

Collaborative Conversation-Based Instruction and Critical Content for World Language  
Classrooms: A Tri-Case Study on Teacher Agency

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**Dedication**

To my kids, Anelise and Adrian.

May you follow your dreams and find the support and time to explore them fully.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my husband, Andrew Detwiler. He has shown absolute and unwavering support throughout this doctoral process. He has been my cheerleader, my sounding board, my pressure when needed, and my critical friend. He often said to me, “You know you’re growing if you’re uncomfortable.” He also willingly held down the family fort while I galivanted and enjoyed Knoxville living a few nights a week for three years.

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preach the importance of self-care, only to be met by skeptical eyes of stressed students. But I will say that this year I have come to a fuller understanding of its importance. This year, I began running. I now fold 'runner' into the broader definition of my personal identity. I never thought this would become a part of me, but I have found running to bring me peace, inspiration, motivation, and a sense of accomplishment amidst the stress of work. Also, over the course of this year, I have met with a therapist for the first time ever. Professional counseling has helped me to maintain a balanced perspective on life, grant myself some grace, and celebrate my wins.

### **Abstract**

This multi-case study explores world language (WL) teachers' perceptions of collaborative conversation-based instruction (CCBI) (Mellom et al., 2019), initially designed for English language learners, as an effective pedagogy to support WL student dispositions when engaging with cultural, critical, and socially relevant topics. The ACTFL World-Readiness Standards communicate that WL education must develop student dispositions that are both collaborative and reflect cultural competence to engage effectively in society. As ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity increases in classrooms across the country, so does the need for curricular approaches that develop and affirm collaborative dispositions. While standards hold educators accountable for end-goals, they do not provide specific roadmaps for student interactions and lesson plans. CCBI can assist WL teachers in developing students' dispositions that support civil engagement, especially during critical discourse.

This study utilized Farrell's framework for reflective practice (2015) and multiple qualitative methods to document three Spanish teachers' experiences as they learned to mobilize CCBI pedagogy through an intensive professional development experience. Interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2022) assisted in identifying themes to describe each teacher's (1) philosophies and approaches regarding student interaction and engagement with cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues and (2) their perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms. Drawing from the case narratives, teacher agency was explored through an ecological lens (Emirbayer & Mische, 1995; Priestley et al., 2015) to understand (3) how teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms.

Findings illustrate how complex personal and professional histories impact teachers' instructional priorities. Although teachers found CCBI to be an imaginative and critical intervention (Emirbayer & Mische, 1995), their agentive moves in implementing the pedagogy in-full were compromised by feelings of overwhelm, tensions around TL use, and external administrative expectations. Critical reflective practice, communities of practice, and interactive professional development can help teachers explore their identities, set goals, and engage with theory to enhance their classroom practices. This research contributes to a limited body of work concerning critical reflective practice and teacher agency in WL education and introduces CCBI as a promising pedagogy to support collaborative student dispositions for WL education.

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### **List of Acronyms**

AAPPL: ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages

ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

CCBI: Collaborative Conversation-Based Instruction

CLASE: Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education

CLP: Critical Language Pedagogy

CLT: Critical Language Teaching

CritCBI: Critical Content-Based Instruction

IC-JPA: Instructional Conversation-Joint Productive Activity

IB: International Baccalaureate

JPA: Joint Productive Activity

LTA: Language Teacher Agency

MERIT: The Center for Multilingual-learner Education, Research, and Innovative Teaching

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

TESOL: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

TL: Target Language

TSLT: Task-Supported Language Teaching

W-RSLL: World Readiness Standards for Language Learning

WL: World Language

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

*Before, there was a lot of doing exercises in the book. And I want to embrace more the idea of communication, especially between the students. Nowadays, some of them come with fears, somebody might have a gun. Yeah, to that level! And what makes the whole difference is how much they get to know each other, from day one when they start their ninth grade. It's so crucial. And I think I have a really, really good opportunity through language, even if it's another language, to have them get to know each other. In many classes they come, and they are asked to sit and stay quiet and do their assignment. And they don't have much of an opportunity for what they want, and they're so thirsty to get to know each other because they want to be accepted. They want to be liked.*

*~Sofia  
Teacher participant  
Initial interview*

This critical interpretivist case study explores world language (WL) teachers' experiences integrating Collaborative Conversation Based Instruction (CCBI) (Mellom et al., 2019) as a tool to support student interaction, communicative competence, and cultural conversations including critical multicultural perspectives (Kubota, 2004) in their WL classrooms. For the purpose of this study, WL classrooms in the US are defined as classes where students are learning a non-English language as subject matter within schools where the primary academic language is English and the first language (L1) or dominant language of a majority of the students is most often English. Teachers teaching WLs in the US are guided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (NSFLEP, 2015). These standards incorporate language to reflect the common core state standards, college and career readiness, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The World Readiness Standards' five Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) "stress the application of learning a language beyond the instructional setting. The goal is to prepare learners to apply the skills and understandings measured by the standards, to bring a global competence to their future careers and experiences" (ACTFL, 2015). This mission statement points to the role that WL education must play in developing student dispositions that are both collaborative and reflect

cultural competence so that they can engage effectively in society. It is with these standards in mind that CCBI has been chosen as a professional development opportunity for WL teachers that might offer new insights around integrating conversational collaboration in the WL classroom.

As ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity increases in secondary classrooms across the country, so does the need for curricular approaches that develop and affirm collaborative dispositions. While standards hold teachers and academic departments accountable for end-goals, they do not provide specific roadmaps for daily lessons, student interactions, and thoughtfully designed curricular plans that effectively put into play the five Cs. The opening vignette demonstrates a language teacher's belief in the unique potential that the language classroom offers in providing a safe space for student interaction. Sofia, one of the three teacher participants in this study, goes on to state that developing communicative competence and empathy is now more important than ever in our post-pandemic, technology-obsessed world. CCBI pedagogy can serve as a tool for WL teachers in developing students' dispositions that support civil engagement with each other as a whole, especially during critical discourse.

## **The Context**

Historically, WL education in the US prioritized rote grammatical accuracy, heavily focusing on language forms and vocabulary memorization (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). However, in the 1980s, calls for centering content through cultural integration and communicative proficiency were further propelled by the initial drafting of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* in 1996 (Asay et al., 2019). These standards, and the subsequent 2015 redrafting titled the *World Readiness Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, are organized into five Cs: communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. Explicit incorporation of culture as central to WL learning is evidenced by how the document portrays the first two Cs, communication and culture, as “inextricably linked” in WL instruction, whereas the remaining three (connections, comparisons, and communities) serve supporting roles (NSFLEP, 2015, p. 140). Culture is organized into three aspects: products, practices, and perspectives. Despite strong teacher support for centralizing “Culture” in theory, difficulties in incorporating cultural content in practice persist (Kearney, 2019). Teachers continue to feel pressure to develop students' linguistic proficiency, i.e. grammatical mastery and vocabulary

memorization (Asay et al., 2019; Baggett, 2018) at the expense of content-focused lessons and cultural negotiations.

In general, WL teachers tend to be more comfortable teaching language over content (Cammarata, 2009) given that they have not necessarily been trained in other academic content areas outside of their target language specialization (i.e., Spanish, French, German, Mandarin, etc.). ‘Content’, as defined by the World Readiness Standards, includes culture (everyday life, social institutions, contemporary and historical issues, literature and attitudes and beliefs, etc.) and connections (i.e. academic interdisciplinarity including math, science, social studies, and other topics relative to broader school curriculum and individual student interests) (NSFLEP, 2015). Furthermore, world language teachers have historically relied heavily on textbooks, which have traditionally emphasized grammar and vocabulary skills (Cahnmann-Taylor & Coda, 2019). This lessens the likelihood that students have opportunities to engage in critical thinking about local and global current events. Even though the World Readiness Standards have brought more attention to the importance of reflecting on and comparing one’s own language and culture to others’, teachers are more likely to opt for “sanitized topics” that support proficiency over critical issues (Coda, 2018, p.75). This could be due, in part, to the Standards not explicitly stating social justice, equity and discrimination (Austin, 2016; Hines-Gaither & Accilien, 2022) as important topics when discussing language, identity, society, and culture.

Setting curricular context and instructional practice aside, the current demographics for WL teaching and learning at the secondary level in the US also calls for developing teacher and student dispositions that support collaborative interaction and critical multicultural perspectives. In the fall of 2022, US public school enrollment consisted of 25.4 million (44%) White students, 14.4 million (29%) Hispanic students, 7.4 million (15%) Black students, and 2.7 million (5%) Asian students, with over 3 million (6%+) identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native, pacific islander, or of two or more races (NCES, 2024). While the White student population is projected to steadily decline, the other groups are likely to increase if not hover around the same percentages (NCES, 2024). Meanwhile, during the 2020-2021 school year, 80% of all public school teachers identified as White (NCES, 2023). Therefore, it is uncommon for many students who identify as other-than-white to have the opportunity to engage with teachers of similar background to their own. While recruitment and retention of a diverse teaching body continues to

be essential, for now, the White teacher is tasked with effectively facilitating meaningful instruction for an increasingly diverse student body (Schwartz, 2023).

Even though language teachers are experts with qualifications in their respective target language(s) (TL) and culture(s), it is unrealistic to expect any WL teacher to be exhaustively well-versed in all cultural and critical aspects of the language communities under study, not to mention their own, if different. Instead, it is our teacher dispositions, which are informed by our teaching philosophies, our linguistic and cultural expertise, and our awareness of the sociocultural context of our schools and students that can make a difference (Stooksberry et al., 2009; Warren, 2018). Increased awareness of how our dispositions impact our practice can support teaching critical multicultural perspectives in our classrooms. WL teachers are often alone or are one of few within schools and districts and have little opportunity to collaborate with and receive feedback from fellow WL experts on teaching content and practices (Glynn & Wassell, 2018; Kleinsasser, 1993). This perpetuates reliance on “sanitized” resources such as textbooks and denies us important opportunities for dialogic collaboration and reflection (Coda, 2018, p.75).

Despite persistent problems surrounding equitable funding and access to WL education for minoritized<sup>1</sup> students, consecutive decades-worth of research has demonstrated that African American students studying WLs have positive attitudes towards WL education. Nonetheless, they are consistently disillusioned by negative classroom experiences that include unfavorable (racist) teacher and classmate attitudes and perceptions, low expectations, and unappealing and irrelevant lessons and classroom materials that have little relation to their current place, identities, or interests (see Anya, 2020). Given the discrepancy between student body and teacher demographics, teachers’ feelings of unpreparedness around content teaching, and student dissatisfaction, the need to support the development of culturally affirming curriculum and facilitate student collaboration is clear.

I believe it is our duty, particularly as WL educators, to regularly engage in critical self-reflection to continue to interrogate our biases, question and revise our teaching approaches, and strengthen our classroom dispositions before and as we ask our students to do the same. It is

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<sup>1</sup> This term is used in lieu of *minority students* or *students of color* so as to indicate minority status as a social construct and consequence of imposed political and social structures (Glynn & Wassell, 2018).

through teachers' critical reflective practice and teacher agency that we will be able to create spaces that support a more diverse array of student backgrounds, identities, and interests. It is difficult to engage in critical reflection without dialoging with others in safe spaces (Farrell, 2015). I also view it as the responsibility of school administrators, district officials, and the higher-ed research community to prioritize funding, time, and access to scholarship so that WL language teachers can engage with each other and other experts within and across content areas. Doing this ensures that we do not stay stranded on our "isolated islands" but rather benefit from constructive conversations within the field of language (teacher) education (Kleinsasser, 1993, p. 6).

### **The Problem and Supportive Practices**

At the heart of this dissertation is my orientation as a teacher educator and my desire to support WL teachers in offering interactive, engaging, socially relevant, and content-rich language-learning environments for their students. For decades, the US has been plagued by significant WL teacher shortages (Acheson et al., 2016; Burke & Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2022; Moser et al., 2019), only to be exacerbated by teachers' increased emotional labor and burnout as a consequence of the global pandemic (Chang et al., 2022). This trend further compounds issues of teacher representation and student access to relevant language learning discussed in the previous section. Research has demonstrated that providing additional support for teachers can combat burnout and attrition. This support includes, but is not limited to, establishing and interacting with learning communities (Neubauer & Wesely, 2023), providing specialized learning opportunities (Moser & Wei, 2023), and helping teachers to feel effective in their work (Acheson et al., 2016). In organizing this study, I focused on three supportive practices to help WL teachers maintain motivation to create engaging and socially relevant spaces for all students: (1) collaborative professional development, (2) critical content-based instruction, and (3) critical reflective practice.

#### ***1. Collaborative Professional Development***

This study investigated WL teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of Collaborative Conversation-Based Instruction (CCBI) for the world language classroom. CCBI is a classroom pedagogy that integrates collaboration and conversation together and anchors this

interaction around solving a particular problem and/or producing a physical product (Mellom et al., 2019). CCBI aims to engage learners in productive conversations, focusing on skills and strategies that support collaborative learner dispositions. With collaborative conversations initially facilitated by the teacher, students are eventually released into small groups to trouble carefully designed tasks or problems independently as a group with the teacher facilitating only as needed. These small group interactions are supported by pre-established routines such as co-written classroom norms to encourage respectful and collaborative behavior and individual goal setting and reflective practice to encourage each student to improve personal engagement, collaboration, and (language) performance. These include, but are not limited to, listening to and building off of others' comments, sharing one's own ideas, allowing others to complete their thoughts, and encouraging others to talk. Collaborative conversations are further supported by providing sentence frames to support language (I agree/disagree with you because..., your strategy reminds me of..., what would happen if, etc.), which encourage active listening, complex thinking, and idea sharing. These sentence frames, in turn, support language acquisition. CCBI has been inspired by and implemented in mainstream classrooms to support the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) but has been shown to benefit all students (Mellom et al., 2019). To date, CCBI has received limited attention in world language (WL) classrooms despite shared goals of effective communicative interaction and language acquisition.

For this study, I have identified CCBI as an effective collaborative professional development opportunity for WL teachers. Three participating Spanish teachers and I attended the four-day Instructional Conversation Foundational Institute hosted by the University of Georgia's Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education (CLASE) (now known as The Center for Multilingual-learner Education, Research, and Innovative Teaching (MERIT)) in July 2024. During this institute, the participating teachers were trained in CCBI pedagogy. As a WL cohort attending the institute, we reflected daily, both formally and informally, as to how we might mobilize CCBI in our own world language classrooms. Post-institute, the teachers were encouraged to design and implement tasks that centered cultural, critical or socially relevant topics utilizing CCBI's pedagogical approaches in each of their own classrooms. The teachers and researcher reflected on the training and subsequent implementations through journaling, individual interviews, and one final focus group.

Congruent with previous research, Neubauer and Wesely (2023) found that active and authentic learning experiences and a sense of community were critical to the success of professional development events for WL teachers. I intentionally selected CCBI as a professional development experience not only because of the pedagogical foundation, the goals it espouses, and the critical self-reflection that it encourages between students in the classroom but also between teachers as they engage with other teacher participants using CCBI strategies during the intensive summer institute trainings. The summer institute provides ‘active, authentic learning’ (Neubauer & Wesely, 2023, p. 2) because the curriculum teaches through doing. In other words, teacher participants engage in conversations about CCBI pedagogical topics through tasks designed using said pedagogy. Regarding a sense of community, it was important to have multiple WL teachers at the institute to establish the opportunity for teachers to be able to collaborate with “like minded language teachers” (Neubauer and Wesely, 2023). In this way, we were able to establish a micro-community of practice consisting of WL teachers within the larger community of practice of CCBI trainees. In addition to this study’s three secondary Spanish teacher participants, 41 non-participating teachers attended the July 2024 face-to-face institute. This non-participant group included 25 classroom teachers (PreK-12, ELA, math, science, social studies), three instructional coaches, nine ESOL teachers, three SPED teachers, and one paraprofessional. Their presence enhanced our ability to dialogue and brainstorm across content areas and with practitioners in different teaching contexts who were also working towards similar goals of student engagement, linguistic development, and equitable interaction and collaboration.

## **2. *Critical Content-Based Instruction***

While the primary goal of this research was to understand teachers’ experiences with CCBI as it is applied in WL classroom settings, a secondary and supporting goal was to promote critical content-based instruction (this approach is also known as CCBI and so for this dissertation will be referenced as CritCBI). CritCBI has a foundation in Content Based Instruction (CBI) which centers subject matter over grammatical points. Using content that is more cognitively challenging and interesting, and often lacking from structure-focused language classrooms, increases student engagement and students’ exposure to the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). By adding the *Critical* to CBI, or CritCBI, students engage in content and language learning while implementing critical analysis and critical literacy skills.

This approach explicitly provides opportunities for conversations around social justice topics and promotes critical thinking and agency amongst students (Glynn & Spenader, 2020; Sato et al., 2017) by developing students' *criticality* (Kubota & Miller, 2017), or the skills, knowledge and dispositions that are necessary to engage in critical analysis (Sato et al., 2017). The personal and group-oriented goal setting and reflective practices that CCBI promotes, coupled with cultural, critical, and socially relevant topics designed for language classrooms, can assist teachers in designing curriculum that is commensurate with a CritCBI approach and in line with the World Readiness Standards. In order to provide a clearer focus for participating teachers in this study, teachers were asked to develop CCBI tasks that centered cultural, critical, or socially relevant topics thus approximating CritCBI. These topics could come from established curriculum at their schools that they were interested in developing further, or a new topic they were interested in implementing during the 2024-2025 school year.

### ***3. Critical Reflective Practice***

Reflective practice is embedded in national teacher certification standards across all content areas (NBPTS, n.d.). Additionally, praxis, or committed reflection and action for transformation, is considered essential to critical language studies (Freire, 1970/2000; Kubota & Miller, 2017; Kubota, 2023). Consequently, there is an abundance of scholarship and ongoing dialogue on critical reflective practice in teacher development in TESOL (Farrell, 2016), but a dearth of said scholarship in WL teaching and learning. This study contributes to the dialogue around critical reflective practice in the WL classroom as teachers explore the potential that CCBI might offer in terms of student interaction and cultural conversations. This exploration of teachers' perspectives is underpinned by a genealogy of theories supporting experience and reflective practice, beginning with John Dewey.

Dewey's notion of experience and reflection (1916/1944, 1933, 1938/2015) has been taken up by other scholars, such as Thomas Farrell whose work in language teacher reflective practice (2003, 2004, 2015, 2016, 2022) will be mobilized here. The scholars I reference throughout this study view critical reflective practice as an aid to developing 'moral vision and critical pedagogies' (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). Reflective practice can be important for teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Akbari, 2008) and can help teachers to make conscious rather than conditioned decisions that directly reflect their teaching philosophies and beliefs (Larsen-

Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Critical reflection is essential for promoting transformative teaching and learning. It can enable teachers to “adapt, innovate, and survive in the face of political, economic, and other realities...in order to enhance language learning experiences for diverse language learners, users, and persons in their classrooms” (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016, p. 126).

In sum, collaborative professional development, critical content-based instruction, and critical reflective practice are ways we can respond to the call for critical research in applied linguistics that might bring about “social progress in a concrete way” (Kubota, 2023, p. 5). The present research was designed to offer teachers the time and space to critically reflect on one’s own teaching philosophies and practices (i.e., teacher dispositions) and to consider critical and socially relevant topics for the WL classroom through collaborative conversations. This work is intended to demonstrate the importance of centering teacher practitioners as co-collaborators in research given their positions as mobilizers of effective pedagogy. By critically reflecting on our self-concepts as language educators, we will better understand how our pedagogical choices position us and our students as individuals, as emerging multilingual interlocutors, as community members, and as agents for change.

### **Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

This research examines WL teachers’ perceptions of the potential that CCBI pedagogy has to support (critical) content-based instruction, student interaction, and collaborative dispositions in WL classrooms. The following questions guided this research study.

1. How do world language teachers describe their own teaching philosophies and approaches regarding (a) student interaction and (b) engagement with cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues?
2. What are world language teachers’ perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms?
3. How do participating teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms?

The final culminating product is a multiple single-case and cross-case analysis of three WL (Spanish) teachers’ perceptions of how CCBI might support student interaction in the WL

classroom, as well as offer foundational support for cultural, critical, or socially relevant conversations. In answering these questions, I engaged as a participant researcher observing, collaborating with, and learning alongside three Spanish teachers who participated in the University of Georgia's CLASE/MERIT Summer 2024 Instructional Conversation Foundational Institute, which trained teachers in CCBI pedagogy. During the course of the institute and subsequent fall semester, I collected the teachers' reflections on and implementations of CCBI systems and task(s) through semi-structured interviews, field observations, field notes, reflective journaling, and a final focus group. Theory on ecological teacher agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2015) and critical reflective practice (Farrell, 2015), and critical content-based instruction (i.e., Crookes & Ziegler, 2021; Glynn & Spenader, 2020; Sato et al., 2017) underpinned this case study analysis. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008) was used to determine salient themes in answering the research questions.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Collaborative Conversation-Based Instruction (CCBI)*: A pedagogical model that integrates collaboration and conversation through small-group teacher-facilitated tasks resulting in an end product. This model utilizes small-group collaboration to support purposeful conversations, language and literacy development, challenging and complex activities, and contextualization for meaning (Mellom et al., 2019). These small group collaborations have two iterations:

*Instructional Conversation-Joint Productive Activity (IC-JPA)*: Teacher serves as facilitator for a small group, providing scaffolding to enhance student engagement with the task and final product (Mellom et al., 2019, p. 132).

*Independent Joint Productive Activity JPA*: Students work collaboratively and scaffold each other with support from CCBI methods to accomplish the task and provide an end product (Mellom et al., 2019, p. 132). The teacher circulates and facilitates across groups as needed.

*Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Critical language pedagogy (CLP), and Critical Content Based Instruction (CritCBI)*: This study recognizes the similarities between Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP), and Critical Content Based Instruction (from here forward referenced as CritCBI so as not to be confused with Collaborative

Conversation Based Instruction) and uses them interchangeably. Broadly speaking CRP proposes to accomplish three things: support student academic achievement, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence (including a valuation of one's own), and develop students' understanding of and ability to critique the social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Similarly, but with a specific focus on language, both CLP (Crookes & Zielger, 2021) and CritCBI (Glynn & Spenader, 2020; Sato et al., 2017) prioritize issues, topics, and themes in curriculum and lesson design that draw on students' interests and that promote: social action, negotiation of personal identities, and development of L2 learners' critical consciousness in conjunction with L2 proficiency. CritCBI has three integrated curricular goals: language, content, and critical perspectives. CritCBI assists students in sharpening or broadening their ability to engage with language and content critically and develop *criticality*, or skills, knowledge and dispositions to engage in critical analysis. CritCBI relies heavily on classroom collaborations between students and teachers and views cultivating criticality as core to the language and culture curriculum at all levels (Sato et al., 2017).

*Critical reflective practice:* In simple terms, reflective practice is when we consider why we do what we do. It differs from contemplation, or general mindfulness of the present, in that reflective practice is a systematic inquiry or evidence-based process (Farrell, 2022) intended to invoke revisions to improve future actions. In line with my interpretivist positionality that relies on dialogic inquiry, Jay and Johnson (2002) view collaboration and dialogue as necessary for reflective practice. They state, "Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others" (p. 75). For me, critical reflective practice is a systematic review of one's practice alone and in conversation with others to understand why we do what we do, to align our practice with our personal beliefs and theories of best practice, and to actively strive for improved practice.

*Community of practice:* A community of practice consists of a group of people who are committed to a collective mission to learn or practice something specific (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This study adopts Richards' (2010) definition of language teaching as a community of practice, which capitalizes on teacher collaboration to further understand and transform teaching

and learning within our collective language classrooms. A community of practice is defined by two primary characteristics: (1) It involves a group of people who have common interests and who relate and interact to achieve shared goals, and (2) It focuses on exploring and resolving issues related to the workplace practices (districts, schools, classrooms) that members of the community take part in (Richards, 2010, p. 117).

Culture: I view culture to be discursive, performative, shared, and continually in flux. Culture (values, traditions, social and political relationships, worldview, etc.) is created and shared by a group of people bound by a combination of factors (history, geography, language, class, religion, etc.) (Nieto, 1996). If culture is created by a group of people, this must involve negotiation, and so culture is inextricably linked to language and discourse. Habits, beliefs, celebrations, institutions, and monuments might all be considered part of a cultural repertoire, but ultimately for them to be considered ‘cultural’, we must ascribe meaning to them, and meaning is ascribed through language (Kramsch, 2013) and discourse. “A discourse is composed of ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings and at specific times, so as to display or to recognize a particular social identity” (Gee, et al., 1996, p. 10). Likewise, Sewell (1992, 2004), whose poststructuralist theory of structure and agency contributes to this research's theoretical lens, views culture as a performative dimension of social life. It is a system of symbols with a “thin coherence that is continually put at risk in practice and therefore subject to transformation” (p. 88).

