary outside of the formal, standardized school curriculum. The intermediary creates a flexible, responsive approach that emphasizes access to diverse experiences and relationships for participants. The host site, as representing and further connecting students to place-based assets and other community capitals, provides a community context for the embodied experience of the internship. The overlap of host site, intermediary, and participant creates diversity and an especially catalytic space typical of ecotones, which becomes fertile ground for students to experience many potentials for their future, discover sparks, or align existing sparks with future expectations while building soft skills. The participants in this study demonstrated that the developmental "work" of the internship, alongside the actual tasks the intern performs for the host site, builds social capital in ways that foster community, career, and self-identity, inspiring students to take action committed to those identities.

Figure 2
Diagram of Internship Experience
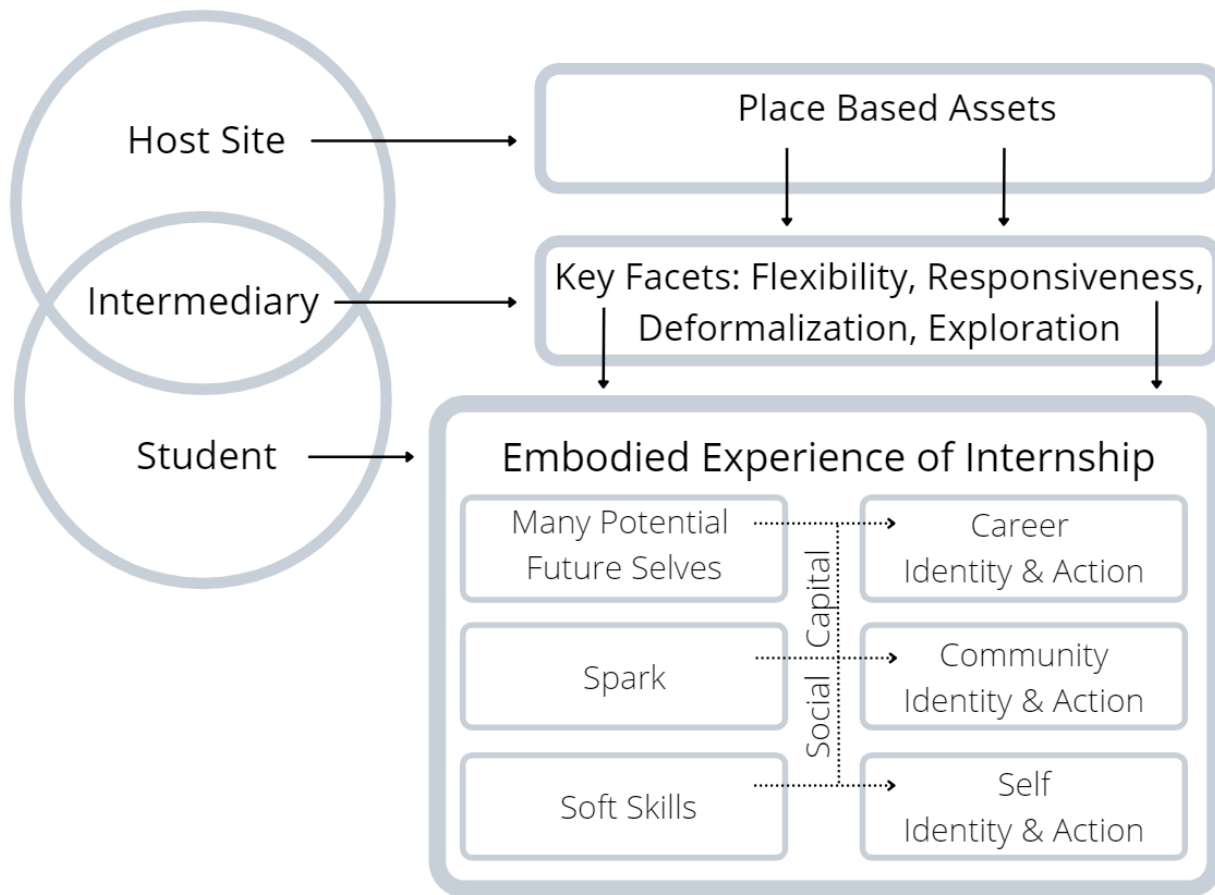
Limitations

Further research is needed to investigate the developmental processes aided by CCCL. For example, this study did not include the perceptions of the businesses and organizations that were the host sites. These perspectives would be useful for understanding more about how CCCL impacts community-level social capital. The findings of this study are also limited by the type and construction of the internship programs for which study participants were selected. In the theoretical model of CCCL, internships represent one of the most immersive, resource-dependent forms of activity, in contrast to a one-time job shadowing or classroom career speaker. Participants who participate in multiple CCCL activities prior to their internship experience may already have completed the necessary exploratory process and therefore may use the internship in different ways than did the participants in this study.

Conclusion

This internship experience was rooted in place, and participants reported this approach mattered emotionally and materially. Rural youth are often transitioning to adulthood in the shadow of a national ideology of upward mobility and rugged individualism that frequently conflicts with their lived experiences in the rural lifeworld. By increasing access to and interaction with place-based assets, students were able to integrate ideas of futures that seemed far-fetched or "placeless" and ground those possibilities in access to immediate, local opportunities. One student, interested in pursuing media studies in college, reflected that before the internship, they believed that jobs in media were not available in their rural area, and thus, a career in media was not economically or practically feasible. This student said:

> I just was really scared of like, failing and not, you know, putting myself in a situation where like, I'm responsible for paying all this money [tuition] for nothing. The whole media world, to me, just seem[ed] so closed off and unreachable.

Through participating in a place-based media internship, this student saw others "doing the same thing I wanted" in their rural place, which helped the student to envision a tangible path forward studying media at the local college.

The social capital connections made possible by internships similar to those that are the focus of this study are imperative to rural youth. These internships allow rural youth to explore possible selves and open occupational possibilities, eliminating some students' fears about the developmental jump from adolescence to the adult world.

For these students, the connection from the internship to a career path is forged with emotional connection via personal relationship to the internship host sites/intermediaries. The internship addresses these fears in a two-fold process: demystification and personal internal development process. As one participant reflected:

> At first when I started my internship, I didn't know that [this field] is what I wanted to do, but I was just doing the internship to see if that was really what I wanted to follow my heart in. It changed me to see how a business is run. I got to grow, and it made me realize that I need to grow up a little bit. The [people at the host site] pushed me to understand why I want to do what I want to do, pushed me to follow my dreams.… I have four individual people that I stay in contact with, just to let them know how I'm doing and what I'm doing. They've given me a lot of advice, just from "Keep it up, you're doing great" to "Let me know when you're out of school."

Our research supports Bauch's (2001) assertion that "community social capital is related to a sense of belonging and to a sense of place ... a rootedness in one's community and the desire to cherish and cultivate one's local community" (p. 212). Over time in the internship experience, the students built trust in their host site mentors and understanding of the ways in which community systems integrate. Rural communities maintain community viability through human capital, or the drive of community members to contribute to the seven key forms of community capital. These internships and similar approaches allow community members to contribute to these capitals as they guide youth through apprenticeship experiences. As McLaughlin et al. (2014) observe, "Youth who feel respected, feel connected to adults, and perceive that their contributions are valued may be more likely to build strong attachments to their families and communities" (p. 456). With increased connection and sense of place, some rural youth may direct their career narratives toward a future that includes life within the community.

References

Allen, L. (2000). *Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Involving English language learners in community-connected learning*. LAB at Brown University. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED445548

Almeida, C., & Steinberg, A. (Eds.). (2001). *Connected learning communities: A toolkit for reinventing high school*. Jobs for the Future, JFF National Faculty, & U.S. Department of Education's New American High Schools Initiative. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED457384

Appalachian Regional Commission. (2022). *State of Ohio Appalachian Regional Commission 2022 annual strategy statement*. https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Ohio-ARC-Strategy-Statement-FY-2022.pdf

Appalachian Regional Commission. (2023). *County economic status and number of distressed areas in Appalachian Ohio, fiscal year 2023*. https://www.arc.gov/county-economic-status-and-distressed-areas-by-state-fy-2023/

Barron, B. (2006). Interest and self-sustained learning as catalysts of development: A learning ecology perspective. *Human Development*, *49*(4), 193–224. https://doi.org/10.1159/000094368

Bauch, P. A. (2001). School-community partnerships in rural schools: Leadership, renewal, and a sense of place. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *76*(2), 205–221. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327930pje7602_9

Beaulieu, L. J., Israel, G. D., & Wimberley, R.C. (2003). Promoting educational achievement: A partnership of families, schools, and communities. In D. L. Brown & L. E. Swanson (Eds.), *Challenges for rural America in the 21st century* (pp. 179–189). Pennsylvania State University Press.