Socially relevant: Socially relevant issues are topics of interest to 6-12th graders and applicable to their social lives as young teens and young adults. Crookes and Ziegler (2021) suggest that students might be consulted on what they feel are important issues that are either value-laden or particular to their local context requiring action. These topics might include bullying, acceptable AI use, slang, social media, social relationships, fashion as identity expression, etc.

Teacher dispositions: For the purpose of this study, I will reference Stooksberry, Schussler, and Bercaw’s (2009) definition of teacher dispositions which “entail the *inclinations* of a person to behave in particular ways, the *context* of a situation, and a person’s *awareness* of his or her inclinations and what the context requires for desired outcomes to be reached” (p. 722, italics true to original text). The authors refer to one’s disposition as an internal filter, rooted in prior experiences, beliefs, culture, values, assumptions, and cognitive abilities, that influence a

teacher's ideas about students, teaching, and learning and how these ideas might manifest in behaviors. This definition is in line with Farrell's *Framework for Reflecting on Practice*, used in this study, which encourages active examination of one's beliefs and practices with an aim to refine one's craft. We can be more purposeful in our practice by fostering an awareness of our own teaching dispositions that influence our actual classroom actions, behaviors, and priorities. Given that teacher dispositions are also influenced by content and pedagogical knowledge (teacher preparation) and knowledge of the sociocultural context of one's students and school/community, Warren (2018) argues that practicing perspective-taking and empathy to enhance one's teaching dispositions can help teachers of the majority background not to reproduce and thus reinforce hegemonic discourse. In CCBI pedagogy, knowledge of context and perspective-taking begins with considering what students "already come in knowing, what matters to them, and how they might meaningfully apply what they are learning to their lives" (Mellom et al., 2019, p. 11).

*Agency and Power*: Sewell's theory of structure (1992, 2004) views structure and agency as a dialectic relationship that can constitute power. Structures consist of resources and schema that interact to "empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by social action" (Sewell, 2004, p. 155). Having agency, or the ability to enact change, requires an actor to mobilize resources and cultural schema. Resources are "actual" and are either human (strength, dexterity, emotions, knowledge) or non-human (objects of any kind whether natural or human-made). Both types of resources can be used to enhance and maintain power. Therefore, "to conceive of human beings as *agents* is to conceive of them as *empowered* by access to resources of one kind or another" (Sewell, 2004, p. 148). While, in theory, resources are available to all members of society, oppression is the result of group(s) wielding resources over other group(s). Cultural schema are "virtual" procedures, rules, values, beliefs, social behavioral norms, etc.; to have agency is to be able to apply schema creatively beyond the scenario in which it was learned while also controlling resources to support change. Structures (resources and schema) can empower agents differentially and are constrained by identities, are situationally relative, and can be enacted with others, for others, or against others (Sewell, 1992, 2004). Power, therefore, is not only the ability to enact change through agency but is the result of wielding our agency to be powerful together, to be powerful for others, or to be powerful at the expense of others.

## Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

I believe in the freedom to remain flexible across and between paradigms and epistemological categories, and as a result I identify as a critical interpretivist (Pozzebon et al., 2014; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). I seek to understand how individuals experience the world, specifically valuing individual voices and appreciating social phenomena (Pozzebon et al., 2014) but I also work to critically interrogate the status quo.

Ontologically, I believe that multiple realities exist given that each person understands the world as filtered through their own experiences, priorities, identity, cultural and social context, and so on. An individual's sense of reality, or their interpretation of it, is always socially, culturally, and historically situated (Kim, 2014). Personal realities and truths are ever-changing and evolve over time based on social interactions and situational forces. As such, interpretivism aims to understand "the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 221).

Epistemologically, I believe that the researcher is a situational force and can build and influence realities together with the research participants. As an interpretivist researcher, I interpret meaning-construction as it is embodied by social actors through language and actions (Schwandt, 1998). Interpretivist research can be dialectic but can be further enhanced through dialogue to better arrive at an understanding between the researcher and participants. As knowledge is created through interaction and collaboration, it is also co-constructed. Interpretivism is described as idealist in that knowledge and reality are rooted in *ideas*. We cannot come to a direct understanding of the world. We can only approximate it through our own interpretations (Glesne, 2016).

Conversely, critical research is a realist orientation in the sense that structures have been established that have a *real* impact on human life experiences and outcomes, including differential treatment based on gender, race, orientation, and social class (Hatch, 2002). Critical research aims to reveal these oppressive structures in order to raise awareness, solidarity, resistance, emancipation, and transformation. Traditionally, there has been an assumption that interpretivism and critique are incommensurable given that interpretivism centered understanding as a primary goal and therefore was not positioned to question or facilitate social change (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Schwandt, 1998). However, "the act of drawing interpretive

thinking to its full potential practically demands some form of fundamental questioning that is not very far from an overtly critical orientation” (Prasad & Prasad, 2002, p. 7). Pozzebon et al. (2014) suggest opening the possibility of critique within interpretivist lines of inquiry and analysis by probing taken-for-granted assumptions through critical reflection. Hermeneutics and critical discourse analysis are two other areas where overlap between interpretivism and critical viewpoints are evident (Pozzebon et al., 2014).

To offer an example of what I view to be critical interpretivist work in SLA, I draw upon Anya’s (2011) study titled “Connecting with communities of learners and speakers: Integrative ideals, experiences, and motivations of successful black second language learners”. To be clear, I identify this work as critical interpretivist, the author herself did not label it as such. Anya investigated the experiences and motivations of black university students participating in language studies. Her research aimed to highlight these students’ experiences so that the field might “duplicate conditions that engender their success and ameliorate circumstances that impede it” (p. 442). Anya’s work stands in juxtaposition to the majority of research that has been done regarding minority populations’ lack of success in or pursuit of world language studies which primarily assumed deficit viewpoints. The motivation to shift the deficit dialogue around minority populations embodies a critical approach. Anya solicited and analyzed language learning autobiographies from six black university students “to investigate how successful black student endeavors in SLA are engendered and nurtured” (p. 448). The findings were interpreted through thematic analysis of the autobiographies and presented in narrative form typical of interpretivist research, which seeks to understand participants’ lived experiences (Schwandt, 1998).

In all, as a critical interpretivist, in order to gain understanding of realities and truth, I value collaborative dialogue with research participants but also seek ways to capitalize on these descriptive explorations to promote change. In this dissertation, my research methodologies include interviews, field observations, participant and researcher journal reflections, and a focus group. Semi-structured interviews as an interpersonal activity invite co-reflection and co-creation between research and participants and helped me to better understand teachers’ reflections on their experiences. Journal reflections helped me to track my own reflexivity throughout the research process as well as gain some insight into teachers’ thinking as they worked through the

summer training institute. Field observations contributed to understanding how CCBI methods affect interaction, engagement, and WL curriculum and programming. It is my hope that through exploration and implementation of cultural topics through CCBI, teachers might be encouraged to engage in or at least begin to approximate critical multicultural education.

### **My Journey to the Focal Topics**

In the following paragraphs, I examine my personal experiences around language learning, language teaching, and my emergent scholarship in the field of teacher education in WLs and second language acquisition (SLA). These stories have wielded certain influence on my identity as a language learner, teacher, and scholar. They contribute to my arriving at the present research, and they may influence the way that I interact with and interrogate my scholarship as a whole.

The primary environment where I learned my second language, Spanish, was at the Concordia Language Villages (CLV), an internationally recognized linguistic and cultural summer immersion experience for youth in Northern Minnesota. I first enrolled in CLV the summer after fifth grade, and it reoriented my identity and sense of self moving forward. After my first summer, I dreamed of becoming bilingual and have pursued this mission intensely ever since. Being an all-immersion experience, Spanish is exclusively spoken by the energetic and dynamic CLV staff, who come from all over the Spanish speaking world. Communicative engagement relied heavily on establishing routines and capitalizing on the multimodal repertoire, including gestures, visuals, theater, music, taste, and smell. While the ‘villagers’, or campers, were never discouraged from using English with friends or during free time, using Spanish to navigate daily life around camp was necessary and praised. English as an instructional language was restricted to critical announcements such as food allergies or weather emergencies, but it was occasionally utilized by staff during debriefs of the evening programs. This mode permitted deeper conversations at the conclusion of camp-wide games or simulations that offered opportunities to wrestle with global topics, historical and social issues, or political conundrums. At camp, I was able to experience the rich linguistic input and interaction required to achieve advanced proficiency in my second language, but I was not denied access to my full linguistic repertoire, which supported deep thinking and authentic personal expression. I recognize as an

adult that accessing this opportunity each summer was a privilege that my parents were able to prioritize.

As a child pursuing my bilingual dream, I felt that my life revolved around the opportunities my CLV summers afforded me, however my K12 education wielded significant influence as well. The Minneapolis public schools that I attended were rooted in an Open philosophy (Kohl, 1969) that prioritized civic engagement, experiential learning, and specifically empowered students as equal partners in the learning process. My teachers regularly posed the questions, “Who, what, when, where and why?” But more importantly, “Why do you care, and what are you going to do about it?”. We held sit-ins and walk-outs, we researched current events in our towns, we interviewed citizens and produced PSAs that were aired on local networks, we dug deep into the cultural arts scene, and we hosted panels with school board candidates and Minnesota governors to whom we posed well-researched questions about topics that mattered to us.

CLV and my K12 education heavily influenced my motivation to become a teacher. Early on in my career, these influences informed my teaching philosophy and approaches that I hoped to implement in my own secondary classroom. However, in my four years of teaching at the secondary level I found that embodying the environment of CLV was very difficult. I was alone and confined by classroom walls, a textbook, traditional language learning pedagogies, and parent and administrator expectations.

As my career shifted into university-level teaching, I found some freedom to push the boundaries of what was possible in teaching and learning, but still recognized my own shortcomings in attempting to provide my students with experiences that pushed the bounds of their thinking. I also recognized the power of my influence as a Spanish teacher. With Latinx student populations on the rise in higher education across the country, I welcomed more and more Latinx and heritage students into my courses such as Advanced Spanish Grammar. I recall one student returning to class after grappling with complex grammatical topics. She was excited to tell me that she was beginning to hear many errors in her parents’ speech and was correcting them over the dinner table. I was unsettled to be inadvertently sending this message. I began modifying my message to promote the value of all dialects and registers, that there is no right or wrong in social language, and that navigating multiple registers that span the familiar and the

academic/professional is an important skill set. The world language classroom can be an eye-opening adventure, transformative and life affirming, but it can also box-in, disempower, and compound stereotypes of marginalized populations.

These cumulative experiences are a few of the highlights that led me to pursuing my Ph.D. and, for this capstone, to collaborate and reflect with other Spanish language teachers on the possibilities that CCBI might offer the WL classroom in support of collaborative dispositions and culturally relevant pedagogies.

### **Researcher's Positionality**

Subjectivity is an iterative process in which a researcher must engage throughout the entirety of a study (Peshkin, 1988), prompting the researcher to recognize how their biases might be influencing, or rather 'enabling or disabling' (p. 18), the way they interpret the data and subsequent outcomes. Subjectivity is monitored through modes of reflexivity, such as using field notes and journaling to interrogate moments of particular discomfort or excessive praise. These reflections can help to monitor personal emotions, views, and reactions within context (Peshkin, 1988; Ravitch & Carl, 2019) and retrospectively during data analysis.

As a scholar in the field of WL education, teacher education, and SLA, I recognize that my positionality as a white, cisgender, heterosexual female plays a role in the way that I engage with communities as well as the way in which I perceive and interpret data. Being a white female, I am positioned as part of the majority, particularly with regard to k12 educators in the US. Within the field of WL education, my first language is English. I learned my second language, Spanish, by choice, through both public and private programs, and abundant access to travel. The privilege I had in affording a high-quality private education at CLV, multiple degrees in higher education, and a personal commitment to travel was essential to my success. The way in which I have oriented my professional career as a language teacher, scholar, and medical interpreter means that I reap direct benefits from my bilingual capabilities. This stands in juxtaposition to other individuals who have not had the freedom or the resources to elect, advance, and thus capitalize on their own linguistic assets. In the US, white English-speaking students have benefited disproportionately more from WL and second language education (see Heineke & Davin, 2020).

I entered this PhD journey after a long career of teaching Spanish at the secondary and post-secondary levels. My position as a WL educator benefits me in the sense that my participating teachers and I have intimate knowledge of what it means to manage a WL classroom, namely a Spanish classroom, within public schools in the US. Our shared experiences around lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management will assist in my ability to conceptualize, anticipate, and empathize with any challenges posed by CCBI as a pedagogical approach. This could have conversely compromised my relationship as researcher with any participant who teaches a language other than Spanish.

At this point in my career, I serve as a language teacher educator and university-level supervisor for pre-service and early in-service teachers. This role as teacher educator positions me in a role of power relative to the student-teacher and teacher practitioners. In this role as teacher educator and supervisor, I am accustomed to ‘coaching’, which risks standing in conflict with my role as a critical interpretivist researcher as I aim to understand CCBI through the eyes of teacher practitioners. This positioning will require careful reflexivity throughout the research project to ensure that I am not exerting undue influence or expectations on the participating teachers.

As a qualitative researcher who relies heavily on semi-structured interviews, it can be that my questions are construed as leading rather than exploratory. I have to be cognizant of the oral language and the body language that I use, especially in my position of power, given that sometimes my research participants are my own students. This positionality can affect the ways my participants respond and perform in my presence during field observations. Even still, as my research aims shift or the context changes from one locale to another, so can my “situational subjectivities” (Peshkin, 1988), further emphasizing researcher reflexivity as an ongoing process.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five separate chapters. The first chapter contextualizes the study, outlines the study’s purpose and aims, and provides researcher background information. The second chapter presents the three primary theoretical considerations: Farrell’s (2015) *Framework for Reflecting on Practice* and communities of practice as a key informants for methodological design, and an ecological perspective of language teacher agency (Emirbayer

& Mische, 1998; Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Priestley et al., 2015; White, 2018) as the theoretical lens through which data analysis was completed. The second half of chapter two reviews literature on pertinent topics related to teacher agency that also informed the data analysis and discussion. These topics include critical pedagogy, teacher identity, CCBI, task-based learning, teaching culture through standards, and considerations for novice learners. Chapter three outlines all other methodological considerations, such as identifying this work as case study research, participant recruitment details, data production schedule outline, dialogical principles of critical interpretivist research, and the procedures involved in interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). The term data *production* is used in lieu of data *collection* throughout this document as it better aligns with an interpretivist understanding that meaning is co-created dialogically between researcher and participants as we engage within and navigate across different contexts (Glesne, 2016). All data for this research (interviews, field notes, journaling) was actively produced. Chapter four is reserved for the presentation of the case-study findings and cross-case analysis. Finally, chapter five presents a discussion on teacher agency relative to the three case studies and offers implications for research, policy, and practice.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I have presented the argument for supporting teacher exploration of CCBI for the WL classroom. Through critical reflection on approaches such as CCBI, WL teachers might identify novel ways to support collaborative learner dispositions that increase student interaction as they engage with cultural, critical, and socially relevant topics. This, in turn, might open possibilities to explore critical multiculturalism in the WL classroom. I have situated myself within the field of WL education, illustrating how I came to focus on this topic. I have also positioned myself as a critical interpretivist, outlining my priorities as a researcher and the ways in which I gather information in order to come to an understanding of participants' lived experiences. For this study, I have drawn on a critical reflective practice framework, an ecological theory of teacher agency, and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2022) in my research design to better understand the participating teachers' sense-making of CCBI pedagogy and how it might support student dispositions when engaging in cultural and critical conversations.

## CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Considerations and Literature Review

Chapter two is organized into two broad categories: theoretical considerations and a literature review. First, the section titled Theoretical Considerations offers brief overviews of (critical) reflective practice, communities of practice, and an ecological approach to teacher agency. These three concepts have been mobilized in this study either in methodological design or as supporting theoretical frameworks for data analysis. Second, the literature review provides detail around additional key concepts that also informed data analysis as seen through the lens of teacher agency such as critical language pedagogy, language teacher identity, CCBI, task-based language teaching, teaching culture and the standards, and critical conversations for novice learners.

### Theoretical Considerations

For this dissertation, I have mobilized three theoretical perspectives. First, Farrell's (2015) *Framework for Reflecting on Practice*, a framework initially intended for teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), has informed the methodological design of the data production. Second, I used an ecological perspective on teacher agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Priestley et al., 2015; White, 2018) to analyze how life histories, current structures, and future aspirations shaped how three participating WL teachers made sense of, conceptualized, and implemented CCBI pedagogy for their classrooms. Both frameworks assume a holistic view of the teacher with regard to their past histories, future aspirations, and institutional and social structures that support and constrain their present work. This holistic view offers a good foundation for pursuing a case study which aims to arrive at an in-depth understanding of an individual's actions within a particular circumstance (Stake, 1995). Finally, I will briefly discuss the notion of 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Richards, 2010) as an important element in designing this critical interpretivist research study that relies on dialogic interaction amongst practitioners who share common goals.

#### *An overview of (critical) reflective practice*

As understood through the works of Dewey, Schön, and Farrell, reflective practice is intentional and pragmatic in nature and can guide practitioners in "systematically investigat[ing] a perceived problem in order to discover a workable solution over time" (Farrell, 2015, p. 3).

Farrell (2015, 2022) has operationalized reflective practice for language teacher education through his *Framework for Reflecting on Practice* (FRP). This framework spans intellectual, cognitive, moral, and emotional aspects of reflection. Farrell's framework is rooted in John Dewey and Donald Schön's perspectives on reflective practice but is unique in that it relies on teacher's inner lives as a point of reference in understanding teaching acts (Farrell, 2015, 2022; Anani Sarab & Mardian, 2023). Organized into five different stages of reflection (philosophy, principles, theory, practice, and beyond practice), the framework is intended for teachers to "become more aware not only of their actions but also the origins, meanings and impact of such actions far beyond the classroom" (Farrell, 2015, p. 22). Reflecting and evaluating within and across each of the five stages can support future decision-making. The model specifically encourages teachers to "challenge embedded assumptions" (p. 23) as they deepen their understanding of personal philosophies, principles, theories, and practices that impact their professional and personal lives.

Tracing back, Dewey defined reflection not as a sequence of ideas but rather a "*consequence*" (1933, p. 4) in that each idea provokes and extends the next, and the current ideas rely on the evidence provided by its predecessors. Thinking in general is a stream of consciousness that can course in and out of topics at random, while reflective thinking provokes inquiry with an aim of conclusion and consequently leading to new action. Dewey (1933) characterizes reflection as an intentional meaning-making process where a learner moves from one experience to the next on a continuum. Dewey's philosophies on experience and education are situated squarely within, and thus in direct response to, the era of behaviorist learning theories.

'Traditional education' of his time, he argued, is teaching that which...

"...is essentially static. It is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally built up or to changes that will surely occur in the future. It is to a large extent the cultural product of societies that assumed the future would be much like the past, and yet it is used as educational food in a society where change is the rule, not the exception." (1938, p. 19)

His perspectives challenged a status quo that assumed students to be creatures of habit who reiterate the knowledge of elders and texts rather than think individually and freely. He understood learning to happen through experience and engagement with one's present context, and in acquaintance with a changing world (Lavadenz, 2010). Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey's

influence continues to appear formally in new theories of reflective practice (Schön, 1983), transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991), and community situatedness (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These theories express progressive iterations of Dewey's work and are shaped by the cognitive and sociocultural turns in teaching and learning (Lavadenz, 2010).

Schön (1983), taking up and challenging Dewey's (1933) idea of reflection as consequence, describes reflective practice as occurring spontaneously when action or practice is subsequently interrupted by a surprise. This surprise triggers reflection and troubleshooting based on prior knowledge in order to restructure one's actions effectively. Schön's (1983) work stems from observations of interaction between novice and senior practitioners. He found that senior practitioners demonstrate a tacit 'knowing in practice' (p. viii). Schön assumes an epistemology of practice that values expertise as gained through practice which is often difficult to express aloud. Knowledge is implicit, where 'our knowing is *in* our action' (1983, p. 49), and 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1983) relies on this intuitive knowledge resulting from experience.

Schön's model claims that knowledge cannot fit into neat analytic models but rather acts to guide people through subsequent actions towards an improved practice (Hébert, 2015; Schön, 1983). Reflecting *in* action as opposed to reflecting *on* action means that we think about doing something while we do it, simultaneously adjusting how we respond or interact. Using the word *in* rather than *on* indicates a temporal difference between Schön's and Dewey's models of reflection. *In* indicates simultaneity and fluidity between action, adjustment, and response while *on* refers to reflection happening once the experience has concluded and before engaging in another. Reflecting *in*, or during, action is equated to an on-the-spot experiment (Schön, 1995). Schön equates Dewey's approach to reflection as design inquiry, where one creates a plan and then enacts it, much like a teacher's lesson plan (Schön, 1995). Conversely, Schön's theory seems to assume the existence of an internal mechanism that mediates our physical interactions (Erlandson, 2005), much like Chomsky's (1986) cognitivist notion of Universal Grammar for language acquisition.

While Dewey's thoughts on reflection have been regularly reiterated in contemporary scholarship, Rodgers (2002) argues that "reflection has suffered from a loss of meaning" (p. 843) over the years due to a lack of a clear definition. Without a clear definition of reflection and how it differs from other forms of thought, it is difficult to guide oneself as a researcher, and in

collaboration with research participants (teachers), through a systematic reflective process and subsequent data analysis. Furthermore, popularization of reflective practice in language education has threatened to reduce the strategy to a pedagogical method rather than an autonomous professional development practice (Yagata, 2018), even insofar as reducing reflection to a checklist of behaviors (Rodgers, 2002). It is with these concerns in mind that I have designed this research study specifically utilizing Farrell's FRP. Farrell's five-stage framework honors the necessity to reflect-on-action and reflect-in-action (Dewey and Schön, respectively) but also incorporates critical accountability in the fifth stage 'beyond practice', where practitioners reflect-*for*-action (Farrell, 2015).

### ***Mobilization of Farrell's Framework for Reflecting on Practice for (language) teachers***

In their scoping review of reflective practice in L2 education, Anani Sarab and Mardian (2023) found only a few studies utilizing Farrell's framework. They support the framework in that it "offers many theoretical and interpretive advantages over less situated accounts (e.g. the Deweyan and Schönian models)" and indicate the paucity of research utilizing Farrell's context-specific framework (Anani Sarab & Mardian, 2023, p. 780). This observation supports my decision to select Farrell's framework to inform my methodological design. I chose to implement the FRP deductively (theory to practice) to understand the three participating teachers' personal backgrounds, teaching histories, and instructional philosophies before they engaged in CCBI training, reflection, and application. The framework is a tool to encourage teachers to deepen their self-awareness and strengthen their practice by drawing connections between the five stages (Farrell, 2015). I also view it as a helpful methodological tool for the researcher and participant to engage in dialogue about teaching philosophies, histories, and beliefs in order to better understand why teachers make certain choices in practice. Engaging in interpretive understanding of my participants' life stories as language teachers is also aligned with the ecological perspective on teacher agency, where past experiences specifically inform teacher decision-making (Priestley et al., 2015). Furthermore, dialogic interaction within a community of practice can help clarify our understandings, opinions, and perspectives on practice and experience (Richards, 2010); deepening self-awareness is a necessary step toward implementing change.

I have created **Figure 1** to help illustrate how the FRP (Farrell, 2015) has informed my methodological design. The five-point circle directly represents the FRP (Farrell, 2015). In order to better understand teacher philosophies (top of the circle) and principles (moving clockwise), participants received a Google form that prompted them to reflect on their personal teaching philosophy as a WL teacher (see Appendix B) and engaged in a follow-up semi-structured interview with the researcher (see Appendix C) in order to clarify and expand upon the Google form responses. The questions from the Google form and follow up interview were informed by the reflective practices suggested by Farrell's framework (2015). For example, teacher stories or teacher narratives provided a source for understanding teaching philosophies, values, and beliefs. Teacher narratives can be collected through chronological mapping, teacher narrative frames, or through revisiting critical incidents (Farrell, 2015). Here, teacher narrative frames were used in the Google form, such as "I became a world language teacher because...". The participants' short responses provided some context upon which we could build in the follow-up interview. While the Google form specifically relied on narrative frames and pointed questions around perceptions, values, and challenges in teaching culture and supporting student interaction, the subsequent interviews provided additional evidence of teachers' beliefs based on lived experiences and relevant critical incidents.

Farrell (2015) suggests metaphor creation and analysis as another method to understand teachers' beliefs, which is an aspect of teacher philosophies and principles. Personal metaphor creation and subsequent elaboration can help us make sense of our experiences by reframing them using alternative symbols or visuals. Reframing beliefs, problems, or issues is an important characteristic of reflective practitioners (Farrell, 2015; Schön, 1983). The pre-interview Google form questionnaire (Appendix B) prompted participating teachers to include a metaphor or simile for WL teachers. It stated, "A world language teacher is (like a)... because...". The metaphors that the three participants provided were valuable illustrations that I used to introduce each teacher's story, or case study, in chapter four.

As we move into theory (**Figure 1**, third box clockwise), the FRP specifically discusses teachers' theoretical opinions around teaching and learning, drawing special attention to the planning process. It is here that I hope CCBI pedagogical approaches will complement and/or

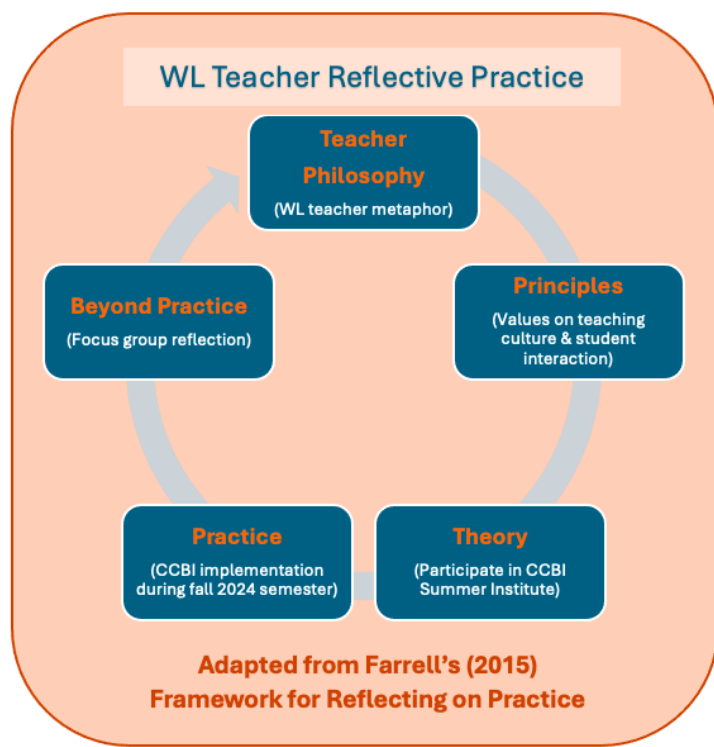


**Figure 1** *Farrell's (2015) Framework for Reflecting on Practice adapted for WL Teacher Reflection on Teaching Culture, Student Interaction, and CCBI Pedagogy*

disrupt any prior personal teacher theories. For example, a teacher might value and regularly employ group work during instruction but may not have considered the impact of establishing group norms for interaction in supporting student accountability toward equitable, civil, and balanced interactions (Mellom et al., 2019). Alternatively, WL teachers might recognize the value of conversation in language learning but their go-to classroom tasks do not effectively promote the negotiation of meaning, which is essential for language acquisition (Philp, 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016; Swain, 2000).

Participating in the CCBI summer institute will provide critical experiences for teachers to familiarize themselves with CCBI pedagogy. Each evening after the institute, teachers were asked three reflection questions using Google forms (Appendix D): (1) What were today's main take-aways? (2) What doubts or hesitations do you have about CCBI pedagogy for your own classroom? and (3) Describe any ideas you have for your classroom, inspired by CCBI pedagogy. Only the fourth and final reflection journal differed. It asked the same questions presented to the participants by CCBI facilitators at the end of the institute: (1) How has the PD affected you professionally? (2) How has the PD affected you personally? and (3) What are your goals moving forward? As teachers plan for classroom implementation (**Figure 1**, fourth box, Practice), they may seek support from the CCBI institute coaches, as well as fellow WL teacher participants and the researcher. Collectively, we serve each other as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Finally, toward the end of the 2024 fall semester, the teacher participants and I gathered as a focus group to reflect on CCBI pedagogy and how the summer institute experience impacted practices during the new academic year. Gathering as a group is the fifth stage of the FRP cycle (**Figure 1**, beyond practice), where the teachers critically reflect on their ability to adjust classroom practices and the potential for broader impact beyond their classroom. Engaging in critical reflection, according to Farrell (2015), requires a 'deliberate move' towards self-awareness and development. This can be done by means of reflecting with a group "in a non-judgmental, open climate of discussion which welcomes multiple and contradictory views in a safe environment" (p. 99). Our ability to gather in this capacity was supported by the norms that all participants of the summer institute collectively drafted and put into practice over the course of the institute week (see Figure 3 in Appendix E). Establishing these norms, engaging

professionally, and getting to know each other personally in our off-hours during the immersive summer institute enabled us to be more open and comfortable during this focus group discussion. Sharing knowledge from experience with other thinkers in a community of practice (Rodgers, 2002) will be further discussed in the following section.

### ***Communities of Practice***

Given that a critical interpretivist perspective relies heavily on dialogic and dialectical methodologies, creating a sense of community amongst the participants and myself, the researcher, was essential. A community of practice in WL education, specifically, is a group of individuals that capitalizes on teacher collaboration to further understand and transform teaching and learning (Richards, 2010). By participating together in CCBI training, we were afforded time to share our teaching backgrounds, build trust through conversation, arrive at deeper understandings of each other's professional struggles and goals, and troubleshoot and brainstorm ideas for practice. Ultimately, attending the CCBI institute over four days allowed us to engage in extended dialogue while learning new strategies that served our practitioner goals. This shared experience contributed significantly to our shared sense of community.

A part of reflecting upon one's experience includes having to express one's thoughts in community, which is essential to the formulation of knowledge. Meaning is derived from reflection upon an experience, or rather by formulating the "relationships and continuities" across personal experiences and also in sharing knowledge from experience with other thinkers (Rodgers, 2002, p. 848). It is through the exchange with others that we not only formulate our preliminary perspective but also open ourselves to having an alternative perspective further shape our experience (Dewey, 1916/1944; Rogers, 2002). In other words, reflection must happen through community interaction. Dewey identifies three attitudes that can directly support or inhibit our ability to examine our ideas that stem from reflection, interaction, and experience. These attitudes are (1) *open-mindedness*, or allowing oneself to entertain alternate perspectives regardless of one's own; (2) *whole-heartedness*, or throwing oneself fully into the task, and (3) *responsibility*, concerning morality rather than intellect which grounds inquiry in real-life implications (Dewey, 1933). These three attitudes help us to exercise 'intellectual responsibility' (p. 33) to independently examine, test, and judge personal experiences. As Lave (2012) states, "One way to think about the surprisingly complex, and contradictory, and multidirectional

character of learning, is that we are always learning what we are already doing. That makes us apprentices to our own changing practices” (00:06:54).

### ***Ecological Perspective of Language Teacher Agency***

I relied on an ecological approach (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Priestley et al., 2015) to language teacher agency (Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; White, 2018) to examine how the three participating Spanish teachers made sense of CCBI pedagogy as a tool to support engaging students in cultural, critical, and/or socially relevant topics in their Spanish language classrooms. An ecological approach offers guidance in understanding how teachers’ actions and achievements might be motivated, supported and/or constrained by unique interplays of personal, temporal and context-specific factors (Priestley et al., 2015).

As a base from which to ground my understanding of agency, I initially looked to Sewell’s (1992, 2004) theory of structure and agency, which examines how schemas and resources are employed dialectically to promote agency and transformation. With foundations in structuralist theories such as Giddens’ (1976) writings on structure and practice, as well as Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of “habitus”, Sewell extends towards post-structuralist thought by describing the dualistic relationship between structure and agency not as generalizable (Giddens, 1984) and homologous (Bourdieu, 1977) but as multiple, transposable, unpredictable, polysemic, and intersectional. In line with Sewell’s multifaceted and complex conceptualization of agency, I was also drawn to Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) temporal conceptualization of agency, which pushed back on philosophical views that failed to adequately disaggregate agency from structure but rather considered it an analytical tool in its own right. As such, agency is defined as

The temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations. (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 970)

The authors’ reference to habit, imagination, and judgement represents what they call the “chordal triad” (p. 972) that make up agency. These three actions specifically refer to a social actor’s temporal frames of the past, future, and present, respectively, and constitute the analytical frame by which this theoretical lens interprets agency. Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) conceptualization heavily influenced Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson’s (2015) ecological

approach to teacher agency, which will be further elaborated in conjunction with this research in the following sections.

This study utilizes an ecological perspective on language teacher agency (LTA) as opposed to other theoretical perspectives on agency like socio-cognitive (Bandura, 2000) and positioning theories (Kayi-Aydar, 2019), both of which primarily focus on individuals in relation to others, and activity theory (Feryok, 2012) which focuses on societal affordances and constraints rather than centering local contexts. Conversely, an ecological perspective focuses more heavily on an individual actor (the teacher) within their own unique (school, district, community) contexts and as influenced by their life histories and future aspirations, i.e. their temporal and situated contexts (Priestley et al., 2015). Agency, through an ecological lens, considers a teacher's perception of their environment (the physical, emotional, and social aspects) and how they construct and navigate these aspects in relation to their identity and beliefs (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016; White, 2018). Given that the participating teachers range from early-, mid-, and late-career practitioners who are housed in different schools across the same district (one virtual), I appreciate that the ecological perspective considers these temporal and situational differences, which I can then compare and contrast across cases.

While there exists a strong corpus of LTA research across English as second and foreign language contexts both in the US and abroad (e.g. Ng & Boucher Yip, 2017; Miller et al., 2018), research has only recently emerged on LTA for WL teachers (Spanish, German, French, etc.) working in US K-12 schools. Davis and Howlett (2022) used an ecological perspective to examine six American secondary world language teachers' generation and enactment of agency to support multilingual advocacy through active implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy (SoBL), especially as they were constrained by an English-only state. Back (2019), in her comparative case study, utilized a positioning theory lens to examine how three high school Spanish teachers performed agency around target language (TL) use and how they positioned themselves and their students as language teachers and learners through reflective and participant-researcher discourse. Finally, Wassell et al. (2019) relied on Sewell's (1992, 2004) theory of structure and agency for their interpretive case study which examined how twelve K-16 world language teachers incorporated social justice issues into their WL curricula, and what social and institutional structures (contextual factors) supported or constrained their work. These

three studies are foundational for the present work in that they focus on teachers' agentic performances in unique WL contexts, and how they might be supported or constrained by contextual factors such as personal beliefs (Back, 2019), interactions with others (Back, 2019), school and policy structures (Davis & Howlett, 2022), students' perspectives and contributions (Wassell et al., 2019), and existing curriculum and curricular resources (Wassell et al., 2019).

This study contributes to this recent WL LTA scholarship by examining three Spanish teachers' sense-making and agentic performances around a new-to-them pedagogical approach (CCBI) meant to enhance student interaction for language learning and as a support for cultural, critical, and socially relevant conversations in their WL classrooms.

### ***Mobilization of Ecological Theory of (Language) Teacher Agency***

The ecological theory of (language) teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015) will be used as the primary analytical lens through which my teacher participant stories will be examined. This ecological frame draws specifically from the three-pronged temporal-relational perspective on agency by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) to analyze how teachers as individuals navigating concrete situations achieve agency and how this achievement is either constrained or promoted by different factors, including current social and professional environment, personal beliefs, and projections for the future (Priestley et al., 2015). Although the ecological perspective can be used as both a methodological and theoretical framework for empirical inquiry (Priestley et al., 2015), I have primarily used Farrell's framework as methodological inspiration in designing data production protocol and have mobilized this ecological perspective on teacher agency as a theoretical framework for data analysis and organization of findings. I find these two frameworks to be complementary in that they share a focus on temporal relationships and the innate situatedness of personal life stories.

As mentioned, the ecological theory of teacher agency has been conceptualized as trichordal (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) because it is organized into three areas that inform the achievement of teacher agency. It is not guaranteed that these areas exert equal impact or resonate harmoniously (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), but the iterative exchange across or interplay between the three areas can offer a comprehensive understanding of agency. **Figure 2**, as published in Priestley et al., (2015), offers a supporting visual on the three areas of teacher agency from an ecological perspective.

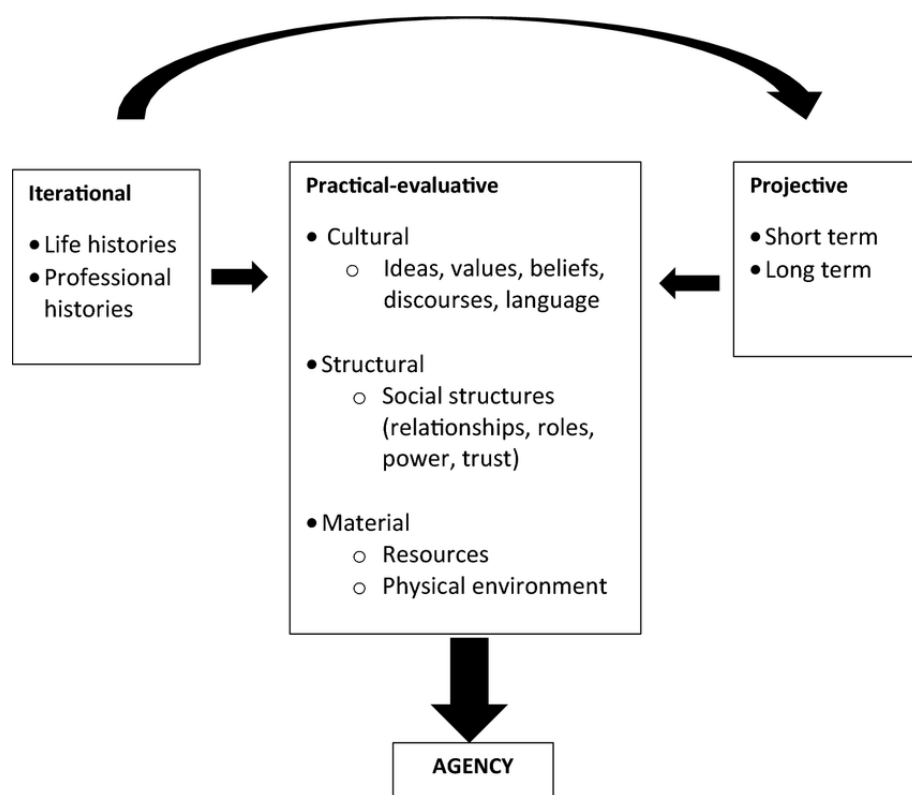


**Figure 2** *Teacher Agency Model (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 30)*

The *Iterational* dimension (**Figure 2**, left side), highlights the importance and potential impact of past experiences on a teacher's decision-making. This area draws from both personal life experiences in a broad sense and professional experiences that relate specifically to the practice of teaching. The term *iterational* implies a person's routines or habits from the past that continue to either propagate structures or inspire change. Teachers may draw from various aspects that are rooted in their past experiences, such as personal capacity (skills and knowledge), beliefs (professional and personal), and values (Priestley et al., 2015). The framework argues that what teachers make of these past experiences can be supported through initial teacher education and professional development (PD) opportunities (e.g., Wassell et al., 2019), such as CCBI. Teacher education, whether initial or PD, can initiate teachers' critical reflection on actions and "interrupt habitual ways of thinking about schooling and to encourage an innovative and questioning mindset" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 31). Through the pre-interview questionnaire and individual interviews, I have been able to understand better teacher's beliefs and practices around interaction and cultural teaching in their classrooms and how they've been enacted in their respective teaching careers, at different times and in different places.

Alternatively, the *Projective* dimension (**Figure 2**, right side) speaks to a teacher's short-term and long-term plans for action. A teacher's aspirations might be motivated by student interests and engagement that support improved student outcomes (Wassell et al., 2019) or might be supported by or run counter to policy intentions (Priestley et al., 2015) such as progress towards the Seal of Biliteracy (Davis & Howlett, 2022) or expectations around target language use (Back, 2019). Aspirations might also be more localized, such as aligning curriculum to a school's culture, connecting across content areas to support interdisciplinary curriculum, or standardizing and operationalizing certain classroom norms. Whatever the motivations for a teacher's desire for change, Priestley et al. (2015) suggest that they are invariably rooted in a teacher's prior experiences, their beliefs and values. For example, negative experiences around parental concerns or a poor performance review by an administrator might lead a teacher to be more risk-averse. Alternatively, these experiences may serve as an impetus to persist, dependent upon how they align with a teacher's personal value set and educational training. There is evidence of the participating teachers' future aspirations and goals throughout this study, but the

reflective journaling (Appendix D) and the final focus group (Appendix C) specifically prompted teachers to voice their future plans inspired by CCBI pedagogy.

Finally, the *Practical-Evaluative* dimension (**Figure 2**, center) considers a teacher's day-to-day decision making. This present-day dimension is where agency can be acted out in real time. In addition to being influenced by both the iterational and projective dimensions, or the past histories and future aspirations, respectively, this dimension represents the ecological conditions of the present context in which agency is supported and achieved or overly constrained and discouraged. The practical-evaluative dimension represents a concrete and specific situation. *Practical* represents feasible action in said context, and *evaluative* is a teacher's evaluation of what is possible given the contextual elements and constraints (Priestley et al., 2015). I envision this dimension as a filter through which the iterational and projective dimensions are pushed, thus shaping a teacher's actions in real-time. In this study, teachers' current course loads and the accompanying county-wide curriculum and IB-mandated curriculum provided some evidence of teachers' day-to-day influences. Teachers also shared how classroom environments (modalities), parental expectations, student interests, and administrative support were structures that influenced their decisions around teaching and instruction.

## Literature Review

The following literature review discusses language teacher agency in conjunction with humanistic endeavors in language teaching and learning that align with the present research. These endeavors include critical multiculturalism and critically situated pedagogies in the language classroom, the inseparability of teacher identity and teacher agency, the complementary nature of critical language pedagogy and task-based language teaching, the development of student dispositions to support civil discourse through CCBI, and the influences of academic standards and student proficiency levels on teacher action.

### *Teacher Agency and Critical Pedagogy in the Language Classroom*

Recent literature in language education has made it clear that teachers need to be prepared for critical language teaching (Gerlach & Luke, 2023; Kubota, 2025). To better understand 'critical language teaching', Kubota (2004; 2025) compared liberal multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism in language education. Qualities of *liberal* multiculturalism include

open-mindedness and non-prejudice attitudes when interacting with people from diverse ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. Liberal multiculturalism appreciates and celebrates cultural diversity, supporting the argument that everyone is equal (Kubota, 2004). This liberal stance towards multiculturalism runs the risk of promoting ‘color-blindness’ and framing racial issues and the color and linguistic hierarchy as non-existent (p. 33). Challenges to this “celebratory orientation” (Kubota, 2025, p. 29), sometimes referred to as *food, fun, and fiestas* (Herman, 2007), gave rise to *critical* multicultural education, or what is now often referred to as social justice education (Kubota, 2025). Critical multiculturalism, or teaching for social justice, communicates that multiculturalism as a construct is more complex than simply appreciating cultural practices and artifacts, and promoting cultural sensitivity. Critical multicultural education “explicitly examin[es] how race, gender, class, sexual and gender identity, disability, religion, and all intersecting identities shape diverse experiences and social patterns, including overrepresentation or underrepresentation of certain groups in institutions and biases in educational, academic, or media discourses” (Kubota, 2025, p. 31). As such, the goal of critical multicultural education, critical language teaching, or social justice education is to help students explore their own critical consciousness and help them realize their ability to be agents for social change.

An ecological understanding of teacher agency is partially informed by teachers’ life histories and professional identities. In this vein, exercising critical reflective practice and identity work is an important step toward enacting social justice pedagogy. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) discussed the need to elicit self-awareness through reflection in teacher preparation and how this self-awareness “can be harnessed to enable student teachers to forge their moral visions and readiness for action” (p. 126). Recent examples of critical reflection by language teachers include Potowski’s (2022) blog post titled “Owning up: When you earn your living from a language that was systematically denied to its owners”. She speaks of the ‘painful irony’ of learning Spanish as an additional language and being well-paid to teach, translate, interpret, and offer other language-related services to those who are often bullied for using it. Adam Schwartz’ (2023) book, *Spanish So White*, invites language teachers to critically examine linguistic and racial privileges in the field as he examines his own weight of Whiteness in his Spanish-English bilingual education and career. Critical consciousness is essential to continued

teacher identity development and necessary for teachers to then “integrate local needs, ideas, and experiences of students and, therefore, promote situated practice and context sensitivity, and, most significantly, criticality” (Gerlach & Luke, 2023, p. 44) in their teaching.

In order to enact critical multicultural education or teaching for social justice, Nieto (2010) offers four guiding components for teachers: (1) it *challenges, confronts, and disrupts* misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on social and human difference, (2) it provides *all* students with the *resources* necessary to learn to their fullest potential, including both material and emotional resources, (3) it draws on the *talents and strengths* students bring to their education, and (4) it creates a learning environment that promotes *critical thinking* and agency for social change. And, as Schwartz’ (2023) text encourages, we must also understand the impact of racialization in language teaching. “The ways languages have been shared, withheld, or forced upon learners have played an important role in shaping related power inequities and racial formations and in mobilizing different material and social resources” (Von Esch et al., 2020, p. 391). Teacher agency specifically examines material and social resources that support or constrain practice, and one significant constraint on critical multicultural language education is access to resources that appropriately and adequately center student backgrounds and real-world needs across diverse US contexts.

For example, the African American population is wholly underrepresented in world language education in the United States (Anyia, 2020; Austin & Anyia, 2024; Anyia 2024). WL curriculum often does not provide a meaningful, authentic and relevant experience for Black students studying additional languages. In support of teacher agency to make the Spanish language classroom a welcoming and relevant space for African Americans, Baralt, Clemons, Anyia, and Gomez (2022) created an open-access task-based Spanish curriculum for Black language learners, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This curriculum was based upon a needs analysis of over 100 Black and Afro-Latino Spanish language learners at two institutions of higher ed, one HBCU and one HSI in Florida. Similarly, Coda et al. (2024) argue that the WL classroom should be a safe space for questioning and exploring identities. Just as the ACTFL world readiness standards of cultures and comparisons support, “students are exposed to linguistic and cultural identities that are different from their own, providing opportunities to

question normative assumptions” (p. 105). They suggest that teachers be trained in LGBTQIA+ allyship and safe zones, carefully reflect on curriculum-in-use, dissect classroom discourse, and provide linguistic information on neutral language choices. Not only is the comprehensive nature of a culturally situated curriculum important for affirming and supporting language learners’ emerging identities, but an open curriculum also breaks down barriers towards teachers’ agentic moves in providing their students with authentic and relevant learning experiences.

### ***Teacher Agency and Language Teacher Identity***

Language teacher identity as a theoretical framework began in the mid-nineties and has become a well-established field of research. Since its foundational beginnings in the mid-nineties, scholars have come to a general consensus on the following theoretical arguments: (1) professional learning as a teacher involves identity work that is an ongoing negotiation integral to the teaching of language learners – in this way, identity is shaped by and shapes learning, (2) teachers negotiate and enact identities through instructional decisions and actions, while interacting with colleagues and students, and through self-reflection, and (3) membership in communities of practice exert significant influence over a teacher’s identity formation (see Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). Identity is not “unitary, fixed or immutable” and is further shaped by multiple intersections, including race, gender and sexual identity, class, and disability, and is subject to contestation, contradiction, and change over time (Norton, 2013, p. 164).

In recent decades, language teacher identity research has experienced an ecological turn which involves exploring the complexity of a teacher’s life stories, especially considering the teacher’s social context and professional realities (DFG, 2016; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Morgan & Martin, 2014). Identities cannot emerge and exist within a temporal and structural vacuum but, similar to the ecological perspective on agency, “identity as temporally shaped may be seen to emerge, or occur, at the crossroads of the past, present and future” (Block, 2021, p. 71). In this sense, an “intricate relationship” exists between teacher agency and teacher identity (Tao & Gao, 2017, p. 346). If a teacher’s life and professional histories inform future professional goals (Priestly et al., 2015), then there is a link between a teacher’s self-realization (self-awareness) and self-actualization (achieving personal growth). Regarding school or curricular reform, teacher agency can manifest through resistance, ambivalence, and approval, which can be demonstrated either actively or passively (Tao & Gao,

2017). If teachers feel they have the freedom and space to enact agency in their workplace, being a language teacher is more likely to become a meaningful vocation rather than “just a job” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 149).