Ben-Eliyahu, A., Rhodes, J. E., & Scales, P. (2014). The interest-driven pursuits of 15 year olds: "Sparks" and their association with caring relationships and developmental outcomes. *Applied Developmental Science*, *18*(2), 76–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2014.894414

Benson, P. L., & Scales, P. C. (2009). The definition and preliminary measurement of thriving in adolescence. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *4*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760802399240

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Brown, B. L. (1999). *Self-efficacy beliefs and career development* (ERIC Digest No. 205). ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED429187

Building Bridges to Careers. (n.d.-a). *About us*. Retrieved September 13, 2023, from https://www.bb2careers.org/about-us

Building Bridges to Careers. (n.d.-b). *Student career exploration: Internships*. Retrieved April 17, 2023, from https://bb2careers.org/internships

Busette, C. M., Farrow-Chestnut, T., Reeves, R. V., Frimpong, K., & Sun, H. (2020). *How we rise: How social networks in Charlotte impact economic mobility*. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/essay/how-we-rise-how-social-networks-in-charlotte-impact-economic-mobility/

Byun, S.-y., Meece, J. L., Irvin, M. J., & Hutchins, B. C. (2012). The role of social capital in educational aspirations of rural youth. *Rural Sociology*, *77*(3), 355–379. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2012.00086.x

Carr, P. J., & Kefalas, M. K. (2009). *Hollowing out the middle: The rural brain drain and what it means for America*. Beacon Press.

Cartun, A., Penuel, W. R., & West-Puckett, S. (2017). Blurring the boundaries between school and community: Implementing connected learning principles in English classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *61*(2), 183–190. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.668

Charania, M., & Fisher, J. F. (2020). *The missing metrics: Emerging practices for measuring students' relationships and networks*. Christensen Institute. https://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/THE-MISSING-METRICS.pdf

Chen, J. A., & Stoddard, J. D. (2020). A virtual internship to prepare high school students for civic and political action. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *68*(6), 3449–3470. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09847-5

Christensen, C. A. (2015). Community-engaged teaching: A project-based model. *Teaching Artist Journal*, *13*(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/15411796.2014.966024

Corbett, M. (2020). *Learning to leave: The irony of schooling in a coastal community*. West Virginia University Press.

Crosnoe, R. (2004). Social capital and the interplay of families and schools. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *66*(2), 267–280. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2004.00019.x

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (2nd ed.). Westview Press.

Fernandez-Repollet, E., Locatis, C., De Jesus-Monge, W. E., Maisiak, R., & Liu, W.-L. (2018). Effects of summer internship and follow-up distance mentoring programs on middle and high school student perceptions and

interest in health careers. *BMC Medical Education*, *18*, Article 84. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1205-3

Flora, C. B., & Flora, J. L. (2003). Social capital. In D. L. Brown and L. E. Swanson (Eds.), *Challenges for rural America in the 21st century* (pp. 214–227). Pennsylvania State University Press.

Flora, C. B., Flora, J. L., & Gasteyer, S. P. (2016). *Rural communities: Legacy and change*. NY: Routledge.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (50th anniversary ed.). Bloomsbury Academic. (Original work published 1970)

Garcilazo, J. E. (2021). Megatrends and implications for rural development policy. In A. Dumont & D. P. Davis (Eds.), *Investing in rural prosperity* (pp. 15-27). Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Getting Smart, eduInnovation, & Teton Science Schools. (2017). *What is place-based education and why does it matter?* https://www.gettingsmart.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/What-is-Place-Based-Education-and-Why-Does-it-Matter-3.pdf

Giovannitti, J. (2021). Core intermediaries and collaborations: Increasing scale, adaptability, and access to resources in rural communities. In A. Dumont & D. P. Davis (Eds.), *Investing in rural prosperity* (pp. 525–534). Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Gristy, C. (2014). Researching within and for a rural community: Research journey. In S. White and M. Corbett (Eds.), *Doing educational research in rural settings: Methodological issues, international perspectives and practical solutions* (pp. 104–118). Routledge.