Several studies in recent years have examined the interplay between teacher agency and identity. Mirabadi (2024) explored how teacher beliefs, identity, and capabilities influence teacher agency regarding adopting plurilingual methodologies in language teaching, emphasizing teachers' ability to navigate and implement innovative pedagogical practices. Tao & Gao (2017) examined how teacher agency and identity commitment shape teachers' responses to curricular reform at a Chinese university, highlighting the dynamic interplay between personal beliefs and institutional constraints. Vähäsantanen (2015) demonstrated how Finnish vocational teachers enacted agency in different ways and at different rates over time, which was largely shaped by their teacher identity and the organizational management culture. Banegas and Gerlach (2021) used duoethnography to investigate the relationship between their teacher-educator identities and agency in implementing critical language pedagogy in their ESL methodology modules. Their work demonstrated how teachers' perceived responsibilities towards social justice exerted influence on their agency and identity. Kayi-Aydar (2017) presented a narrative case study of how a Hispanic language teacher enacted agency while establishing her professional identities in various contexts, demonstrating how personal experiences and sociocultural contexts influence identity development. Lamar (2019) uses autoethnography to examine how systemic barriers impacted her ability as a Latina educator to enact agency in navigating recruitment and retention challenges, ultimately resulting in her leaving the profession.

Tao and Gao (2017) and Vähäsantanen (2015) both investigated teacher agency and identity in contexts other than the US and under mandated curricular reform. These parameters are notably different from the present study's context, which is WL teachers in the US exploring a new and optional pedagogy. However, both works examined and encouraged further examination of how teachers' identities and professional cultural constraints mediate their professional development experiences. Banegas and Gerlach's (2021) focus on agency around critical pedagogies and teacher responsibilities relates to this study's focus on teachers' decisions and actions around implementing cultural, critical, and socially relevant instruction. Kayi-Aydar (2017) and Lamar's (2019) work offers insight into how minoritized individuals experience and

navigate the teaching profession in US contexts, offering supportive evidence when examining the identities and experiences of the teachers participating in the present study. Finally, Mirabadi's (2024) work may support the findings in this study as teachers negotiate demands around teaching toward proficiency and professional values regarding target language use. In sum, teacher identity work is an ongoing process of negotiating and balancing conflicting influences "at the nexus of individual aspirations and contextual constraints" (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020, p. 3).

### ***Teacher Agency and Collaborative Conversation Based Instruction (CCBI)***

Collaborative Conversation-Based Instruction (CCBI) is highlighted in this study to serve as a toolbox to assist teachers in prioritizing collaborative conversational tasks in their language classrooms. Mellom et al. (2019) argue that increasingly diverse student bodies, lack of diversity and representation across the teacher population, and a significant increase in mediated modes of communication (email, text, social media, etc.) at the expense of face-to-face interaction all contribute to an increased need to actively develop student dispositions that support civil discourse and collaboration. Heightened U.S. political polarization also contributes to this need, especially as young graduates enter the workforce where 'soft skills' are valued and expected (Davidson, 2016; Finley, 2021). If language teachers are encouraged to work towards critical language pedagogy (CLP), critical content-based instruction (CritCBI), or teaching for social justice (Gerlach & Luke, 2023; Glynn et al. 2018; Kubota, 2025; Reagan & Osborn, 2021), then offering a toolbox that supports developing student dispositions to engage in civil discourse, particularly in the target language, is essential. By providing CCBI training, access to coaching support, and CCBI-relevant materials, this study hopes to support teacher agency in mobilizing strategies to develop collaborative student dispositions and additional language acquisition.

CCBI is based upon the Center for Research for Education, Diversity, and Excellence's (CREDE) five critical standards that most impact diverse learners. The five standards include (1) *teacher and student producing together*, (2) *developing language and literacy*, (3) *connecting school to students' lives*, (4) *teaching complex thinking*, and (5) *teaching through conversation* (Dalton, 2008, p. 133) While CCBI touches on all of these standards, it's primary focus is on the fifth, *teaching through conversation*, with the intention of enhancing students' academic language skills, and ability to engage in conversation and civil discourse (Mellom et al., 2019).

CCBI as a system begins with laying a foundation for a safe classroom environment. This is achieved through co-authored classroom norms for collaborative conversations by the teacher and students. These norms inform personal goal setting, which students and teachers actively reference during specific teacher-designed tasks.

The tasks, called joint productive activities (JPAs), begin as Instructional Conversation JPAs (IC-JPA), where the teacher serves as a facilitator, helping students navigate the goal-setting procedures and mobilize linguistic skills and content knowledge. The IC-JPAs lead to independent JPAs where students work collaboratively without direct teacher assistance. During independent JPAs, the teacher observes and occasionally intervenes to encourage fuller participation and to offer questions that challenge and deepen student thinking (Mellom et al., 2019). In IC-JPAs and JPAs, students engage in a productive task that requires a collaborative conversation to accomplish it. These tasks include, but are not limited to, making one collective t-chart, one Venn-diagram, one sort, one cartesian plane, or creating a collective literary mosaic. Whereas the collaborative social-emotional skills are mobilized through accomplishing the task collectively (i.e., listening actively, encouraging others to participate, being brave to offer a unique or alternative opinion), the task itself involves engaging with the content (theme and vocabulary). Rather than treating social-emotional and behavioral skills as separate from academic learning, CCBI demands “actively planning for and teaching the social skills necessary for success *while* teaching the content standards” (Mellom et al., p. 24). Just as Van Patten argues, the classroom is a real-world environment that students will navigate for years. CCBI strategies can help students communicate effectively, which will, in turn, help them to accomplish tasks and build relationships. Nieto’s (2010) second component required for teaching for social justice is to provide all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential, including both material and emotional resources.

By learning, practicing, and applying collaborative conversations in their real-world environment, students can exert agency in shaping the environment in which they exist – their classrooms and their school. In their study investigating CritCBI, Glynn and Spenader (2020) found that

teachers linked their decision to present their students with complex topics to significant growth in their students, finding that their students could more

confidently voice their own ideas and perspectives and demonstrate agency in not only their learning, but also in their personal lives as they took a more critical eye to situations and events impacting their own communities. (p. 89)

By creating a safer classroom environment through developing student dispositions toward civil discourse and collaboration, teachers might feel better prepared to engage students in complex cultural, critical, or socially relevant topics.

CCBI assumes a sociocultural perspective, where a dialectic relationship exists between the mind and the social environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Swain & Deters, 2007). Within sociocultural theory, people's behaviors are either enhanced or constrained by the tools that are available to them and the affordances present, or not, in their environment (Swain & Deters, 2007). CCBI is intentional about collaboratively designing tools and practicing tool-use to enhance equitable participation and effective interaction in the instructional space. Similarly, constructivism assumes language is learned through interaction with the surrounding environment. This theory of knowing focuses on learners' own creation of knowledge through interaction rather than repeating what others think is important (Kamii & DeVries, 1993). Collaboration and conversation are essential to cognitive development and language learning (Mellom et al., 2019). CCBI pedagogy was originally designed to support English language learners' (ELL) ability to develop conversational skills in collaboration with their peers, though it has been shown to support all learners (Mellom et al., 2019). If the goal in WL education is to assist learners in engaging linguistically and with cultural competence in the broader society, CCBI pedagogy promises to assist teachers in developing these social and collaborative skills.

### ***Teacher Agency, Task-Based Language Teaching, and Critical Language Pedagogy***

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a product of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement of the 1970s (Ellis, 2017). TBLT focuses on the linguistic needs of students and their developing language proficiency and, over the past half-century, has garnered robust empirical evidence to support it as an approach that effectively promotes SLA (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017; Loewen & Sato, 2018; Keck et al., 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007). CLT aims to support communicative competence by developing language functions like promising, inviting, declining, and giving opinions. CLT suffered over time from a lack of clarity in supporting teachers' ability to mobilize it in the classroom (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Task-

supported language teaching (TSLT) and TBLT were developed in response to this reality. TSLT is considered a ‘weak version’ of CLT in which tasks are used as support within more traditional language teaching that centers explicit attention to linguistic forms; TBLT is considered the ‘strong version,’ using tasks as the primary mode through which to experience and engage with the language (Ellis, 2017, p. 109). Whereas TSLT draws more explicit attention to language forms through language practice, TBLT caters to incidental learning through meaning-focused engagement, allowing for attention to form especially around communication breakdowns while attempting to accomplish a task (Ellis, 2017). In the field of instructed second language acquisition (ISLA), and in support of teacher agency, developments such as TSLT and TBLT offer resources or guidance that teachers might access and accommodate for use in their practice of CLT to support students’ linguistic and interactional competence.

Defining ‘task’ is essential to understanding TBLT as well as CCBI. A task should be meaning-oriented rather than grammatically driven, and reflective of “students’ real-world activities beyond the classroom” that are intentionally designed based on a learner-needs analysis specific to the student population at hand (Long, 2015, p. 5). These real-world tasks are then revised into pedagogic tasks, which are specifically designed for classroom use but without losing sight of real-world possibilities (i.e., reading the news, preparing a meal, recalling your day, replying to an e-mail or making a call, filling out a form, etc.). VanPatten (2017) also differentiates between exercises and tasks, with the former focusing on language mechanics and the latter on achieving a product, goal, objective, or outcome through utilizing the TL. In CCBI, JPAs are 20-to-30-minute tasks where students work collaboratively through content-based conversation to produce a collective product. The collective product (sort, graph, mosaic, timeline, which one doesn’t belong, etc.) serves multiple purposes, such as slowing down the task to enhance collaboration, providing visual assistance for various proficiency levels across language learners, and allowing the teacher to follow students’ thought processes. Furthermore, this collective product should ideally not have a right or wrong answer but can be negotiated in multiple ways (Mellom et al., 2019). This allows students to experience flexibility in language use and communicating their opinions. During task performance, in TBLT and CCBI alike, learners should primarily rely on their own linguistic resources rather than rely heavily on outside resources (Long, 2015; Loewen & Sato, 2018; Ellis, 2017). However, teachers who

engage in CCBI tasks have created sentence-stem reference sheets for language learners to utilize during task engagement to encourage collaborative conversations, effective dialogic engagement, and information exchange in the TL.

TBLT primarily focuses on teacher-student and student-student interaction through productive task accomplishment. Much like in CCBI's IC-JPAs, the TBLT teacher works together with students during tasks initially, but in subsequent iterations, students work collaboratively while the teacher circulates the room, listening and assisting as needed. In TBLT, given that the primary focus is using language as a tool to make meaning (Ellis, 2017) and thus collectively accomplish a task, the teacher-as-facilitator primarily offers linguistic feedback in the form of recasts to assist linguistic development (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Alternatively, the teacher-as-facilitator in CCBI does not solely focus on language production and accuracy but enhances learning by "facilitating discussion, increasing the complexity, and differentiating for individual needs" (Mellom et al., 2019, p. 133). Therefore, it can be said that the teacher's role in CCBI is not limited to providing linguistic corrective feedback and modeling vocabulary, but rather does this through questioning and recasting that supports students' abilities to develop and communicate their understanding of the content at hand. CCBI also positions the teacher as a learner in IC-JPAs, where they have a chance to consider alternate ways of thinking and new concept applications through listening to student perspectives. The pedagogy recognizes and values students' lifetimes of experience and prior knowledge as valuable for learning. It is important to note that IC-JPAs require a power-shift from the educator. Even though the educator is playing the role of facilitator in these joint productive activities, the activities are still to be designed as student-centered, and the teacher is ultimately engaging as a participant facilitator.

In TBLT, addressing culture is not a primary goal unless the task is built in such a way to intentionally center cultural content, "such as when students prepare different ethnic foods to share" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 157). Crookes and Ziegler (2021) claim that little attention has been given to "how a critical lens might be adopted in the task-based or task-supported classroom" (p. 11). Also a product of the CLT era, and potentially in response to TBLT's lack of focus on learners' identity and context, Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP)...

...seeks to deepen L2 learners' understanding of social action, support learners' identity development in terms of critical consciousness, and considers the content

of instruction primarily with regard to particular issues, topics, and themes, and its studies have been, as a result, not particularly interested in how instruction might support L2 learners' general improvement in, say vocabulary or grammar (Crookes & Ziegler, 2021, p. 2).

Whereas TBLT orients itself around linguistic and general cognitive learning theories, CLP is driven by social theory and views learners as shaped by race, gender, context, complex histories, and varied social goals. Crookes and Ziegler (2021) argue that integrating TBLT and CLP together might prove to be a powerful relationship, or as they say, “intersections or lacunae can prompt development” (p. 2). Other advocates for TBLT and CLP also view an overlap between the two. Long (2015), an early advocate for TBLT, “aligns TBLT with philosophies of education that emphasize guided individual freedom to learn, emancipation, learner-centeredness, egalitarian teacher-student relationships, participatory democracy and the natural human inclination to behave cooperatively” (Ellis, 2017, p. 111), however Crookes and Ziegler (2021) also point out that Long's (2015) position is at the “discretion of the teacher” and not a fundamental element of TBLT theory (p. 8).

With regard to CLP, Akbari (2008) argues that discussions around critical pedagogies in language education have focused on rationale and theory, and not enough has been done to inform and guide classroom practice. As mentioned previously, some progress has been made to support teachers in implementing CLP in the language classroom, such as Baralt, Clemons, Anya, and Gomez' (2022) open-access task-based Spanish curriculum for Black language learners and Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell's (2018) text for language educators titled, *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages Through the Lens of Social Justice*. The present research views CCBI as a pedagogical system that accounts for TBLT and CLP philosophies to support students' critical multilingual development, offering a clearer roadmap for instructional planning

Like TBLT, CCBI relies on productive ‘real world’ task engagement to build linguistic proficiency through communicating with others. With regard to CLP, and returning to Nieto's (2010) four guiding components on teaching for critical multiculturalism, CCBI (1) encourages students to *challenge, confront, and disrupt* misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes through respectful and civil conversations with their peers, (2) it provides *all* students with the material and emotional *resources* necessary, such as co-constructed class norms and goal setting (3) it draws on the *talents and strengths* students bring to their education by demanding student

centeredness even in teacher-facilitated tasks, and (4) it creates a learning environment that promotes *critical thinking* and agency for social change as teachers not only focus on linguistic recasts but questioning to promote critical thinking. Similar to Crookes and Ziegler's (2021) concern, in CCBI, critical, cultural, and socially relevant content is still at the discretion of the teacher. However, CCBI's pedagogical practice is critical in itself by way of student-teacher positionings, valuing of students' backgrounds, and promoting productive collaboration through civil discourse.

### ***Teacher Agency, Teaching Culture, and the Standards***

Rather than foregrounding communicative skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning (W-RSLL) (NSFLEP, 1999/2015) were established to identify content as essential to supporting communicative goals (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016), as well as to maintain alignment with Common Core State Standards, college and career readiness, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (NSFLEP 1999/2015). The W-RSLL are organized into five goals known as the five Cs: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. While Communication across three modes (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) is intended to serve as the basis for language teaching and learning, the remaining four Cs provide a framework to assist teachers in integrating culture, interdisciplinarity, diverse worldviews, and encourage multilingual engagement beyond the classroom. The C representing Cultures, or interacting with cultural competence and understanding, is further broken down into two sub-standards:

1. **Relating cultural practices to perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.
2. **Relating cultural products to perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Kubota (2003) critically examined how culture is conceptualized through the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (NSFLEP, 1999). Her criticism was published before the redrafting of these standards into the W-RSLL in 2015, which includes a narrative on

“avoiding cultural misunderstandings” (p. 71); however, the structure of the Cs and references to products, practices, and perspectives within the Culture standard have remained the same. These three terms adopted into WL corporate speak are likely the quick-reference tools that teachers rely on when planning. Kubota (2003) argued that while the standards do offer guidance on “developing cultural understanding of the Self and Other” (p. 70), there are several limitations.

First, the standards terminology assumes culture to be homogeneous and knowable rather than “diverse, dynamic, and fluid, constructed and transformed by political and ideological forces” (p. 70). This fixed definition assumes that students will be able to arrive at an understanding that is either correct or incorrect and that cultural perspectives and practices will be the same across all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, generation, class, occupation, region, etc. (Kubota, 2003). These assumptions may lead to a prescriptivist approach to teaching about culture, resulting in a *Us vs. Them* perspective, and further concretizing ‘Them’ (a homogeneous group) as inferior or romanticizing and exoticizing foreignness (Kubota, 2003). Furthermore, this assumption of a shared American or U.S. identity, which has historically and persistently been defined by whiteness (see Austin, 2023; Clemons, 2021) and cisheteronormativity (Coda et al., 2024), can de-center, marginalize, and discredit fellow peer identities within the WL classroom. Austin (2023) contends that Black students should not be recognized as having more or different cultural capital, but rather language (teacher) education should problematize the notion of culture as capital altogether, given that it is subjective to those (in power) who interpret it. Coda (2023) illustrated ways that WL teachers utilize language instruction and cultural products to upend heteronormative assumptions around gendered language, gender norms, and gender roles, especially in restrictive contexts. The WL classroom is positioned through the standards to compare and contrast. Therefore, spaces are opened to interrogate social norms, inviting and supporting queer thinking (Coda, 2023; Nelson, 2020).

Acknowledging that culture is diverse, discursive, and dynamic and that arriving at an objective understanding of culture is impossible (Kubota, 2003) has implications for how culture is taught in the WL classroom. Kubota (2003) recommends four Ds to better assist teachers in planning for cultural teaching and learning. These Ds may reduce the possibility that culture is understood as fixed, homogeneous, and objective.

1. Offer a *descriptive* rather than prescriptive understanding of culture.

2. Focus on the *diversity* within culture, addressing the notions of diaspora and hybridity.
3. Acknowledge the *dynamic* or shifting nature of culture, allowing one to interpret cultural practices, products, and perspectives in historical contexts.
4. Recognize the *discursive* construction of culture where culture is invented by discourses and influenced by power and politics.

By reframing cultural standards not as products, practices, and perspectives but rather descriptive, discursive, dynamic, and diverse, teachers might be able to better facilitate instructional conversations about culture in the WL classroom. As Kramsch (2014) states, “the way we are to conceive of language, communication, culture and learning in an era of globalization calls for greater reflexivity and interpretive capacities on the part of both teachers and learners” (p. 308).

### ***Teacher Agency and Critical Conversations for Novice Levels***

Wassell et al. (2019) utilized an ecological lens to investigate the factors that support and/or impede world language teachers’ integration of social justice topics into their curriculum and instruction. While teachers recognized academic freedom within the WL curriculum as an asset (i.e., flexibility with resources, what topics are covered, and when) they struggled to find curricular materials that were both developmentally appropriate and accessible according to the students’ language proficiency level. Even when finding materials was possible, teachers found it particularly challenging to “create a task that allowed their novice-level students to engage with the resource” (p. 15) in the TL. Students are inquisitive beings and conversations around social justice topics were often done in English, which frustrated many of the teachers.

In their practitioner-oriented text published by ACTFL titled *Words and Actions: Teaching through the Lens of Social Justice*, Glynn et al. (2018) acknowledge the challenges of finding authentic resources and mobilizing them appropriately with novice learners. They offer a 3-step suggestion to help scaffold learners’ linguistic skills while engaging with the topic at hand (p. 75). First, *set the stage*. Use rich visuals, like photographs, with limited captions or words (such as signage in the picture) so that students can rely on the image to provide context for the language they see. Ask targeted questions to assist students in making sense of the content and language. Second, engage in *critical thinking and discussion* by placing students in small groups to discuss their impressions or initial opinions. This stage is likely supported by appropriate

sentence frames (I see..., I find...most interesting, I am surprised by...). Finally, *dig deeper in the topic*. This stage is considered an extension, where students might decide to take action on a social topic that impacts their school or community. Alternatively, they may broaden the scope of their research by investigating similar issues, topics, or movements in other places, whether local or abroad.

Another consideration regarding novice learners is for WL teachers to negotiate the tensions between exclusive TL use and translanguaging in the WL classroom. Traditionally, WL teachers have ascribed to the notion (promoted by the field) that maximizing the TL, or a monolingual approach, is essential to building language proficiency (Ortega 2019; Li, 2018). However, with the rebalancing of the World Readiness Standards, which forefronts culture and content knowledge, teachers might consider adopting a translanguaging stance to support a new equilibrium between achieving proficiency targets and cultivating cultural competencies.

Translanguaging is the “flexible use of multiple languages and other meaning-making resources” (Tai, 2023, p. 7). To practice translanguaging is to mobilize one’s entire linguistic repertoire to accomplish communicative tasks. Translanguaging is often compared to code-switching. However, they are epistemologically different cognitive processes. Code-switching assumes a monoglossic view of languages where bilinguals navigate between two separate linguistic systems. Conversely, translanguaging is both a theory and a social and relational practice that defines bilingual behavior as heteroglossic, dynamic, and rooted in “one integrated linguistic system” (García & Lin, 2017, p. 120). A translanguaging perspective combats an entrenched power dynamic between nationally named languages, allowing for more equitable and accessible incorporation of linguistic repertoires in language classrooms. Despite this critical angle, translanguaging simultaneously recognizes named languages as a social and political reality. Part of integrative bilingual education is helping students to decipher and skillfully implement “the appropriate features of their repertoire to meet the communicative exigencies of the social situation at hand” (García & Lin, 2017, p. 129), including communicating effectively in one language. Fuller development of named languages maintains and sustains minoritized languages over time.

Translanguaging could offer the following advantages to language learners (Baker, 2001; García & Lin, 2017, p. 119):

1. It may promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter
2. It may help the development of the weaker language
3. It may facilitate home-school links and cooperation
4. It may help the integration of fluent speakers with early learners

Translanguaging theory is critical because it empowers teachers and students to “upend ideological divides” (Detwiler, 2024, p. 4) between majority and minority languages, especially in contexts where restrictive language policies are in play. In WL education in the US, no politically driven policy restricts language use. However, embracing a translanguaging stance in the WL classroom could have reverberating effects on the broader multilingual student population in schools. Rather than perpetuating learned boundaries between languages and language separation, WL students might better understand and be able to engage with the skillful language mixing of their minoritized multilingual peers (Ortega, 2019). Using a translanguaging framework in the classroom might also combat teachers’ tendency to position students as reluctant Spanish speakers (Back, 2019). Back’s (2019) comparative case study hypothesized that “this repeated positioning of students as anxious or ‘imperfect’ learners contributes to a vicious cycle, in which students take on and augment these positionings to the point where successful language learning becomes all but impossible” (p. 117). Li (2018) presents translanguaging as a theory of linguistic participation. Through a translanguaging approach, instructors can spur novice learners’ participation in a way that is welcoming and supportive of their linguistic agency, in whatever form it takes, as they develop their multilingual skills.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter offered an overview of the major theoretical considerations and a review of the corresponding literature. The three theoretical frameworks include critical reflective practice, communities of practice, and an ecological approach to teacher agency. The first two specifically motivated and informed the methodological design for this study while the framework for teacher agency was used to interpret the findings. The review of literature highlighted several themes such as the important interplay between teacher identity and teacher agency, the potentially productive relationship between CCBI, TBLT, and CLP, the impact of cultural

standards on instruction, and nuances affecting novice learners' ability to engage in critical conversations while supporting language learning.

## CHAPTER 3: Methodology

### Introduction

In this chapter, I describe case study as the overarching methodology for the present research. I will also provide information on the participants, research settings, and interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2022), which guided the qualitative analytical procedures. I conclude this chapter with elements that support research trustworthiness and validity, which include my own reflexive considerations, triangulation through multiple qualitative methods, and the dialogic principles for critical interpretivist work (Pozzebon et al., 2014).

I have organized the following table (**Table 1**) to demonstrate how the three temporal frames (past, present, and future) are relevant to various stages of my research process, including methodology and analysis. This organization helped me during data production, while writing the participant narratives, and the analysis phase.

**Table 1** *Research Questions, Methodological, and Theoretical Alignment*

| <b>Temporal Frame</b>                                     | <b>Past</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Present</b>                                                                                         | <b>Future</b>                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Research questions</i>                                 | (RQ1) How do world language teachers describe their own teaching philosophies and approaches regarding (a) student interaction and (b) engagement with cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues? | (RQ3) How do participating teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms? | (RQ2) What are world language teachers' perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms? |
| <i>FRP (Farrell, 2015)</i>                                | Philosophy ~ Principles                                                                                                                                                                                 | Theory                                                                                                 | Practice ~ Beyond Practice                                                                       |
| <i>Ecological Teacher Agency (Priestley et al., 2015)</i> | Iterational                                                                                                                                                                                             | Practical-Evaluative                                                                                   | Projective                                                                                       |

Despite the grid-like format presented in **Table 1**, I recognize the permeability across timeframes, which manifests in unique ways per individual and as they are bounded “within different structural contexts of action” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963).

### **Research Design: Case Study**

Case studies provide deep insight into an issue or problem embedded within a particular context that is bound by time. A case can focus on a single individual, a community, an event, or program implementation (Glesne, 2016). Additionally, case studies are “targeted at information-rich sources for in-depth understanding and can also be used to inform policies or to uncover contributing reasons for cause-and-effect relationships” (Bhattacharya, 2017). This definition supports the notion that case studies provide highly descriptive detail that can inform decision making. “Case study,” Stake (1995) writes, “is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi).

Overarchingly, case studies do not deny the critical role of context, but the investigation is particularly concerned with the activity, or the interaction of an individual within particular circumstances. It is with these definitions in mind that I have selected case study as an appropriate methodology to investigate teachers’ reflections on and experiences with implementing CCBI in their classrooms. In alignment with Stake’s definition, the individual teachers are each a case, and the investigation looked at their activity within the circumstance of CCBI training, while also considering each participant’s teaching histories, and current classroom and school contexts. As Bhattacharya contends, it is through deep understanding that we might contemplate a course of action for incorporating elements of CCBI in WL classrooms.

Case studies can act as a heuristic, offering rich evidence to support the creation of new theories as well as confirm or refute existing ones (Duff, 2020; Yin, 1994). Alternatively, if no existing theory is relevant or adequate for analyzing the case at hand, the inquiry will likely be more exploratory in nature. Even if the case is exploratory, the proposed study must clearly identify what is to be explored, why it warrants exploration, and against what criteria the exploration will be judged successful (Yin, 1994). This study was exploratory in nature, given that applying CCBI in the WL classroom has not yet been investigated. During the analysis phase, the theoretical lens that was used was an ecological perspective on teacher agency

(Emirbayer and Mische, 1995; Priestley et al., 2015) in order to make sense of the teachers' perceptions, decisions, and actions regarding CCBI pedagogy relative to their own teacher identities, teaching goals, and unique teaching contexts.

Stake (1995) differentiates between two types of exploratory case studies, the *intrinsic* case study, and the *instrumental* case study (p. 3). An intrinsic case study might be initiated based upon interest in a particular student, an existing organization or agency, or deciding to implement a program evaluation. Alternatively, an instrumental case study is led by an initial puzzlement and need for understanding, which reflects the present CCBI research. Stake (1995) offered an example of an instrumental case when he described a study about a new grading system being implemented in Swedish secondary schools, which had the potential to affect how teachers taught and assessed learning. In this scenario, a teacher was selected as a case, and particular attention was paid to how the teacher graded students and if this new grading approach affected their teaching. When I was first introduced to CCBI, I immediately recognized theoretical and pedagogical alignment with the WL classroom but was puzzled when attempting to visualize how, exactly, CCBI might be applied in reality. This puzzlement led to my desire to expose more WL teachers to the approach, thus establishing a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Richards, 2010) through which we might collaboratively arrive at a better understanding of the affordances CCBI lends to the WL classroom.

In addition to identifying this research as an exploratory instrumental case study, I further identify my research design as a multiple holistic case design (Yin, 2017). Multiple case research design is advantageous because comparing and contrasting across multiple cases (in this case three) can provide a more robust and diverse understanding of WL teachers' perceptions of CCBI pedagogy for WL classrooms. This stands in contrast to a single-case research design, which is often intended to explore a critical, representative, or typical case (Yin, 2017). Given that CCBI has not been researched for WL contexts, there is no single critical or representative case at this time. A holistic design, as opposed to an embedded design, is advantageous in this context because there are no embedded subunits of study within each teacher's case, such as document analysis or student outcomes per teacher. In the future, an embedded design may be advantageous for deeper study if and when CCBI has been adopted and fully mobilized by a WL teacher or program. Here, "the global" or holistic nature of each teacher's experience with CCBI

pedagogy was examined (Yin, 2017, p. 50). This global interest aligns with the chosen theory for analysis (Yin, 2017), an ecological lens of teacher agency, which is holistic in that it considers the whole via the unique interplays of personal, temporal, and context-specific factors (Priestley et al., 2015) within a case.

The most defining characteristic of a case study is a clear delineation of the case itself (Merriam, 1998). I initially planned for the individual cases to be individual WL teachers (any language) within the same public school district in the Southeast US. Per the study's design, these were the only required shared characteristics amongst participants, a language teacher from the same district. However, all participants that consented to participate happened to be Spanish teachers. The context and timeframe within which the study took place was the time leading up to, during, and the academic term following the summer CCBI training institute in July 2024. Beyond the WL requirement, the shared language of focus, and the collective participation in and reflection on the CCBI training, each teacher's case represented different educational backgrounds, different current teaching contexts or modalities, and a range of years of teaching experience, and overall different teacher identities. These differences are of particular interest in this multi-case exploratory study that is instrumental and holistic in nature.

Describing what lies outside of a case's bounds helps to define the unit of analysis. Case studies have a 'nesting' (Duff, 2014, p. 236) quality, where a phenomenon (CCBI) is studied in individuals (teachers) within larger social units (classrooms), which are nested within larger institutional (school) and socio-educational (district, state, country) contexts. Even if the broader contexts are not the focal points of the study at hand, there is an acknowledgement of the inevitable interaction between humans and their "social, physical and ideological ecology" (p. 236). This ecology also includes the researcher as a social actor and co-constructor of knowledge (Duff, 2014). The focus of this case study was teachers' perceptions of the utility of CCBI therefore, it is necessary to consider teachers' philosophies, school contexts, district priorities, and other broader levels of the 'nest', which may influence the ways teachers experience and reflect upon CCBI pedagogy. The nesting effect that Duff (2014) describes aligns with my theoretical framework, the ecological perspective on teacher agency's three temporal frames that influence a teacher's actions (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Kayi-Aydar, 2015, 2019; Priestley et al., 2015; White, 2018).

The use of multiple qualitative methods is hallmark to a rigorous case study (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021) in order to arrive at a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). The present study relied on questionnaires, reflective journals, field notes, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews to arrive at a detailed understanding of individual WL teachers’ perceptions of CCBI pedagogy. Multiple methods also contribute to the trustworthiness of a case study, which will be further addressed in following sections. Case study research complements the highly valued large-sample-size research in that the former offers a depth of understanding, and the latter provides breadth (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Ultimately, case studies are exemplars that can tell an effective story to the general public. Effective evidence-based story-telling may be better positioned than other types of research to increase empathy and promote change in policy and pedagogy.

## **Participants**

Duff (2014) suggests four to six cases as ideal for a doctoral dissertation. Similarly, Smith and Osborn (2008) recommend that for students embarking on their first IPA analysis, three cases make an adequate sample size. Maintaining a reasonably small sample size permits in-depth analysis without being too overwhelmed by data. Furthermore, a sample size of three to five both accommodates participant attrition and permits for various modes of analysis and reporting of findings (individual case reports, comparisons across pairs and/or cross-case thematic analysis). My goal was to recruit no more than 5 participants, which allowed some flexibility in the event of participant attrition. After multiple invitations, I secured five participants, but that number was reduced to three due to changes in CCBI modality, funding, and participant summer schedules.

Participant selection was purposeful (Cresswell & Cresswell Baez, 2021) in that all participants were in-service WL instructors teaching in WL classrooms during the 2024-2025 academic year within the same public school district. Convenience sampling (Cresswell & Cresswell Baez, 2021) also characterizes this research in that participants volunteered to participate in the initial interviews, summer training, semester task implementation, and final reflections. I sent an invitation for participation to WL instructors within a singular public school district in a mid-size urban area in the Southeast US, seeking volunteers. This invitation provided a brief overview of the research study and included a link to CLASE’s (now MERIT’s) CCBI

institute information so as to encourage teachers to familiarize themselves with the institute's goals and ensure general alignment with their own pedagogical priorities. Even though the study was open to instructors of all WLs, including classical languages, the three participating teachers who gave their consent were Spanish educators, one of whom was an online instructor. I am also a Spanish educator, and so our shared instructional language supported common understandings when engaging in CCBI training and brainstorming classroom tasks and practices. However, for this research, all reflection activities collected for research purposes were done in English.

### **Setting**

In July 2024, the three WL teacher participants and I attended the four-day summer CCBI institute together, supporting a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Richards, 2010). The institute ran from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. We stayed at a nearby hotel and often went out in the evenings to share a meal and continue conversations.

Given that the teachers aimed to implement procedures or tasks inspired by the CCBI training during the 2024 fall semester, each teacher's individual school and classroom also formed part of the 'setting'. These school ecologies influenced teachers' resources, sense of flexibility, and implementation of CCBI in their classes. Zoom, Google Forms, and Google Docs are other 'settings' where participants interacted with me, the researcher. Semi-structured interviews took place over Zoom, and periodic journal responses on teachers' reflections were collected via Google Forms during various points of the CCBI training sessions (see **Table 2** for a timeline of data production). Google Docs provided a collaborative e-space for creating the 'student task cards' necessary for CCBI classroom tasks. This shared e-space permitted me as the researcher to collect these classroom tasks for analysis. However, as will be seen later in the findings and discussion, the teachers did not end up creating any CCBI-specific instructional materials.

### **Data Production and Methodological Triangulation**

In line with case study research (Bhattacharya, 2017; Duff, 2020; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017), multiple qualitative methods have been implemented for this study. Methodological triangulation through multiple methods is a well-recognized strategy in qualitative and case study research to ensure depth and increase confidence in case interpretation (Stake, 1995).

Triangulation is a contested term in the field, as it reflects a more logical empiricist perspective of arriving at the truth. However, utilizing multiple methods offers different views of the topic, helping to deepen my interpretation and understanding as the researcher without necessarily aiming to arrive at one defined truth (Glesne, 2016). For this study, I relied on a pre-interview questionnaire, one semi-structured interview, researcher field notes, participant and researcher reflective journaling, a post-institute questionnaire, and a final focus group (see **Table 2**). To demonstrate how I view triangulation as useful to this study, I offer the following example. In the pre-interview questionnaire, teachers shared their metaphor on what it means to be a language teacher. In the semi-structured interview, I had the opportunity to ask for clarification and further information on the metaphor they offered. In all three cases, this opportunity for clarification proved essential to better understand or clarify assumptions I initially made as the researcher. “Triangulation,” according to Stake (1995), “regularly sends us back to the drawing board” (p. 114).

In reviewing my methods, the *pre-interview and pre-focus group questionnaires* helped me to utilize time effectively during the interview and focus groups. These questionnaires primed topics so the participants and I could engage more immediately and directly in conversation about relevant issues and experiences as needed. The *semi-structured pre-summer institute interview* served to get to know my participants, allowing us to begin to build a foundation of trust and rapport. I implemented a semi-structured interview design, which includes some pre-prepared questions but is open to conversations as they develop, especially as guided by the participant (Glesne, 2016). These initial interviews (one per participant) centered around getting to know the teachers past life and professional histories, their current teaching contexts, and their philosophies and beliefs regarding student interaction and teaching culture, critical, or socially relevant topics in their classrooms. We also discussed motivations for attending CCBI and areas of professional practice they were interested in developing.

The *field notes* were recorded during the four-day summer institute. This two-column document helped me to separate the details of the events as I observed them from my personal questions or reactions. On the left, I described the events in detail. On the right, I recorded reflective or reflexive moments, including posing questions, making connections between institute happenings and previous participant interviews, or identifying my own emotions

towards certain events. The *reflective journaling* for teachers was organized through Google Forms. At the end of each summer institute day, the teachers received an emailed link reminding them to reflect on the day's activities. The Google Form was brief and asked for participants' key takeaways from the day, their hesitations around CCBI for WLs, as well as their motivations for possible classroom implementation. The researcher's reflective journaling was less structured. In a Word document, I recorded my personal reflections from the day as a narrative account. These reflections included my impressions of the day, any surprises or doubts, and thoughts to consider for the following day(s). As part of my reflective journaling, I also engaged in analytic note taking (Glesne, 2016), or journaling, in the months following the institute in order to stay abreast of and document shifts in my thinking, whether it be regarding the data production process or thoughts around identifying patterns or themes.

Finally, the *final focus group* was an opportunity for the four of us to reconvene months after the institute to reflect and discuss together if and how CCBI was impacting teaching and learning during the current semester. Focus groups are intended to elicit multiple perspectives on an issue through dialogue (Glesne, 2016). Choosing a focus group design was intentional at this point in the process because it allowed us to continue to engage as a community of practice, especially as we had built a foundation of rapport over the summer. During the focus group, I encouraged teachers to share and reflect on what aspects of CCBI were impacting their teaching, and how, why, or why not. We collectively explored the possibilities that CCBI offers the WL classroom, and the challenges it poses. Through dialogue, we could better trouble and extend our reflections, understandings, and plans for the future.

In sum, **Table 2** outlines the general timeframes for data production per participant that occurred over the course of the research project.

**Table 2** *Data Production Points*

| <b>Method</b>                                                                                     | <b>Mode</b>       | <b>Length</b>    | <b>Timeframe</b>                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Participant philosophy statements on teaching culture and student interaction in the WL classroom | Google form       | 17 questions     | Mid-spring 2024, prior to summer institute attendance |
| Initial participant interview to discuss philosophies and teacher metaphor                        | Zoom              | 30 minutes (min) | Late spring 2024, prior to institute                  |
| Researcher field notes/journaling during training and otherwise                                   | Personal computer | N/A              | Continuous                                            |
| Early-institute reflective journal                                                                | Google form       | 1 paragraph      | After day 1                                           |
| Mid-1 institute reflective journal                                                                | Google form       | 1 paragraph      | After day 2                                           |
| Mid-2 institute reflective journal                                                                | Google form       | 1 paragraph      | After day 3                                           |
| Final institute reflective journal                                                                | Google form       | 1 paragraph      | After last day                                        |
| Mid-semester questionnaire re: task implementation                                                | Google form       | 5 questions      | Mid-semester Fall 2024                                |
| Final focus group                                                                                 | Zoom              | 1 hour           | Fall semester 2024                                    |

### **Data Analysis: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

One of the most difficult and often weakest aspects of a case study is an explicit discussion of analysis protocols and techniques (Yin, 1994; Duff, 2014). Successful triangulation of generated data, the identified theoretical and analytical framework(s), and even member checks can be a strength of case studies, if done well (Duff, 2014). I drew upon Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an analytical framework to understand teachers' experiences with CCBI as a pedagogical tool to engage in cultural lessons in the WL classroom. IPA, a qualitative approach, was established within the field of psychology to investigate personal lived experiences (Smith, 1996; Tai, 2023). IPA has three key theoretical underpinnings: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Tai, 2023). IPA is phenomenological in that it seeks to understand, through detailed examination, a participant's lived experience, specifically a person's 'personal perception or account of an object or event' (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). In this research, there are multiple events, the participants' experience surrounding CCBI training and the subsequent envisioning and implementing of CCBI system and/or task(s) if they choose.

Ideal for case studies, IPA is idiographic in that it prioritizes detailed exploration of individual experiences and can make specific statements about the individual case. IPA is primarily concerned with the detailed analysis of individual cases rather than generalizations for broader populations (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Promoting generalizations through case study research is heavily debated (Duff, 2020; Flyvbjerg, 2006) given that the units of analysis are uniquely situated contexts. A more accepted approach might be to generalize against theory, models, and analytic concepts rather than contextually bound populations (Duff, 2020).

IPA utilizes a 'double hermeneutic' approach (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53) where the participant first makes sense of their experience, and the researcher then has to make sense of the participant's sensemaking. In conducting IPA, the researcher can take an empathetic stance to gain an insider perspective (Conrad, 1987), but also a critical or questioning stance (Smith & Osborn, 2008) which might help the researcher to situate personal experience within larger contextual influences or constraints. Furthermore, IPA recognizes participants as cognitive, linguistic, affective, and physical beings who utilize language as a means to express thoughts and emotions. Thoughts and emotions, as such, are complex, and language is unstable and does not

always suffice as a descriptive tool. The researcher, then, must recognize this as a factor in attempting to interpret participants' experiences as they are communicated through language, in addition to the limitations this might impose on the researcher themselves.

Semi-structured interviews are an exemplary method for IPA analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The present research utilized semi-structured interviews, in addition to participant journaling, which can also be processed for themes utilizing IPA analysis procedures. Through iterative analysis of transcripts and journal entries, I aimed to understand the participants' beliefs and constructs (Smith & Osborn, 2008) surrounding CCBI pedagogy and its usefulness in the WL classroom. IPA analysis requires sustained iterative engagement with the data. Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest that the researcher analyzes one participant's transcript data before working towards more general cross-case categories and claims. First, the researcher should put the transcript into a 3-column document. One column contains the transcript itself, and the other columns are utilized for iterative note-taking and theme identification. After becoming very familiar with the transcript through multiple reads, the researcher can make free-analysis in the first open column in-line with provocative areas of the transcript. These notes might include summarizing or paraphrasing, associations or connections, preliminary interpretations, and echoes, amplifications, or contradictions (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Once the researcher engages with the entire transcript, they return to the top and begin again utilizing the third column to narrow down relevant theme titles using concise phrasing. The goal at this stage is "finding expressions which are high level enough to allow for theoretical connections within and across cases, but which are still grounded in the particularity of the specific thing said" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 68).

All identified themes are then listed chronologically on a new document, permitting the researcher to make sense of connections between themes and cluster them with the aim of identifying 'superordinate concepts' (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 70). For this study, the chronological ordering of the summer institute journal entries provided an interesting map of emotional responses to the CCBI training sessions over time.

Themes and concepts should be cross-checked again within the transcripts, locating specific moments as evidence. This helps to ensure that the researcher is iteratively cross-checking their own sense making with the participant's words and messaging. The final stage is

to produce a table of themes that strongly capture the participant's concerns on the particular topic or experience. Finally, the findings for one case can be written up for a single case study or the researcher can continue on to analyze the remaining cases for cross-case analysis. The themes from the first case can be utilized to help orient subsequent case analyses or can be put aside to then independently analyze the next case (Smith & Osborne, 2008). IPA is often well supported through narrative accounts in the reporting phase.

### **Researcher's Role**

I expect to be positioned as both an insider and an outsider for the duration of this research project. I am an insider in the sense that I, like my research participants, am a WL educator. I have been collaborating with the participating public school district for the past three years, and so I am a familiar professional partner to some of the participants. I will rely on this rapport as we grapple together with the ins and outs of CCBI pedagogy and how to make sense of it for our linguistic and cultural goals. All participating teachers are Spanish teachers, like me. In chapter one, I mention that sharing our content area (Spanish) is an asset with regard to collaboration and troubleshooting as a community of practice. There are no other WLs represented in this particular project. Furthermore, in chapter one, it was mentioned that in the US, white English-speaking students have benefited disproportionately more from WL and second language education (see Heineke & Davin, 2020). Three of the four participants (including myself) are white females who learned our additional language and the language we teach, Spanish, by choice, which positions us as the privileged majority. It is necessary that we negotiate these privileges as we consider how CCBI might assist in leveling the playing field for diverse learners in our classrooms. The fourth participant is a Latina female who immigrated to the US at age fourteen and learned English as an ESL student.

Regarding the CCBI institute experience, I am positioned as both an insider and an outsider. This study was inspired by my initial experience as a participant at a CCBI summer institute in the summer of 2023. I was only one of two attendees with a WL teaching background, the other being my faculty advisor and chair of this dissertation. Therefore, when I attended as a participant researcher in 2024, I was familiar with the training curriculum and was able to anticipate certain topics and activities. This sometimes primed my attention towards one

participant or another based on their expressed interests in the pre-questionnaire and pre-interview. Also, based on my previous involvement and research plans, I had begun to establish relationships with the institute leaders themselves, one of whom served as a committee member for this dissertation. Her guidance and availability proved invaluable for this project.

I am not a WL teacher in the district where my participants work, which positions me as an outsider. Furthermore, this outsider status will likely be enhanced by the fact that I am the ‘researcher’ and university affiliate, which may cause participants to perceive me as an authority figure. This positionality will affect what knowledge or truths I can access and how I am able to access them. Ultimately, it is important to remember that the researcher’s position is inevitably a role of power relative to the research participants (Glesne, 2016). It is my responsibility as the researcher to utilize this power responsibly with regard to the wellbeing of the participants and the analysis and application of the research.

To respond responsibly to the tensions of researcher positionality, Glesne (2016) proposes five dispositions that can help frame one’s mindset upon entering the field. First, be anticipatory and think about what the particular setting or participant interaction might call for. One might also reflect through journaling between one observation or interview and the next to review emotional responses and anticipate desired future dynamics. Second, maintain a “learner’s” stance. Don’t assume you know what the participant means, but rather ask clarifying questions and confirmation checks to verify your understanding. Third, maintain an analytic mindset. Interview flow and observational focus will be maintained, and final analysis and reporting will be easier if analytical thinking is ongoing. Fourth, a good researcher is reassuring so as to help put participants at ease. This includes being open about what notes are taken in the field, what data is stored, and what will become of it. It is important to communicate that all participant responses are valued; there is no wrong answer. Finally, a researcher in the field must express gratitude both immediately and afterward with a written note (Glesne, 2016). These dispositions are important reminders of how to proceed with care as one enters the research field.

### **Dialogic Principles for Critical Interpretivist Inquiry**

With regard to my epistemological orientation as a critical interpretivist, I rely on the dialogic principles for qualitative inquiry as laid out by Pozzebon, Rodriguez, and Petrini (2014)

to help guide me in maintaining what has previously been termed scientific rigor (Yin, 1994), trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or research quality (Tracy, 2010) and validity (Cho & Trent, 2006). Whereas academic rigor has traditionally been acknowledged through clear comprehension of relevant theory, methodology and literature, as well as originality of the work, I agree with Kubota (2023) that social relevance and community impact must also be of primary consideration.

The dialogic principles as set forth by Pozzebon et al. (2014) are intended to ensure that the researcher's writing practices are aligned with readers' expectations, thus building "authorial authority" (p. 303). Five dialogic criteria are proposed to evaluate critical interpretivist work. First, it is paramount to convey persuasiveness to the audience. To achieve this, one must meet these first three expectations as perceived by the reader(s): (1) authenticity, (2) plausibility, and (3) criticality. The fourth principle, reflexivity, offers transparency in positionality and acknowledges "a certain awareness of the ambiguity of language and the limits of its capacity to convey knowledge of a purely empirical reality" (Pozzebon et al., 2014, p. 303). Finally, the fifth criterion, artfulness, is suggested as optional for critical interpretivist work. Artfulness aims to "mobilize audiences through vivid, creative, and unconventional pieces of work (Czarniawaska, 1999)" (Pozzebon et al. 2014, p. 304). Artfulness, or the way in which creativity is mobilized to express ideas, is not a part of the current research project but could be an interesting endeavor for future investigations regarding CCBI and WL classrooms, possibly in collaboration with students. **Table 3** (Pozzebon et al., 2014, p. 304) outlines the five dialogical principles that support critical interpretivist research, which is followed by explanations on how these aspects apply to my own methodological plan for the present study.

First, authenticity demands that authors engage deeply in the field and with actors. As a participant researcher, I attended the CCBI summer institute training with participants. Because this summer institute was a 4-day face-to-face training, it required all of us to travel and stay overnight. I considered this to be an intensive or immersive experience because of our collective travel, allowing for outside obligations or distractions to be lessened. While the participants fully engaged in the institute, I sat at the table and acted as participant observer, both participating in institute activities and discussions and taking field notes.