Gómez, E., & Brostoff, M. (2018). Helping high school students explore nursing careers in a summer internship program. *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, *34*(3), 133–141. https://doi.org/10.1097/NND.0000000000000446

Hecht, M., & Crowley, K. (2019). Unpacking the learning ecosystems framework: Lessons from the adaptive management of biological ecosystems. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *29*(2), 264–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2019.1693381

Heilman, R. L. (2021, June 14). Commentary: The semantic antics of "community." *The Daily Yonder*. https://dailyyonder.com/commentary-the-semantic-antics-of-community/2021/06/14/

Howley, C. (2006). Purpose and place: Schooling and Appalachian residence. *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, *12*(1), 58–78.

Israel, G. D., & Beaulieu, L. J. (2004). Investing in communities: Social capital's role in keeping youth in school. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, *34*(2), 35–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330409490111

Ito, M., Arum, R., Conley, D., Gutiérrez, K., Kirshner, B., Livingstone, S., Michalchik, V., Penuel, W., Peppler, K., Pinkard, N., Rhodes, J., Tekinbaş, K. S., Schor, J., Sefton-Green, J., & Watkins, S. C. (2020). *The Connected Learning Research Network: Reflections on a decade of engaged scholarship*. Connected Learning Alliance. https://clalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CLRN_Report.pdf

Kana, L. A., Noronha, C., Diamond, S., Pun, M., Broderick, M., Finks, J., & Sandhu, G. (2020). Experiential learning opportunities enhance engagement in pipeline program: A qualitative study of the doctors of tomorrow summer internship program. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, *112*(1), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnma.2019.11.006

Kretzmann, J. P., McKnight, J., Dobrowolski, S., & Puntenney, D. (2005). *Discovering community power: A guide to mobilizing local assets and your organization's capacity*. Asset-Based Community Development Institute, School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University. https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/publications/publications-by-topic/Documents/kelloggabcd.pdf

Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2019). Social cognitive career theory at 25: Empirical status of the interest, choice, and performance models. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *115*, Article 103316. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.06.004

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45(*1), 79–122. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, *41*(9), 954–959. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Mather, M. A. (2000). Where community and curriculum come together. *Tech & Learning*, *20*(10), 60–61, 63–66.

McLaughlin, J. E., Bush, A. A., Friedman, A. D., & Lai, S. K. (2020). Immersive research experiences for high school students aimed at promoting diversity and visibility in pharmacy education. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, *84*(3), 297–301. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7589

McLean, N. A., Fraser, M., Primus, N. A., & Joseph, M. A. (2018). Introducing students of color to health sciences research: An evaluation of the health disparities summer internship program. *Journal of Community Health*, *43*(5), 1002–1010. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-018-0505-1

McRae, N., & Johnston, N. (2016) The development of a proposed global work-integrated learning framework. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative*

Education, *17*(4), 337–348. https://www.ijwil.org/files/APJCE_17_4_337_348.pdf

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis* (4th ed.). Sage.

Montessori, M. (2007). *From childhood to adolescence*. Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. (Original work published 1948)

Mourshed, M., Farrell, D., & Barton, D. (2012). *Education to employment: Designing a system that works*. McKinsey Center for Government. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/education-to-employment-designing-a-system-that-works#/

Ohio Department of Education. (2015, January). *Typology of Ohio school districts*. Retrieved April 17, 2023, from https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Typology-of-Ohio-School-Districts

Papadimitriou, M. (2014). High school students' perceptions of their internship experiences and the related impact on career choices and changes. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, *7*(1), Article 8. https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ojwed/vol7/iss1/8

Parcel, T. L., & Dufur, M. J. (2001). Capital at home and at school: Effects on child social adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*(1), 32–47. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00032.x

Penuel, W. R., Fishman, B. J., Cheng, B. H., & Sabelli, N. (2011). Organizing research and development at the intersection of learning, implementation, and design. *Educational Researcher*, *40*(7), 331–337. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X11421826

Petrin, R. A., Schafft, K. A., & Meece, J. L. (2014). Educational sorting and residential aspirations among rural high school students: What are the contributions of schools and educators to the rural brain drain? *American Educational Research Journal*, *51*(2), 294–326. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214527493

Putnam, R. P. (2015). *Our kids*: *The American dream in crisis.* Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, R. D. (2020). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* (20th anniversary ed.). Simon & Schuster. (Original work published 2000)

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. Basic Books.