**Table 3** *Dialogic Principles for Critical Interpretivist Research (Pozzebon et al., 2014)*

| Aspects of interpretation                                                       | Dialogical principle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Sources of inspiration                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Interaction with empirical material                                             | Authenticity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Was the researcher there?</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Criteria from ethnographical research (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993)                             |
| Building sound interpretation                                                   | Plausibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Does the history make sense?</i></li> <li>○ <i>*Do the research participants have the opportunity to accredit the plausibility and authenticity of the story?</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                |                                                                                                 |
| Engaging with a critical interpretation                                         | Criticality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Does the text activate readers to re-examine assumptions that underlie their work?</i></li> <li>○ <i>Does the text include the possibility of criticizing the existing social conditions and the distribution of power?</i></li> </ul>                                                       | Criteria from critical research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Hardi et al., 2001; Scherer, 2009) |
| Reflection on text production and language use                                  | Reflexivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Does the author reveal his or her personal role and his or her selection of the voices or actors represented in the text?</i></li> <li>○ <i>Does the text reveal personal details about the research (self-revealing writing), interlacing “actual” and confessional content?</i></li> </ul> | Criteria from confessional research (Schultze, 2000)                                            |
| Being creative and evocative through the features of the text (added, optional) | Artfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Does the author mobilize creativity, art, culture to express, craft his or her ideas?</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          | Criteria from post-modern research (Czarniawaska, 1999)                                         |

*\*Added by L. Detwiler to address the need to directly engage the participants during the data production phase and write-up process, i.e. member checking.*

Maintaining authenticity also requires that the research shows raw data while simultaneously maintaining a balance between descriptive data analysis, and theoretical interpretations and findings (Pozzebon et al., 2014). In chapter 4, the findings are organized into vignettes that have been crafted to effectively narrate participant experiences. In vivo quotations are included as frequently as possible. An example of my IPA analysis work is offered in Table 7 in Appendix G.

Second, plausibility demands that the researcher/author writes in a way that is relevant to the concerns of the reader, engaging them in “intellectual conversation” and “create[s] actionable knowledge” (p. 305). To address this guideline, I drew from narrative inquiry to communicate findings because it permits the researcher to ‘highlight the uniqueness’ of individual stories (Chase, 2005, p. 657) and to compare storylines across individual human experiences (Thomas, 2010; Chase, 2018). Finally, storytelling centers the personal and the social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), contextualizing the inquiry to “stimulate engagement with a broader audience” (Holley & Colyar, 2009, p. 680). I have also opted to add an additional question within this principle in **Table 3**, marked by an asterisk, which states: Do the research participants have the opportunity to accredit the plausibility and authenticity of the story? This question encourages that dialogue not only exist between researcher and reader but also involves the participants directly in the research analysis and writing. This is also known as member checking. Multiple times over the course of data production and data analysis, I invited participants to review their data, whether it be their own journal entries, interview transcripts, or researcher-authored narrative accounts, so that they had the opportunity to approve, refute, or edit in the interest of co-creating an accurate portrayal of understanding. This was done through Google Doc sharing, commenting, and email communications.

Third, criticality should entice the reader to reconsider assumptions, activate new ways of knowing, and consider new alternatives to social action (Pozzebon et al., 2014, p. 306). One way to do this is to pay attention to multiple narratives (Pozzebon et al., 2014), which I have done by presenting three case studies of individual teacher narratives. These narratives will not give us a singular understanding of the influence that CCBI might have in the WL classroom but rather allow the reader three unique viewpoints by which to consider the pedagogical implications. Furthermore, my understandings, insights, experiences, and reflexive interpretations (Pozzebon et al., 2014) as the researcher, further shaped by theoretical underpinnings, offer an additional

layer of interpretation and analysis that might afford the reader “the opportunity to...espouse a critical view” (p. 306).

It is also within the principle of criticality that the researcher must tend to potential ethical dilemmas that arise during the research study, including issues of power (Pozzebon et al., 2014) and beneficence. The iterative journaling process in which I engaged as a researcher was an important element in documenting any issues or doubts that arose during the data production and analysis phase.

Finally, reflexivity involves the researcher’s active reflection, specifically as to how the research processes might influence or shape the research outcomes. To support this principle, the field notes that I took during the institute included my personal reflections and questions that arose during institute interactions, which is part of the IPA analysis methodology. The notes column is an important space to grapple with and make researcher bias visible (Pozzebon et al., 2014, p. 306). Finally, “Self-revealing text” refers to the use of personal pronouns in order to highlight whose perspective is being highlighted and recognizing the researcher as “reasonable yet fallible” (Pozzebon et al., 2014, p. 306). Throughout the chapters that discuss findings and discussion, I utilized the appropriate pronouns so as to differentiate between participant beliefs and opinions, theoretical connections, and researcher observations and reflections.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter offers a comprehensive outline of the research methodologies, including case study design, participant and setting information, methods for data production and analysis, and researcher reflexive considerations supported by Pozzebon et al.’s (2014) dialogic principles. Congruent with the exploratory nature of interpretive work (Glesne, 2016), this research required continuous revisiting of theory and construct definitions, as well as research questions as the participating teachers and I worked together to make sense of CCBI for the WL classroom.

## CHAPTER 4: Findings

### Introduction

Chapter four presents three individual case studies on the participating Spanish language teachers, Patty, Maddie, and Sofia (pseudonyms). Each case begins with a teacher introduction, reflections on their teaching philosophies, and concludes with narratives about each teacher's reflections and experiences as they progressed through the research project timeline. These case study narratives seek to answer the first and second research questions, which reflect certain stages of the FRP (Farrell, 2015).

1. How do world language teachers describe their own teaching philosophies and approaches regarding (a) student interaction and (b) engagement with cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues?
2. What are world language teachers' perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms?
3. How do participating teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms?

The end of this chapter offers a brief cross-case analysis, discussing common or contrasting topics across the teacher participants' cases. While elements of the third research question surface throughout the following findings, it will be more directly and extensively addressed in chapter five where the findings on teachers' reflections and actions will be interpreted through an ecological lens of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015).

### Case Study One

Patty has been a classroom teacher for thirty years, and at the time of this study, she was entering her ninth year of teaching Spanish at her current urban high school. Her initial goal was to become an English teacher, but her college academic advisor encouraged her to double major in Spanish. Similarly, when pursuing her Master of Arts in Teaching, she was encouraged to dual certify in English and Spanish to remain flexible and work in bilingual and ESOL environments. She spent her first six years teaching in Florida, drawing on her dual-licensure skills, while her husband pursued his doctorate. They also spent one year in Minnesota, which she described as

‘terrible’ and referred to the town as small, isolated, and unfriendly. Patty referred to both the Florida and Minnesota middle schools as rural teaching contexts, a stark contrast to her current urban teaching environment. For the past two decades, she has only taught high school Spanish in two different high schools within the her current district, the first of which she identified as “a little country school” due to its location on the outskirts of the city. She decided to leave this setting due to a change in school administration that was less supportive of WL education, and move to her current school in the same district.

Patty’s current school is in the heart of the city. She has been at this school for the longest stretch of her career. This school is also her husband’s and children’s alma mater. She currently teaches Spanish III, IB Spanish I, IB Spanish I and II for Heritage Learners, and HL Spanish for seniors. International Baccalaureate (IB) programs claim to be different from other curricula because they (1) encourage students to think critically and challenge assumptions, (2) develop independently of government and national systems, incorporating quality practice from research and the global community of IB schools, (3) encourage students to consider both local and global contexts, and (4) develop multilingual students (IBO, 2025). The urban environment and the IB curriculum currently impact Patty’s perspectives on teaching and learning in her classroom, which we will explore in the following sections. Patty was born and raised in the United States and learned Spanish as a second language primarily in academic contexts. She never studied abroad but spent seven weeks traveling in Mexico.

***Patty: “A language teacher is a multi-purpose tool”***

Crafting and examining personal metaphors about teaching and learning is one way to identify teacher principles and beliefs (Farrell, 2015). Metaphors are used to express the way one values an experience (Schön, 1983). In the initial pre-interview questionnaire, I asked each teacher to complete the following sentence: “A world language teacher is (like) a ... because...”. In the interview following the questionnaire, I reminded each teacher of their metaphor and asked them to explain their thinking. Crafting and examining metaphors requires viewing an issue through an alternative lens, which is an important aspect of being a reflective practitioner (Farrell, 2015; Schön, 1983). Patty described being a world language teacher as a multipurpose tool.

In the first couple of years, you're just building up, you know, vocabulary and basic grammar skills... giving them a language to start using. And then when you get higher up into it, of course, we're still doing all of that, but we're also adding in more conversation, much more reading, more writing. So, we're then becoming kind of like English teachers, too, because we're doing a lot of that stuff. And then, another teacher in a different area wants help making sure that their thing is Google translated right so a student will understand it. So, I do that. Or they'll get a call in the front office. They need someone to translate, so I'll run and do that. And I love all of it. I'm so thrilled to be able to do it. But yeah, and then teaching IB adds on to all of that, because it's such a very specific goal. And the idea of trying to create, you know, lifelong learners who have a wider worldview. And um... yeah, just the... I don't know. I feel like it's more than – A math teacher does math, and maybe they do it at different levels, but I think that's different from building a language all the way up.

Although overarchingly positive, here Patty shared ambivalent emotions toward her role as a language teacher. She talks about the layering and scaffolding of skills over time, and the depth that is potentially unique to language learning with regard to linguistic skill and cultural competence. When she speaks of love and thrill, she offers a sense of fulfillment in her work. However, towards the end, she mentions the IB goals ‘adding to all of that’ and ‘I don’t know. I feel like it’s more than –’, there is a sense of feeling overwhelmed, under pressure, or stretched thin. She mentioned being happy to serve beyond her classroom. However, she simultaneously recognizes that additional external roles, such as serving as a multilingual interpreter or translator, are expectations or ad hoc duties that may not extend to teachers of other content areas.

### ***On Teaching Culture: “I sometimes feel false”***

Patty’s valuing of cultural lessons in her classroom is guided by the demands of the IB curriculum. She has been one of the primary IB Spanish teachers at her current urban school for many years. It is difficult to tease out if her practice has been formed by the IB's cultural focus or if IB goals simply align with her teacher identity.

Because I teach IB, culture is part of every unit. Each unit is structured around elements of culture (that I know of, as a white woman) as well as reading, writing, listening, and speaking... I sometimes feel false for teaching about a culture I'm not very familiar with. I feel like I'm reading a blurb from a textbook unless I've read a lot about a culture or have visited myself.

In her reflections on teaching culture, she highlights its importance and the challenges she experiences around contextualizing it meaningfully. She also demonstrates a self-reflective stance on her positionality as a white woman.

IB curriculum for languages is organized into 5 themes: (1) identities, (2) Experiences, (3) Human ingenuity, (4) Social organization, and (5) Sharing the planet. Each theme invokes notions of culture through subtopics such as beliefs and values, rites of passage, artistic expressions, social relationships, community, equality, and ethics, etc. (IBO, 2018). Not only is Patty's teaching guided by these curricular themes, but the students that the program attracts are, in Patty's opinion, more interested in and motivated to learn beyond basic language acquisition. Many students have international experience, come from multilingual families, and are interested in "what it's like to live in another country, and what people's lives are like in other places." IB students, in Patty's experience, arrive at class with a willingness to share stories and ask questions. She states that she has been teaching highly motivated IB students for so long that she has struggled to engage students effectively in her 'standard' courses recently.

According to Patty, she feels supported in various ways as a teacher, including effective administrative leadership at the school and district level. She also classifies her current student body as fairly liberal, which is different from her past teaching contexts. Still, she specifically highlights IB standards as the driver for cultural and socially relevant conversations in her classroom, allowing her freedom to dig deeply into topics with less fear of repercussion.

**Patty:** IB is sort of outside all of the laws we have. So, there are five areas that I teach that are like the five pillars of what we do in world language and whatever is within them. You know, what we can talk about. So we've got one that's called 'sharing the planet' and we talk about all kinds of things in that, kind of whatever students are interested in. We start with a basis of vocabulary and ideas. But then, if they have a question on top of that, then we'll dig into that. And that gets, you know, fairly liberal. We talk about laws in other places and compare them with ours. We talk a lot about racism and the history of racism in other countries as well as here. I'm not saying we get super deep into like, you know, we read books about racism in Brazil, or whatever but...

**Liv:** The topics freely come up.

**Patty:** Yeah, yup and I don't have to worry about anybody saying, you know, "Well, you're talking about American racism like we're a bad place". Nope, we're just talking about racism.

Here, Patty references the current state law that restricts teachers from including critical perspectives in K12 public schools, particularly as they pertain to race or sex (Prohibited Concepts, 2022/2025). In Patty's reflections, she shares how her approach to teaching about immigrants, immigration, and related stereotypes has shifted over the years. In the nineties, while teaching in Florida and primarily rural contexts with student populations that she viewed as "raised anti-immigrant", she opted to take students' voiced assumptions about the local Spanish-speaking population and examine these stereotypes as a class as they came up.

Originally what I did when I was teaching middle school Spanish, we would talk about all of the - this was back in the nineties, and students had very strong opinions about what *Mexicans* were like. We were living in North Florida, and they're like, why do they always smell? Why do they always look at me when I'm at Walmart? Why do they all pile out of a car together? Why are there so many *whatever*... And so I said, well, let's just think about it. Let's take all of those negative stereotypes and see if we can find a reason that people might live those ways. And I said also, they're not staring at you in Walmart. They're doing their own thing. And you are hearing them speak another language and freaking out, so settle down. So, we talked about what it would be like to come here and be poor, and to not know the language, and to have to live with a bunch of people because you can't afford to rent your own lovely place *and* to be sending a bunch of your money home. And they would end up with that being like, 'Okay, wait a minute, now I get it.' And it was really nice. I was worried about it the first time I did it. Because it's like, 'Yeah, let's pile on those stereotypes! And then let's discuss them.' But yeah, it ended up being really helpful. So, I don't do that exactly anymore, because I think that's more fraught, maybe.

Patty identified the political climate as a major contributor to the 'fraught' environment, and the fear of students misinterpreting the conversational goals of examining stereotypes and thus relaying misinformation to parents at home. This happened once, Patty relates, with a Latina student who went home and told her parents that Patty "was teaching stereotypes". Despite heightened political tensions in the workplace, Patty shares that her students now are different than they were, which she attributes to a combination of time (nineties vs. today), age (middle vs. high), and place (rural vs. urban). She expressed that her students today have access to more information and, thus, are not making the same broad-stroke assumptions. Wassell et al. (2019) shared similar findings of today's students being ready and willing to engage with social justice themes. This creates "an environment of acceptance, openness, and awareness" (p. 10),

permitting teachers to move forward more comfortably with challenging topics. In Patty's classroom today, fighting against misconceptions is less at the forefront, which has shifted her approach to teaching cultural and critical issues.

Her current approach to critical issues, such as collectively defining culture and discussing immigration, involves challenging students to broaden and deepen their perspectives by asking them many questions. The IB approach specifically aims to help students ask challenging questions (IBO, 2025), so question-asking is at the forefront of Patty's instructional goals. Patty views her duty as a Spanish teacher to help students widen their worldviews, which is inextricably linked to teaching culture. When asked how she defines culture for the WL classroom, she responded:

That is a question I ask them, because 'What is a Culture?' is one of the units we do. So, it's a huge group of things all put together. It's the language. It's the shared history. It's the practices, the way that people approach work and life and the work-life balance. And you know what you eat and for how long, it's the daily schedule. It's all of that stuff. So, when we talk about it, we try and build it up from like, you know, history. And can you become part of the culture if you don't have the history? And can you join a culture, you know, when you've lived in another culture? And whatever. Can you really be part of that culture? Yeah, I mean, it's... it's all of that. It's the... I don't know, the years that you go to school, the choices that you make in your life that you don't have to make somewhere else. Everything.

When discussing immigrants and immigration, rather than debunking stereotypes, Patty focuses on asking her students to consider what contexts or realities would require them to reassess their needs and act on relocating. Through this hypothetical repositioning, Patty elicits students' critical thinking around immigration issues, emphasizing the students' ownness as they troubleshoot through different scenarios.

Now we talk about immigration and, and why, and under what circumstances would *you* do it, you know, like what would have to happen in the United States for you to go to Canada, or Mexico, or Europe, or whatever. What would make you go. I actually did that in the past, too. When they would complain about Latinos, or whatever, I'd say. Well, how did you choose where to be born? What made you decide to live in the US? To be born in the US? And they're like, what are you talking about? And that kind of helps. But also, you know that conversation, like, 'under what circumstances'. So, you have two children... Or you know, think about your mom right now. See, she can't get a job. She can't

make enough money. You're not getting an education. What would she do? How would she live to get you a better life? That often just helps them see it a little bit better.

When differentiating between cultural, critical, or socially relevant topics in class, Patty readily claims cultural and socially relevant (“anything students ask about”) as topics they address, but she is reluctant to claim engaging with critical issues in class. She equates critical issues to critical thinking but believes that because the aim in the WL classroom is to conduct conversations in the target language (TL), the content-specific critical thinking that takes place is inevitably simpler, given the students’ limited language proficiency levels.

***On Student Interaction: “A silent classroom is so boring”***

Patty believes that students learn through sharing and interacting with each other in the Spanish language classroom. Classroom set-up regulations post-COVID have complicated her preferences. Whereas she used to cluster desks into student groups of four, she now has students paired off and seated in rows. Sometimes, students will move desks around temporarily, but rows have become the norm, which “makes me feel so lame,” Patty says. Nonetheless, she continues to prioritize shoulder partners and small groups for interactive activities. She regularly creates opportunities for students to interact using the TL and encourages students to use their hands and their bodies when communicating. “It gets really funny watching them [speak with each other]. Because they’ll be so big with the way they talk,” she says. “A silent classroom is so boring.”

In the past, Patty has hosted *tertulias* during the lunch hour at her high school and is interested in starting them up again. Once a month, especially as students prepare for their IB exams, Patty would invite them to her classroom for casual conversations over the lunch hour. Students could propose topics, or Patty would have something prepared with key vocabulary on the board. Her students have responded very well to this format. Patty said she is not interested in the extracurricular commitments of hosting a Spanish club or the exclusionary nature of a Spanish honors society. The lunch hour *tertulias*, she felt, provide a relaxed atmosphere for all interested students to gather, with minimal preparation required, to advance student engagement and conversation skills.

***Reflections on CCBI: “We have to build up the language first”***

Patty was motivated to participate in the summer training because she felt that her teaching practice “gets stale” and she was looking for new ideas. She specifically mentioned improving her questioning techniques, a cornerstone of the IB’s inquiry-based teaching and learning curriculum.

To track teachers’ thinking during the institute, Patty and the other participants completed Google form journal entries at the end of each training day (**Table 4**). After each of the first three days, I asked the teachers to share (1) their main takeaways, (2) their hesitations or doubts regarding CCBI pedagogy, and (3) their ideas for their classroom inspired by CCBI pedagogy.

Patty agreed to participate in this training for two primary reasons: (1) to begin the school year inspired and (2) to improve her questioning techniques around cultural conversations. The responses in the first and third columns (**Table 4**) offer evidence of these initial goals for attending, and she is fairly enthusiastic. After the third day (**Table 4**, bottom left, *italicized*), Patty explicitly states that she feels she will start the year in a better place. The idea of norm and goal setting, as she mentions across Day One entries, can provide a starting point for her to set the stage for meaningful conversations in the classroom. She also mentioned her excitement about how CCBI pedagogy might support student conversations around complex IB readings and topics (**Table 4**, bottom right box). Day Two responses indicate active thinking and planning for her own classroom context, as demonstrated through the notes she linked with ideas for classroom implementation, which consists of a list of brainstormed questions on cultural topics (immigration, defining culture, influence of symbols on culture) and moral questions (What does it mean to be a good person? Why do we go to school? What if a friend does something illegal/dangerous/careless? What are my responsibilities?).

As observed and documented in my research field notes, Patty was interested specifically in how teachers act as facilitators in CCBI. When students engage in an independent JPA, the teacher notes how students are responding, if they are sharing freely, if anyone in the group needs to be invited into the conversation, if there is evidence of non-verbal participation, and if students are more concerned with finishing the task rather than collaborating, etc.

**Table 4** Patty's Reflective Journal Entries

|       | <u>Prompt 1:</u><br><i>What were your <b>main take aways</b> from this day of training?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <u>Prompt 2:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>hesitations or doubts</b> you might have about CCBI for your own classroom.</i>                                                                             | <u>Prompt 3:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>ideas or inspirations</b> you're having for your own classroom, inspired by CCBI pedagogy.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | There are loads of acronyms, having agreed-on expectations is essential, giving students the vocabulary to discuss/agree on/disagree on academic topics is a first step                                                                                                                                             | So far, the videos and examples are mostly of elementary school. I worry about putting this all together in a way that will keep teens enthusiastic.                                               | Set behavioral norms, do goal setting, use the one-of-these-things-is-not-like-another with vocab.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Day 2 | I see more ways that this can fit into a high school world language classroom. I have ideas for how to use this system with an IB reading assignment. The Learning Pit is a great way to think about how people learn, and I feel more like I can both plan and use it in classes.                                  | I'm concerned about using this in the target language.                                                                                                                                             | <i>[Patty shares a Google doc link to her notes from the day. It includes a link to The Learning Pit Youtube video; questions she has generated for class discussions on immigration, being fluent, and culture, friendship; questions she had AI generate about culture per a fellow participant's suggestion; using US symbols to lead discussions ("Is the flag our culture?"); have students build culture quilts (for country, for family, for friend groups).]</i> |
| Day 3 | This training is way deeper and broader than I thought it would be. I've learned a ton about the practices and strategies, but also loads more other things-- like collocations, naming conventions, intellectual hospitality, and more. <i>I feel like I'll start the school year in a better place this year.</i> | The idea of using the JPAs weekly (or bi-weekly, since we have classes every other day) seems a little overwhelming. And it's a little daunting to try to do conversations in the target language. | I'm excited to use this with language family and dictionary-use conversations to start out my lower-level classes. Also, there are difficult readings we do in IB classes that I think my students will do better using this pedagogy. I think I'm most excited about having deeper and wider talks (probably using English) about defining things like culture & immigrants with students, because these are conversations that have fizzled in previous years.         |

The CCBI workshop leader stated, “Don’t just listen for the answer, but how [students] are processing the answer. Facilitate with well-placed questions. How can our listening shape our questions and help us differentiate our questions?” (see also Mellom et al., 2019, p. 70). Patty appreciated that the teacher is not focusing on the right vs. the wrong, but rather the many ways something might be said, expressed, or discussed. Patty’s positive response to this approach reflects her concern with deepening student conversations through effective questioning. Establishing clear teacher goals regarding listening and observation during the independent collaborative task can strengthen the intentionality behind teacher questioning. During this portion of the training, Patty and other participants across the larger group discuss the difficulty of coming up with questions “on the spot”. It was suggested that AI can be a great tool to anticipate or prepare questions before implementing classroom lessons. Patty immediately played around with ChatGPT and generated 15 supporting questions to ‘What is a culture?’, which she placed in the shared document (**Table 4**, Day 2, last column).

Despite mentioning in the bottom right response a few ideas for lower levels to engage in productive conversations at the beginning of the school year, Patty feels overwhelmed at the idea of implementing CCBI strategies in the TL. Based on our interactions, it was evident that Patty highly values TL use in the classroom. All instances of student interaction that she mentioned in her entrance interview involved simple conversations between students using the TL. In the initial interview and in the final focus group, Patty repeatedly brings up the notion that before engaging in any conversation in class, she must “build up the language,” or “come up with the language first.” According to my researcher field notes on the last day of the institute, Patty expressed to the group that the CCBI training experience has really made her reflect on the trajectory of her 30 years in the classroom and how she has moved away from a grammar/translation method into the IB space, which is more conversational and content-focused. She shares that while maintaining a communicative approach is a priority for her, it is still difficult and requires a lot of effort.

In her final journal entry after the last training day, Patty said her goal was to use collaborative conversations (IC-JPAs and JPAs) with IB classes every other week to cover some of the deeper topics that her classes needed to discuss. Throughout the training, she was enthusiastic that collaborative tasks such as collectively negotiating t-charts could offer

significant benefits as her IB students prepare to write 400-word argumentative essays, which traditionally have been challenging for them. Patty focused heavily on questioning as a driver to support quality conversations in her classes and to push students' thinking and language use.

During the training, we viewed a video called *The Learning Pit* by James Nottingham, who created the Learning Challenge model to help develop students' resilience and growth mindset (Nottingham, 2016). In a follow-up group discussion, we were given the question "What is the importance of throwing students into the pit?" Patty responded, "The students don't just become complacent – here's the answer 'pat pat' [on the head], check, we're done." This technique is central to CCBI pedagogy and was demonstrated in various ways throughout the institute. As students begin to decipher their response or solution and climb out of the pit, the teacher poses a follow-up question or challenge and the students "jump right back in," said Patty. Armed with evidence that CCBI can support students' ability to write effectively and engage collaboratively in civil conversations, Patty exclaimed at the end of one of the training days, "these students could be in congress, and it would be wonderful."

In the final focus group, which took place on October 21<sup>st</sup> or the 11<sup>th</sup> week of school, Patty, the other two participating teachers, and I discussed whether or not they had incorporated any aspects of CCBI in their current teaching. Patty felt that she was just coming up on a few topics that would fit well with CCBI tasks but had yet to implement any.

**Patty:** I am just coming up on a couple of things that I feel will lend themselves really well to that. But I started the year with five different classes. And I just thought, I need to get started before I try and bring in something new. I definitely did the like, "Let's set our plans for the school year. Let's discuss, you know, what we want to do in this class," and –

**Liv:** Do you mean goals and norms and stuff, or no?

**Patty:** Yes!

**Liv:** Yeah, okay, setting the culture, kind of.

**Patty:** Yes, so I did a lot of that, and I've tried to bring in things where they can express their opinions, you know, freely. But to actually have little groups. I'm thinking about that for actually, this week. I'm thinking on Wednesday we're going to start a unit on community and have them talk about what is a community. And kind of rate how important different things are within the community.

Later in the focus group and after the focus group, I followed up with Patty about her experience with norm-setting. She and her students collaboratively came up with classroom norms and Patty posted them on the wall. She said, “towards the beginning we referred a lot to our norms. And it’s probably my fault that we’ve fallen away from that.” Patty had the norms posted for the first four weeks of the school year but took them down to make room for other student work. The list of norms got shuffled around the classroom for a while, eventually to be thrown out in early November.

Despite waning success with classroom norms, Patty continued to contemplate how she might implement CCBI across her five different courses. She discussed doing something in English with her Honors Three students and trying a sorting activity with her heritage language learners. She was concerned that the “silliness” of her HLs would interfere with productive work. Patty struggles with getting her HLs to actively participate, which is not a reality for her IB courses. She also shared that her HLs participate best when there is a written requirement as they seem reluctant to share any extended personal opinions orally. This topic came up in the focus group, which gave us an opportunity to troubleshoot as a community.

**Patty:** In my IB classes they all participate. It's just the heritage that doesn't for me. I don't know. It feels like they are accustomed to having like, work to do on a piece of paper, and then, you know, then they can ignore me. So, I'm trying to change that. But who knows.

**Sofia:** So, they are participating in short sentences, just not thoughtful sentences that touch feelings or...

**Patty:** Right.

**Liv:** So, some of those critical topics or emotional topics like you said, or potentially like socially relevant topics are harder for them to discuss out loud, you think?

**Patty:** For me. It's just anything that is not on a... that isn't either written down, or each of us has to say it. You know if it's something where I just call on one person. Say, what do you think about this? They're like. Eh...mmnmn.. [looking down in avoidance or disengaged]

**Liv:** Sure.

**Patty:** Yeah,

**Maddie:** Would they discuss it in a small group, or not? Like if we put them in with just a couple of people, do you think they would discuss it?

**Patty:** Well, that's one of the things I'm working on. But I've kind of tried that. I've said, like, you know, talk to your partner. Talk to whoever's closest to you about this, and then... Maybe if I said, and then write it down, you know, write down what each of you thinks about this, that would probably work. Because it doesn't work having them each talk to each other, and then report it to me. They don't like that.

**Liv:** Well, and I think that... if we go back to the CCBI stuff, I think, having that tangible product is essential for achieving the conversation, right? Because the expectation is there, then, is that their group produces the product.

**Patty:** Yeah.

**Liv:** So in theory, that could kind of take the place of that piece that they think is for the grade. You know, it kind of forces their hand and we have to engage to get this stuff written down.

**Maddie:** It also separates them one spot from their feelings. So, if they work in a small group, and they all write down their feelings, and they report back as a group their feelings then they're not putting themselves out there because it's you know it's not, "Hey? This is what I think." It's, "This is what *we* think."

Patty's HL students were having difficulties breaking away from the Initiation, Response, Evaluation (IRE) pattern of classroom discourse (Rymes, 2016). She stated that her students are comfortable engaging in written drills or repeated calls and responses, but if she asks an individual for a more nuanced opinion, her HL students tend to struggle. Patty has continued to rely on shoulder partners, a think-pair-share approach, something she commonly employed prior to CCBI training. The other focus group members, including myself as the researcher, discussed how CCBI strategies such as productive task completion (T-chart, cartesian plan, Venn diagram) might raise student accountability, and as Maddie mentioned, students may then feel more comfortable sharing with the whole class. They may no longer feel put on the spot individually and instead can present their group's collective opinion or findings.

Patty continued to be enthusiastic about CCBI pedagogy in the final focus group but insisted that it is harder to implement in world language classrooms, specifically at the high school level. She felt that much of what was presented at the institute was video evidence from elementary classrooms. Patty states, "I was *crazy* about what I saw. I thought that was so cool that those kids are being taught to do that. And I think it's, I think it's excellent. I am so excited to teach kids who've learned how to do that. But um... yeah, it's trickier [in my context]." Here,

Patty alludes to the necessity of a larger collective shift where CCBI would have to be instilled more broadly across the district and at younger age levels, and teachers could then capitalize on those habits through the years. It feels like a steep climb to make this shift with her current Spanish classes.

## **Case Study Two**

Maddie is entering her 23<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching Spanish. She began as a middle school teacher and has taught “a little bit of everything,” including high school and community college levels, both in-person and virtual, and hybrid-remote for public schools that do not have a dedicated language teacher. She has remained in the role of district virtual school Spanish teacher post-COVID and has been proactive in designing online materials to share across the district for all teachers to use. She teaches mostly lower-level Spanish online and blames early graduation for diminished enrollment in upper-level courses across online and in-person settings. Despite taking many Spanish classes throughout high school, she credits her own language education to her college major and a one-semester study abroad in Mexico. “I didn't have a really good experience with the Spanish teachers I had [in high school].” I asked for clarification in her first interview. She replied, “The grammar/vocab [approach], teachers who never spoke the language. I even took up to level three. They never, ever spoke in Spanish in class. So, I... Yeah, but then when I went to college, it was kind of funny because then the teachers only speak in Spanish.” Maddie maximizes TL use in her classes. She recalls one time when a grandparent complained about her instruction, stating that it is not a Spanish immersion program. Maddie took what was intended to be a critique as a wonderful compliment.

### ***Maddie: “A language teacher is a travel agent”***

Maddie’s metaphor that she shared in the introductory questionnaire was, “a world language teacher is like a travel agent because we show students all the exciting places they could visit and cultures they could enjoy.” This initial comparison seemed to take a ‘foreign’ stance that has been contested in the field of WL education in recent decades (see Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008). The term ‘foreign’ ignores local linguistic communities. For example, Spanish has a “heterogeneous identity” in the US dependent upon an individual’s linguistic background (p. 147). However, my assumption of her taking this foreign stance was

quickly challenged when I asked for clarification in the follow-up interview. Maddie viewed a travel agent's role as one that *upended* what she viewed as common assumptions that others have about Spanish speakers.

So, most of my students probably just think *Mexico* when they think of Spanish. So, whenever I'm teaching the courses, I make sure to find authentic resources from all Spanish speaking countries, because I want my students to have heard all the different accents. I don't want them to just know how to understand someone from Mexico or just someone from Spain. I want them to hear every accent.

Her perspective accounted for the US context and students' abilities to engage effectively with diverse local populations. She likes to share a music video from Colombia that incorporates a variety of Colombian artists and highlights different regions. "I like to show that one because a lot of times students get a bad impression of a country. So, it's nice to show them songs where they see how beautiful a country is. Yeah, it's not defined by its stereotype of having drug lords." Maddie uses authentic resources to actively negotiate stereotypes with students.

Maddie emphasizes that over the course of her 23 years of teaching, she has made a significant shift from a grammar-vocabulary-based curriculum to one that focuses more heavily on cultural and communicative competence. She credits increased access to authentic resources online, and an increasingly diverse local community and school population.

It's a little bit easier now, now that we have more Hispanics in our community, now that we have more like... even watch TV, you'll see commercials in Spanish. Now that we just have more access, most of my students have Spanish songs they like. You know, it's not as hard of a sell anymore as it was, but it was a hard sell when I first started.

She also credits excellent administration for supporting her evolving practice. Maddie's school district, the same district of all three participating teachers, is one of four in Tennessee, out of 147, that has a central office administrator dedicated to WL education. This person organizes targeted professional and curricular development for WLs, a support that the majority of WL educators do not receive across the state (Detwiler, forthcoming).

***On Teaching Culture: "It has taken years to accumulate, to research, and find resources"***

In line with Maddie's preference for exposing students to a wide variety of speakers, Maddie relies heavily on authentic resources as a source of culture and as tools to help students increase their communicative competence in her class and in the broader community.

I do a lot of YouTube videos on different topics in the classroom. So, weather forecast if we're doing weather, you know, you can go to the Spanish weather.com and pull authentic resources, because I don't want my students going out there and saying, "It is cold. It is sunny." Because that's not really how we speak in English or Spanish. So, I teach them how to say like. It is mostly cloudy. It is, you know, things like that. I try to teach them, even the one, you know, there's a 50% chance of rain. My Spanish One students learn that kind of vocabulary, and then they're exposed to the authentic texts, so that they're not going out there like little kids. They can actually express themselves... I mean, we have to teach our students to do things very simply at first, because they can't do the more advanced, but we can still expose them to the authentic way that people do things. Because we use the ACTFL principles, you tailor the task, you don't tailor the text. So you may pick a text that's a little more complex, but you only have your students pick out what they understand from that. That way they're getting exposed to that authentic language, and you're helping, you're scaffolding your activities so that they can actually be successful in that.

By exposing students to audiovisual materials with a variety of speakers from differing geographical and linguistic backgrounds who are using the target language in authentic contexts, Maddie intends for her students to be better prepared for when they take the ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) exam at the end of the semester. Her district has adopted this standardized exam, which requires students to listen to a proficient Spanish speaker and record their responses in a back-and-forth format on the exam platform. This performance assessment shapes Maddie's instructional goals throughout the semester. As made apparent in her reference to ACTFL's "tailor the task, not the text" (ACTFL, n.d.), Maddie's practice is informed by ACTFL guidelines and the World Readiness Standards. During the CCBI summer institute, when the state literacy standards were referenced for the state where the institute was held, she immediately pulled up her own state standards to help make the conversation relevant to her context.

When asked about the difference between cultural, critical, and socially relevant topics, Maddie stated that culture is "more of an overview". Her lower-level students learn about culture through music videos, country-specific videos, and texts on topics ranging from food to festivals to daily routines. Cultural topics become more critical or socially relevant when you "really want students to think about things", says Maddie. In her school district, units that support critical thinking around social or cultural issues happen primarily in third-year language classes and

beyond, with the idea that they can better engage with more complex resources and express more complex thoughts in the TL.

Maddie's third-year students discuss personal and public identity through open-ended questions like, what defines us? And what is culture? "Culture," Maddie states, "is hard to define because there are so many different influences, and everybody really has their own unique culture within their own home and their own family and beyond". In a unit on food, Maddie has her students watch a video on the Coca-colonization of Mexico, or how popular culture in the U.S. has infiltrated the rest of the world by marketing products abroad. They examine the effects of sugar soda on the population, access to healthcare, and compare and contrast these realities across the US and Mexico. Other units she considers to be socially relevant include "Is it art or vandalism?" in which students research street art from various countries. Students also examine political content through music, such as the Argentinean *desaparecidos* and *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, victims of the Dirty War of the 70s and 80s, and similar civil unrest across other countries in the Spanish-speaking world.

In her second-year course, Maddie had students explore what immigrant resources are available in their town. She framed the 'immigration lesson' in this way to potentially avoid controversial or offensive student perspectives in class. Students had to interview a recent immigrant and produce a podcast on immigrant experiences and local resources. She also invited the district's ELL supervisor to speak to her class. Students learned about a community center for the Spanish-speaking community, met various community members, and learned that 50% of the local ELL student population is native-born, meaning that many of their ELL classmates are US citizens. Maddie notes that it has taken years for her to collect resources and develop these units. She has never received any pushback from students or parents regarding the content she teaches, even though she always offers the option for an alternative assignment if students, parents, or guardians feel uncomfortable.

***On Student Interaction: "I think we'll do better [online] as we continue through"***

Maddie indicates that student interaction is an absolute necessity in the Spanish classroom. "Students have to speak to each other in order to learn to be proficient in the language". The biggest barrier to spoken interaction is that her online students prefer to use the chat feature during class. She plans at least one collaborative activity that takes place in breakout

rooms per week to help ensure students are speaking with each other more directly. Occasionally, to encourage students to speak, she will clarify expectations around an interpersonal activity and then record student sessions. She informs students that if the recording doesn't clearly show effort toward speaking with each other in the target language, they will receive a zero.

Maddie expressed frustration with what she sees as a new trend in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) within her virtual school. Since the pandemic, she has seen a shift in the accommodations made for student interaction and communication, which has a direct impact on students' abilities to achieve world language class objectives.

The one issue I'm having, and I'm going to have to figure out how to address this legally, is that... so, if I was in a classroom I would never have a student with an IEP that said they didn't have to speak but for some reason, since we're virtual, some people think it's okay to put in an IEP that the students don't have to speak. And I'm like, no, you cannot write any accommodations that allow the student to not be accountable for the objectives of the course, and speaking is one of the main objectives. So, then they'll be like, "Well, then, they can just do the assignment on their own." Well, you don't get the same interaction doing the assignment on your own as you do working with another person. So, if I record a question, they listen and they reply back - yes, they're getting speaking practice, but it's not on-the-spot reacting. You know what I mean? It's not the same. So, that's one I don't know how to... I don't know how to address that.

Here, Maddie discusses student achievement in interpersonal communication. Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication are the three primary communicative modes that are taught in WL education today (ACTFL, 2015). Interpersonal communication is understanding and producing meaning through interaction with a fellow interlocutor (Henshaw & Hawkins, 2022). While this can be done asynchronously through written communication or via back-and-forth recorded conversations, as Maddie explained above, synchronous face-to-face spontaneous conversation is also essential to increasing proficiency when communicating in another language. All three modes, interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal, are promoted by the ACTFL World Readiness Standards, adopted by the state standards for world languages, and are the curricular expectations at the district level where Maddie works.

Overall, Maddie feels that her middle and elementary school students excel in the virtual school environment, both academically and socially, as compared to her high school students.

She theorizes that high school students were abruptly thrust into the virtual environment during COVID and have had a more difficult time adjusting to the modality. In contrast, the younger cohorts have grown up in and thus become accustomed to the virtual educational space.

I think we'll do better as we continue through, but a lot of our high school students, and they're kind of graduating out, didn't know how to do virtual, because virtual was something that they did starting in high school. But our middle school and our elementary do virtual well, because they've always been in virtual, so they're a little more social. So, like, I had a middle school class that would chat with each other and knew each other, and where everybody was in the same class, we had a little bit more socialization. In high school, no. If you put them in the breakout rooms, they will. Some will chat and make friends. I did have one that loved to put little memes and things in the chat in one of my classes, and I let him because that was a way for them to communicate and chat, and they would make comments. If we play games, they'll roast each other in the chat. And so that's kind of fun. So, there's a little bit [of socializing]. But no, it's a little more awkward [in high school]. But like I said, I think it'll get better as we have kids that are... They know how to live in the virtual school environment versus those that just, kind of, transitioned there. A lot of the kids are there because they don't want to socialize, you know? That's why they're virtual.

Communication in the online environment is shaped by the availability of alternative modes, like the chat feature and turning one's camera on or off. The COVID pandemic forced entire school populations into the virtual environment, leaving little time to acclimate. Maddie also suggests there are types of students who might be attracted to the virtual environment, where a need to relate to and communicate with others could be viewed as less necessary. Nonetheless, Maddie seems confident that the virtual learning space is just as viable as in-person learning if done well.

I will tell you that one thing that I've learned is that the myth that they don't learn virtually is just such a lie. Good teaching is good teaching, you know? Excellent teaching is excellent teaching. If teachers know what they're doing and they just adapt for the virtual environment, their students can learn just as much, if not more, than they can in person

Maddie is passionate about her work and collaborates extensively with her district. She serves on the WL assessment committee, creates open-source online materials to share with fellow WL teachers, and fills teaching gaps as a virtual instructor when there are temporary teaching shortages across the district.

***Reflections on CCBI: “I would like to try...I just haven’t had the opportunity”***

Maddie expressed interest in creating tasks around short stories, music, and current events prior to attending the institute. However, in my researcher field notes and researcher journal that I kept during the summer institute, I noted that Maddie was unclear about the goals of the research study, and my expectations for the participating language teachers. In my first journal entry on the night before the institute began and after having dinner with all three participating teachers, I wrote:

She [Maddie] was surprised by the ELL focus of the presurvey from the institute even though it was communicated that this approach [CCBI] was initially established for ELL and the idea of this project is to see how WL teachers interpret, interact, and take it up (or not) for use in their own classrooms. I hope that I clarified that a little bit at dinner... but I am wondering how she’s going to respond in the coming days.

In the early afternoon of day two of the institute, Maddie spoke with me during a snack break, which I noted down in my field notes:

[Maddie] asks for clarification about what exactly I am expecting of them for this study, she mentioned what to do “if we already do this”. I reiterated that while I suggest they take the strategies laid forth in the seminar and consider them for a cultural, critical, or socially relevant lesson and develop a task card for that, it is ultimately up to them to see what takeaways are relevant for their work. CCBI is a pedagogy, and my suggestion is to use it to support teaching culture, critical, and/or socially relevant topics. I am interested to see how they mobilize, what they mobilize, why they mobilize based on the reflections and thought processes that the institute brought about or encouraged.

Later in day two, the institute introduced the Pat Mora (2024) video titled *My Bilingual Home*, which discusses home language versus school language. This moment captured Maddie’s attention, and she started formulating possibilities for her own classroom. On day three, I noted the following encounter in my field notes:

Maddie approaches the table after getting coffee and asks Sofia “What are you thinking, do you have an idea for your classes?” Sofia kind of hedged and hesitated (The question came as a bit of a surprise) and Maddie says “I think I have an idea!” And she tells us about posing the question, “What language do you speak at home?” and using the Pat Mora video we watched as part of her lesson. Her wheels are turning!

Despite some need for clarification early on, Maddie participated actively and found relevance in the Pat Mora (2024) content. This motivated her planning throughout the remaining institute sessions, which can be seen in the following reflective journal entries (**Table 5**).

Similarities between Maddie and Patty's reflective journal entries are apparent. Some of the shared positive reflections include the importance of establishing classroom norms, the meaningful concept of the 'learning pit', and how CCBI can help to support students in learning to cite textual evidence. Both Maddie and Patty are concerned with difficulties in mobilizing CCBI in world language classrooms that focus on developing the TL, especially with lower-proficiency learners. Maddie states in days two and three that scaffolding and sentence starters would be needed in order to engage students effectively in IC-JPAs and JPAs, which is something that CCBI pedagogy recommends.

Whereas Patty's biggest takeaway was the 'learning pit' and developing her questioning techniques, Maddie's interest was piqued by the module on Pat Mora (2024), an award-winning bilingual American poet and author. This module involved our table group (Maddie, Patty, Sofia, myself, and an ESL teacher from a neighboring state) working together on a mosaic, or a cultural found poem. This is one of CCBI's suggested productive tasks. Everyone at our table received a different one-page immigrant story told in the first person. We were each tasked with highlighting meaningful words or phrases from our monographs. Then, we were instructed to collectively create an original poem using the selected language from our individual stories. We titled our collective poem on the immigrant experience, *Perspectivas*, or perspectives. A picture of our mosaic can be seen in Figure 4 in Appendix F. Maddie repeatedly referenced the mosaic activity as something she would like to try in her classes throughout the remaining institute training and subsequent reflections. Similar to Patty's interest in improving student outcomes in their argumentative writing, Maddie viewed the mosaic activity as a tool to support students' developing skills in citing textual evidence.

Ultimately, Maddie was an enthusiastic institute participant who proactively engaged in conversation and offered examples of materials from her online courses when relevant. As mentioned, early on, Maddie looked up her State's standards for WLs to compare them to the ELA and other Georgia state standards referenced during norm and goal setting at the institute

**Table 5** *Maddie's Reflective Journal Entries*

|       | <u>Prompt 1:</u><br><i>What were your <b>main take aways</b> from this day of training?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <u>Prompt 2:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>hesitations or doubts</b> you might have about CCBI for your own classroom.</i>                        | <u>Prompt 3:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>ideas or inspirations</b> you're having for your own classroom, inspired by CCBI pedagogy.</i>                                                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | Students learn when they are given high quality activities that push them academically. 2. Using JPAs can help students to feel safe enough to participate and share. 3. Setting norms as a class will allow students to set expectations that they will follow (ownership).                                                                                                                                               | The complexity of the activities would be difficult for level 1 and 2, but with some adaptations, I could add a few activities to that level. | Creating more activities using authentic texts were students find textual evidence. This could be completed in breakout rooms with a shared Google Doc T-chart or other supporting graphic organizer.  |
| Day 2 | Praise students for effort not intelligence. Create questions that push students to fall in the "pit" and need to work cognitively to get out of that pit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | The complexity of the language needed to use this is a challenge.                                                                             | In Spanish 2, I could use the video of Pat Mora discussing bilingualism in the home. They can discuss home vs school language. This would need to be scaffolded to their level with sentence starters. |
| Day 3 | I liked the mosaic activity. I could use this in my classroom. Also, the JPA would be a way to increase proficiency in Spanish, too. We often ask our students to cite evidence on our quizzes and Module tests. These activities would allow our students to understand what they need to provide on these assessments. It would allow them to develop the skills needed to find textual evidence to cite in these exams. | I just need to scaffold for the level I am teaching.                                                                                          | I would like to try a mosaic activity.                                                                                                                                                                 |

(Figure 3 in Appendix E). She drew connections to her State's standards on interpersonal communication and that, in her experience, teachers struggle with expectations around classroom interaction overall, specifically with student willingness, student anxiety, and parent expectations. Interpersonal expectations are also implicated in negotiating IEP accommodations. Given that Maddie was making these connections in tandem with the institute's goal and norm-setting sessions indicates that she was considering norm and goal setting as strategies that could help support interaction in the WL classroom.

In her final journal entry at the conclusion of the institute, she wrote,

This PD has given me ideas of how to incorporate more group work. I will be creating activities in which students can discuss cultural topics. This will require me to think of sentence starters and how to simplify the activities to match my students' current proficiency level. My goal is to create one activity per module in level 2 or higher.

The Pat Mora video and Mosaic activity resonated with Maddie, serving as an entry point for her into this pedagogy. She felt this type of activity aligned well with her current practices. Whereas I concluded that Patty found the institute rejuvenating, I perceived Maddie's institute training as affirming of her current practices.

In the final focus group, Maddie's first share was one of feeling overwhelmed, similar to Patty's beginning-of-the-year experience. Despite her summer intentions of incorporating CCBI-inspired tasks at least once per unit in certain classes, she states,

**Maddie:** I just haven't had an opportunity. I feel like we came back to school, and they're just all *mrr mrr mrr mrr* (poking her finger) and telling us how we haven't been doing everything we're supposed to do. And so now we have, like, Google sheets to fill out if someone comes in late or leaves early.

**Patty:** Oh my god.

**Maddie:** Fighting the camera battle and then attendance. And call home if they've missed two days. And I just... I'm so overwhelmed with the amount of paperwork tasks they expect us to do on a daily basis. That I feel like planning is getting shut behind. And then [names other district high school] can't keep a teacher. So, me and the other Spanish teacher, like, I just gained 2 new classes this week.

**Patty:** To do online?

**Maddy:** Yeah, because they can't find the teacher to fill that position so now I'm like the little dog, you know, like [doggy paddling].

**Liv:** Trying to stay above water...

**Maddie:** So hopefully, hopefully, things will... Usually I feel like the Spring is a lot a lot easier than the fall every year, so maybe things will be a little calmer, and I can and focus a little more in the spring and try to implement things. But I mean, we've been doing a lot of group work, and I've been making them speak a whole lot more and I've been doing my doing my best to try to get them to be more vocal and participate and I do feel like that makes a big difference.