Ricket, A. L. (2022). *Valuing complexity in education-community partnerships: SROI as measurement framework for learning ecosystems* [Doctoral dissertation, Ohio University]. OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center. http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=ohiou1657547038349744

Ricket, A., Bentley, E., & Yahn, J. (2021). *Community and career connected learning: The impact of high school internships in rural Appalachian Ohio*. Building Bridges to Careers. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51e96d5ee4b00dfa731a01d5/t/623b399058c0f3010abff689/1648048534244/Internship%2BImpact%2BReport_2022-v3-compressed.pdf

Ricket, A. L., Knutsen, F. B., Jolley, G. J., & Davis, S. C. (2022). Appalachian social entrepreneurship ecosystem: A framework for rural development. *Community Development*, *54*(3), 315–336. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2022.2155676

Ricket, A. L., & Werry, T. (2020). *Community and career connected learning* [Venn diagram]. Building Bridges to Careers. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7b6222058fdd4c38bb5019652a3fee40

Roth, W.-M., van Eijck, M., Hsu, P.-L., Marshall, A., & Mazumder, A. (2009). What high school students learn during internships in biology laboratories. *American Biology Teacher*, *71*(8), 492–496. https://doi.org/10.2307/20565362

Rural Action. (n.d.-a). *About us*. Retrieved April 17, 2023, from https://ruralaction.org/get-to-know-us/about-us/

Rural Action. (n.d.-b). *Paid internships for high school students.* Retrieved Month DD, YYYY, from https://ruralaction.org/our-work/environmental-education/paid-internships-for-high-school-students/

Russell, J. L., Knutson, K., & Crowley, K. (2013). Informal learning organizations as part of an educational ecology: Lessons from collaboration across the formal-informal divide. *Journal of Educational Change*, *14*(3), 259–281. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-012-9203-4

Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2011). Adolescent thriving: The role of sparks, relationships, and empowerment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*(3), 263–277. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9578-6

Sharp, E. H., Seaman, J., Tucker, C. J., Van Gundy, K. T., & Rebellon, C. J. (2020). Adolescents' future aspirations and expectations in the context of a shifting rural economy. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *49*(2), 534–548. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01152-6

Sherman, J., & Sage, R. (2011). Sending off all your good treasurers: Rural schools brain-drain, and community survival in the wake of economic collapse. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *26(*11). https://doi.org/10.18113/P8JRRE2611

Siskar, J., & Theobald, P. (2008). The meaning of place and community in contemporary educational discourse.

Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education, *1*(2), 58–78. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1134695

Sowl, S., Smith, R. A., & Brown, M. G. (2022). Rural college graduates: Who comes home? *Rural Sociology, 87*(1), 303–329. https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12416

Tieken, M. C. (2014). *Why rural schools matter*. University of North Carolina Press.

Theobald, P. (1997). *Teaching the commons: Place, pride, and the renewal of community*. Routledge.

Theobald, P. (2009). *Education now: How rethinking America's past can change its future*. Paradigm.

Waterman, A. S. (1982). Identity development from adolescence to adulthood: An extension of theory and a review of research. *Developmental Psychology*, *18*(3), 341–358. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.18.3.341

Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies.* Free Press.

Williams, D. R., & Brown, J. D. (2010). Living soil and composting: Life's lessons in the Learning Gardens. *Clearing Magazine*, *2010*(Compendium Issue), 40–42. https://clearingmagazine.org/magazine/2010-2

Wolfe, A. W., Black, L. W., & Welser, H. T. (2020). Sense of community and migration intentions among rural young professionals. *Rural Sociology*, *85*(1), 235–257. https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12289

Yahn, J., & Ricket, A. (2023). The rural lifeworld as a pathway to career identity: Lessons from a non-school internship study. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/25151274231189453

Yahn, J., Ricket, A., & Werry, T. (2023). Bridging schools, communities, and universities: Community and career connected learning. In S. L. Hartman & R. Klein (Eds.), *The middle of somewhere: Rural education partnerships and innovation* (pp. 13–29). Harvard University Press.

Yates, M., & Youniss, J. (1996). Community service and political-moral identity in adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *6*(3), 271–284.

Zuckerman, S. J. (2019). Making sense of place: A case study of sensemaking in a rural school-community partnership. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *35*(6), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.26209/jrre3506