Maddie expressed feeling significant pressure due to the new accountability procedures required by her virtual school. Her class periods have also been shortened by ten minutes. In her two new courses, she works with Spanish students asynchronously while a French teacher sits with them in person during their Spanish period to ensure they do their asynchronous work. With clear frustration, Maddie states, "I feel like teaching is getting put to second place, because I'm spending *so much* time dealing with all of this, you know."

When asked if increasing students' spoken participation was specifically a takeaway from the CCBI institute, she said it is something she has always done. Still, yes, she has intentionally added more speaking this semester. She recognizes the benefits and felt student outcomes had improved for AAPPL exam performance. Maddie intended to engage in norm and goal setting but her virtual school instituted new demands for students to have their cameras on during portions of class.

So, the only thing I do is tell people to turn their camera on. We can't create that norm, that's a norm that was created for us. I spend the entire time, 'Okay, if you don't turn your camera on and speak, I'm going to count you absent!' You know, and for some kids even that doesn't motivate them. So, I'm counting people absent just for not turning their camera on.

Maddie expressed frustration that the school has mandated her to police her students in this way. She would have preferred to leverage CCBI's norm and goal setting to entice and increase student engagement positively rather than by force, especially regarding camera use, which is a critical component of communicative competence in a virtual school setting.

Overall, Maddie said that she was glad to have attended the summer institute. As evidenced in the focus group dialogue included at the end of Patty's case study, she continues to troubleshoot and contemplate the benefits of CCBI with her colleagues. In her words, "I think it was just so much information. You just kind of absorbed it, and then you have to step back and

think about it. And then I think eventually it'll start showing up in our teaching as we have more time to process it.” Based on this response, it seems Maddie believes the experience will inevitably shape her practice, in some form or another, for the better.

### **Case Study Three**

Sofia is in her third year of teaching high school in the same district as Patty and Maddie. She was born in Chile and immigrated to the US at age fourteen. Sofia is the only participant who became a Spanish educator through an alternative pathway after a rewarding career in journalism and broadcasting and a subsequent hiatus to care for her daughter. She speaks vibrantly of being “the first female face” for a Telemundo regional station in the US Southwest. Early on, she sought a career that allowed her to use her Spanish as an asset, helping a larger audience access accurate current events.

I had that beautiful experience to use Spanish in the way I wanted to, you know, to share with everybody. I got to interview everyone, from the governor to... and what was really interesting, and to me had a lot of meaning is to translate a lot of important information to our Spanish viewers and make it in the most easy way for them to understand. You know, you don't know who's watching so you need to make that available for everybody.

Sofia eventually moved across the country for family reasons and struggled to plug into any bilingual journalism jobs in communities with lesser need. Instead, she sought other work, including bilingual customer support. She enjoyed working with a diverse international workforce that supported a company’s customer service needs until the pandemic hit. During the pandemic, she stayed home with her daughter and began offering private online Spanish conversation classes to individuals. These lessons inspired her to learn more about teaching and second language acquisition, which led her to her current career in secondary Spanish instruction. When this study began, she had just finished her second year of teaching at a high school where she didn’t feel completely at home. She was assigned very large beginning-level Spanish classes. She floated from room to room using a rolling cart and received little support from fellow language teachers. For her third year, she transferred to a different school in the same district, which promised a little more stability and professional collaboration.

***Sofia: “A language teacher is an expedition leader in the Quest for El Dorado ”***

When Sofia was asked for a teaching metaphor in the pre-interview questionnaire, she wrote that a world language teacher is like The Quest to El Dorado. Students think they will learn a language in class, but they leave with much more than “gold” or Spanish language fluency. In our follow-up interview, Sofia describes beginner Spanish students’ narrow expectations and how a year of language instruction can offer much broader cross-disciplinary connections. Sofia hopes students leave her class with a new sense of geography, culture, and linguistic variation, among other things.

I had a student who said, “Oh, you told us that word but that's not how they say it in my work.” It's like, “Oh, you're working! Oh, where do you work? Where's your coworker from?” ...”So you know what? That's in Central America, and then this one is from South America. And then they say this word in different ways, and they also say it like this”. And all those topics are like, Oh, oh, *okay!* [Eyes open wide, nodding, expressing understanding, interest, and intrigue].

She stated that she enjoys the back-and-forth with students and thinks it is exciting for their age group to engage in these conversations. Sofia challenges student perspectives by helping students reevaluate US or English-centric assumptions, which ultimately helps students be “more flexible to other things or anything they do.”

Germany in Spanish is a totally different word. And then they ask, but why don't they just say Germany? Oh, that's not even how they say it in their... Oh, wait! They speak *German*. So all these connection, all these different logical points start opening up. Or the currency exchange. You know, if you travel? What are you taking? How much money? Oh, that's going to cost you in pesos! There's so many other things that come up. So that's how I felt it was a Quest to El Dorado.

Overall, Sofia views Spanish class as an avenue for students to “learn so many other things about the culture, the environments, and the relationships”. She agreed that her interpretation of Spanish class as The Quest to El Dorado often means valuing the journey over the destination.

***On Teaching Culture: “Changing fear into curiosity”***

Sofia shared that teaching culture is necessary to increase students’ flexibility in conceptualizing the world and relating to others. Sofia views culture as inextricably linked to language. She relates stories about how culture can involve food, music, housing, and

interactions across different social scenarios, which are often interpreted differently by individuals and communicated through language. Teaching culture, she believes, is best done through the use of authentic resources.

Language is culture, the way we express ourselves and how we communicate with others. One of the best ways to teach culture in a language classroom is by utilizing authentic resources. These are objects and online media; images, music and videos from the places we talk about, including myself, by sharing personal anecdotes/stories during my time living and or traveling abroad.

Sofia specifically describes herself as an authentic resource, given her multilingual and multinational identity. It is not only the objects that help represent culture, but for Sofia, it is how we talk about them with each other. Sharing personal experiences and anecdotes from her family and life experiences are one way she can enliven the curriculum that she otherwise finds lacking in textbooks.

She felt that some challenges in teaching culture include a lack of budget “because not everything is free on the internet”. She would love to have school funds to purchase realia for her classroom, especially as a new teacher. Time is also a significant constraint, especially when she wants to address current events meaningfully in a timely manner. Finally, as a floating teacher, she expressed frustration around lack of dedicated space to keep materials. This meant she was less likely to engage students in longer-term or more hands-on projects.

Despite Sofia’s readiness to define herself as an authentic resource, she shared that she sometimes feels restricted when engaging in more critical or socially relevant topics with her students, especially given the current political context in her region and as an immigrant herself. Before attending the institute, Sofia talked about a lesson she had created for her introductory Spanish classes using the movie *A Million Miles Away*.

It was the first time I exposed myself to teach something that could be socially relevant at the same time. So, I wasn't sure. And I didn't expand too much to it. But I wanted to see how the students would react first to showing the movie, because it's about a family of migrant farm workers who eventually stay in the US. The parents obviously speak Spanish throughout the film. We did not specifically talk about immigration, but that would have been something that we could do for a class lesson... there's a whole topic that could be developed there, right? Like, what do you think? Yeah, I could ask... Would you put yourself in that position to leave home by yourself? You're under 18 and cross something

called a border and go to another country? And then, how would you feel if you had to just start learning the language? Come to work? That's the priority. There are a lot of that kind of conversations, right? So, I didn't want to do that right away with my students because I was new and I wanted to see how they reacted first. I wasn't sure. It was like new territory for me, and also you know me being as an immigrant as well.

Sofia hesitates to dig deeply into topics that might emerge as controversial in class, especially as it implicates her own identity and students' responses to it. Her hesitancy in engaging in these topics also stems from a lack of support from her fellow teachers and district. She felt she has received little guidance on how to teach cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues. Despite asking for advice on approaching these topics, especially when using texts that could raise complex questions in class, fellow teachers responded, "Well, you do, and then you just see what happens." However, Sofia was the only Spanish teacher in her building with an immigrant background. She mentions that she felt very alone in this space.

Years of language study also seemed to dictate how deep Sofia is willing to go with certain critical or socially relevant topics.

There was one teacher that said she taught some immigration in her class. But we're talking about like Spanish four level, which students have already been through several things. I feel like in Spanish one and two you're just getting students. Some of them have never seen the language before, so for them, especially Spanish one, it can be culturally shocking just to go through Spanish one the first semester. I saw that quite a bit. So, it's like, uh-uh. I mean, vocabulary is all we can do this first semester with some of them, so exposing them to topics that are so much more critical, socially - They don't even follow the news! So, I kept it very simple with Spanish one. It's not... I think to me it's like, let's see what's fun about it. Let's learn what's fun about the language first before we start to take into consideration the more critical topics. But I think one of the things was, for me, I did not have a sample of how will you do this in a classroom?

Over time, as students advance through language classes, Sofia indicates that students build up cultural competence or a level of comfort and sensitivity in wrestling with new and challenging topics. Additionally, she felt there was general messaging in the teaching profession that topics such as political and religious opinions should not be shared in the classroom. Her school has responded to political pressures by designating personnel in the library to sift through

books for inappropriate content. “Especially with language,” Sofia states, “a lot of it at some point touches politics. I mean, immigration is politics.” She feared that her lessons could be easily manipulated or misunderstood, and she needed more time to feel comfortable in the district to promote certain perspectives and know what to ask of students. Wassell et al. (2019) also found that teachers are constrained by perceived and actual threats from parents, students, and administration, which constrains a teacher’s agency around teaching for social justice. Sofia, therefore, expressed prioritizing language and cultural entertainment over critical questions, especially as her comfort level dictated it. Sofia remained neutral when teaching the *Million Miles Away* movie. She focused on “how relevant could it be for a student to, regardless of their current situation, to dream. To dream of *anything* they wanted to do. The sky is the limit.”

While immigration was a topic around which Sofia trod lightly, she did not hesitate to introduce other critical topics, often spontaneously, such as alternatives to gendered language. In Spanish, where descriptive adjectives take either a feminine or masculine ending dependent upon the gender identity of the person in question, Sofia introduces her students to the flexibility of a third option – not as a critical topic but rather as a sociolinguistic fact. When speaking of a neutral *-e* ending as opposed to just *-o* or *-a*, she states:

I did awaken that idea that, yes! We do have that. It exists, and that's what it is. It's not a debate. I wasn't criticizing or being critical about “Oh, we can't do that.” No, it has been accepted, and it's being used, and it has nothing to do how you might feel about any of this. It's what is being used. You'll see it and you'll hear it, and you don't need to correct it, kind of. I haven't made a full lesson approaching it specifically because I think it flows better where you are... while you're teaching it. It kind of floats. But anyway, that has been my approach so far.

Sofia is a cis-gender heterosexual female and not of the minority or marginalized identities that prefer gender-neutral pronouns. This leaves her less vulnerable or at risk when stance taking in this public space, unlike when engaging in topics about immigrants and immigration.

Despite Sofia still discovering her own path in how she would like to address critical or socially relevant issues in her courses, she is clear that her purpose as a language teacher is to help students discover and develop the tools they need “to open that door or to be the bridge”.

**Sofia:** This is a world where, every day more, right? We have our companies move abroad and back and forth, and I always tell them if there's a managing

position, I want you to be ready because one of those things on the list they will ask from you is to be able to work with people from other places.

**Liv:** Hmm, yeah.

**Sofia:** To have the ability to not feel like you're fearful because if something sounds different. I want you to take it and embrace it and try to pronounce it.

**Liv:** I like that. I'm combating, combating fear, right? Or...Changing fear into curiosity, into ability, into...

**Sofia:** Into *curiosity*, yes! So, I always try to highlight that.

When Sofia discussed her teaching and her students throughout this study, she often described how she encouraged bilingualism and the benefits it would afford them in the future. She pointed it out as an advantage they could not pass up, whether navigating the world more effectively, establishing richer relationships, or making more money per hour in the workplace. This might be viewed as Sofia encouraging learners' *investment* (Norton, 2013) in language learning. Investment, according to Norton (2013), recognizes feelings of ambivalence towards learning and practicing an additional language. Still, one commits to the process in order to "acquire wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money)" (p. 6).

***On Student Interaction: "They're so thirsty to get to know each other"***

Sofia expressed that she highly values interaction in her Spanish classes. Today, students have lived through the social-emotional complications of the global pandemic. They also rely heavily on screens and social media and face unprecedented school violence. Therefore, Sofia enthusiastically believes world language classrooms are perfectly positioned to develop interpersonal skills essential for today's students' social-emotional health.

Before, there was a lot of doing exercises in the book. And I want to embrace more the idea of communication, especially between the students. Nowadays, some of them come with fears, somebody might have a gun. Yeah, to *that level*! And what makes the whole difference is how much they get to know each other, from day one when they start their ninth grade. It's so crucial. And I think I have a really, really good opportunity through language, even if it's another language, to have them get to know each other. In many classes they come, and they are asked to sit and stay quiet and do their assignment. And they don't have much of an opportunity for what they want, and they're so *thirsty* to get to know each other because they want to be accepted. They want to be liked.

Sofia feels it is her responsibility to work on interactive relationship skills in class because they help build a sense of community. To increase student interaction, Sofia often uses a pass-the-ball (in her case, Leo the Lion) method, where she asks a student a question, passes Leo, the student answers, and passes it on to someone else. She finds this alleviates the stress of having to volunteer answers and supports future small-group work.

She describes the language classroom as a lab where vocabulary is the ingredients to a formula. In the (language) lab, we experiment with words and create sentences in order to express ourselves. “Testing the product” in the safety of the classroom, she says, is essential for students to feel comfortable venturing out and engaging with the wider world in a more natural and spontaneous way. Sofia reflected on a particularly notable lesson where she had students make paper fortune tellers to engage students in semi-spontaneous language exchanges.

There I am, one by one, you know, like 30 students in each class. Let's do this. It was really strange to me. It's like, “Okay, let's see, look at your neighbor, help each other because I can't go one by one,” and some of them really took charge, you know. “Let me help you. Let me do it.” And so, it was a way to connect and do this little craft with each other. “Okay, you just make it a square.” And then in teaching each other, it's like, Oh, okay... So number one, they're able to teach each other once they find something in common. Alright, there's a need. And the other one is, I know how to do this, and I want to help you. Okay!

She goes on to tell how students used the fortune tellers to interact with their peers by asking the questions they chose to put in the paper fortune teller flaps. The students begged to do the same activity in the following days. This was a light-bulb moment for Sofia, as she recognized increased student motivation. This task demonstrated that (1) students can teach each other if they have common goals, (2) the task can help establish a common goal, and (3) students want to help each other achieve the goal.

### ***Reflections on CCBI: “It does take a minute”***

Sofia did not participate in all of the reflective journal entries during the four days of the institute. However, she did offer reflections after day one and day four. These reflections are shown in **Table 6**.

Unlike Patty and Maddie, who expressed significant concerns about student preparedness and the proficiency levels required for CCBI, Sofia's initial response on day one was that it was

**Table 6** Sofia's Reflective Journal Entries

|       | <u>Prompt 1:</u><br><i>What were your <b>main take aways</b> from this day of training?</i>                                       | <u>Prompt 2:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>hesitations or doubts</b> you might have about CCBI for your own classroom.</i>                                  | <u>Prompt 3:</u><br><i>Describe any <b>ideas or inspirations</b> you're having for your own classroom, inspired by CCBI pedagogy.</i>                                                                                       |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | The pedagogy presented is possible for every level, age group. Students, overall, seem to respond well to this style of teaching. | I will have to give more deep thoughts to when to introduce the CCBI pedagogy within my lesson; plan for it properly so it will flow at the right time. | I am planning to move from the ping pong table sample to the pinball table and let the students do more of the work. Have the students ask each other their name, age, greet each other, etc. after I give the first model. |
| Day 4 | It opened my mind to see how students have many more abilities such as establishing proper conversations with each other.         | I noticed that my instructions were too much about me before and there was little room for my students to lead the way.                                 | I would like to have the students interact more with the language in a spontaneous way.                                                                                                                                     |

feasible for any level or age group. This is a first impression, and we do not see continued reflection across days two and three, which might have given more insight into Sofia's thinking around CCBI. She does acknowledge that incorporating CCBI requires significant planning, which was a significant hesitation or doubt. What the CCBI training seems to have awakened in Sofia is a decentering of the teacher in the instructional space. In the journal entry for day one, she references the "ping-pong" vs. "pinball" model. Mellom et al. (2019) use this analogy to illustrate teacher-centered instruction versus student-centered instruction. In the student-centered 'pinball' instruction, the teacher launches students into a task, and they tussle with it amongst themselves. When students become stuck or drop the ball, the teacher launches it back out to them with a new perspective, question, or challenge so that there is a continued and sustained tussle (p. 8). I noted in my field notes that on the second day of the institute, after viewing videos of students engaging in productive JPA tasks, Sofia said that she struggles to implement conversations like these in her classes that keep the momentum going. Sofia was interested in CCBI's potential to help her establish the pinball model and not solely rely on the Initiation, Response, Evaluation cycle, or Q&A (ping pong model) that can quickly die out after one teacher-student or student-student interaction (Rymes, 2016).

On the third day of the institute, when Maddie shared with Sofia her ideas about using Pat Mora's (2024) texts in class and asked if she had any ideas of how she would like to use CCBI, Sofia seemed unprepared for the question. However, on Thursday morning she circled back to this question with another tablemate. Her goal, she stated, was to try to implement some aspects of this pedagogy at least once a week. She reflected on the instances where she would have students turn and talk, saying, "How are you? What's your name?" etc., and then she would have the whole class share. She said this interaction helped students to speak more, but the whole-class review took so much time. Reframing this valuable whole-group interaction into productive small groups could save time. When discussing social-emotional learning and academic learning, Sofia reflected that CCBI practices, if effectively implemented, could support students in bringing academic content knowledge home. When parents/guardians ask, "What did you do today?" kids might be better prepared to engage them in a conversation about the day's lesson, bridging the gap between school and home and strengthening family relationships.

The school year following the summer institute presented significant changes for Sofia regarding her teaching context. In her first two years of teaching, she taught low-track Spanish-one students in an urban school setting. In her third year, she moved to an outer-ring suburban school where she taught level two-honors and Spanish heritage language classes. Patty, who taught at the same urban school as Sofia, referred to Sofia's new students as 'country kids'. This move was intentional on Sofia's part because she felt so unsupported and overwhelmed as a teacher-on-wheels at her first school. She felt a significant difference in the student population in her new context.

[Changing schools was] a much-needed change, I guess, because the group of students I have this year are so different in general than the previous ones. And it was kind of a wow-ing experience personally, because it's, to kind of identify that they can be so different sometimes. These ones, they're all super respectful, and if they're not respectful, they call each other out. They are very... Well, I do have two honors classes, but I also have a heritage class, but both of them, like even the heritage one that has mixed students. Some are little troublemakers, or they're like 90 plus percent of the time on task following along, very responsive. They're trying. They're doing the things. Even if like, maybe it's boring one day the next day, you know. they're... it's just very interesting, because they're like, *with* me. And before I didn't feel that way.

Whereas Patty and Maddie stated outright that they have not yet had time to implement CCBI as they had planned, Sofia never directly said one way or the other. Instead, she told us what was currently happening in her new classroom and how, if not exactly CCBI, she felt it was related to what she had learned over the summer institute.

Sofia talks about how she was handed a thick curriculum for two-honors, which she thought would be a challenge to get through. She was shocked at how quickly and enthusiastically her new students moved through the content. It was clear to Sofia that while her new students had higher proficiency levels and more support from home, she also felt that "... if you give them more, and you set up the expectation higher, they are able to deliver."

Her heritage language class consisted of mixed proficiency levels. Some parents complained to Sofia that their children never spoke Spanish at home. She also had newcomers, or recent immigrants from Latin America, whose English speaking and literacy skills were still developing. Sofia was very pleased with the collaborative behaviors that were taking place in her classroom two months into the year. She described how CCBI inspired her to intentionally work on interaction, relationship-building, and leadership skills early on, especially in this mixed-ability heritage group.

I have 3 newcomers, and they don't sit with them. So, there's discrimination within the classroom because they're [the rest of the students are] all 'perfect', they speak English, right? And I said, "Okay, we need to sit with our friends here, too. So now we're all friends." But that took about a month of "Okay, let's move here. Let's go there," and I will pick on them, and I say, "Y por qué me estás hablando en inglés si es clase de español? Cómo me van a hablar en español los niños de honores y ustedes no me hablan. ¡No! Ahora entonces me hablan en español."

Later, during the same final focus group, Sofia continues to discuss how the class has matured and how the three newcomers have become more comfortable.

Those three [newcomers] too have moved forward really strongly now. They feel like they lead the class and... Not leadership for everybody, but they do lead in many ways. They will be not shy to answer and then we share, "Oh, okay, that's how you say it in Guatemala, and that's how you say it in Mexico, and that's how you say it in Honduras". And at the same time the older ones [non-newcomers], and this is very interesting because it's difficult, they feel bad that they are speaking English. So, now I set them with other various different personalities, and they're able to help each other. But it took a good month for them to feel

closer to the group. First, they were kind of scared to sit with each other, and then now I have some that will help them and feel welcome to be with them. It does take a minute.

Sofia did not explicitly set co-created norms with her students, as CCBI instructs, but her intentionality around group collaboration and dispositions that support collective engagement and productive relationships are reflective of CCBI pedagogy. She came to the final focus group wanting to make that connection clear. She shared with the focus group that she been tasked with a new course next year where the two honors and heritage populations will combine and suspects that intentional relationship-building to support interaction will be essential.

### **Cross-case Discussion**

The findings of this study illustrate the complex personal and professional histories, current teaching contexts, and teaching philosophies of the participating teachers, as well as their engagement with CCBI pedagogical training and how they envisioned CCBI as an approach for their own WL classrooms. Through a methodological design based on critical reflective practice (Farrell, 2015) and instrumental case studies (Stake, 1995), I sought to answer the first two of three research questions:

1. How do world language teachers describe their own teaching philosophies and approaches regarding (a) student interaction and (b) engagement with cultural, critical, or socially relevant issues?
2. What are world language teachers' perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms?

In response to the first question, I asked teachers to share a metaphor describing what it means to be a language teacher, both through a questionnaire and then in expansion during a semi-structured interview. Each teacher offered a unique perspective, including exposing students to the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world, combatting assumptions and stereotypes, building proficiency from the ground up, and important factors beyond proficiency, such as relationship building and considering alternate perspectives. Only one teacher, Patty, included a broader perspective on her professional identity which included serving as an ad-hoc interpreter and translator in the (public) school setting. In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of these teacher metaphors, it was essential that the teachers and I revisited this topic in the follow-up

semi-structured interviews. Otherwise, as exemplified in Maddie's case study, I would have assumed a "foreign" or an "othered" perspective, without having provided her the opportunity to elaborate.

There was resounding agreement across all three teachers that interaction in the WL classroom is essential for learning. Patty felt that a quiet world language classroom is "boring", and perhaps not encompassing the spirit of learning and using language. She describes a 'not quiet' classroom as one where students are not only speaking but also physically moving and using gestures to communicate. Here, Patty taps into translanguaging ideology, where language speakers utilize their entire communicative repertoires to convey a message (Li, 2018; Tai, 2023), including body language. Sofia feels that students are hungry for the opportunity to engage with each other, form friendships and connections, and feel socially accepted. Since she views the WL classroom as a linguistic laboratory where ingredients of a language can be tested in combination to create new meaning, it is essential to encourage collaboration and teamwork. Therefore, her perspectives on relationship building and language development are complementary. Maddie, the online instructor, was enthusiastic about the potential that online learning holds for interaction. The breakout rooms, the chat feature, and the ability to record supports and holds students accountable regarding interaction. However, she feels our abilities (students, teachers, and administrators alike) are still evolving as we have abruptly entered into virtual learning due to the global pandemic. All three teachers referenced reverberating effects of the pandemic on the structure and interaction within their classrooms, ranging from physical hurdles to social shifts.

Teaching cultural, critical, or socially relevant topics presents some complexities across all teacher participants in comparison to interaction because of how teacher identities are implicated in the practice of guiding students through sensitive topics, especially in politically polarizing times. Both Patty and Sofia, who at the time were teaching in the same high school, brought up restrictive laws and the impact they have had on their school environment, such as book censoring in the library. Both Patty and Sofia were introspective on how their personal identities were entangled in their teaching of cultural or critical topics. Patty reflected on her Whiteness and "false" feelings when teaching about cultures with which she had little personal experience. Sofia expressed feelings of vulnerability due to her immigrant status, tentative to

engage in critical conversations on the topic due to uncertainty around how to manage combative or contrarian student comments effectively. Maddie did not express feelings of discomfort or inexperience. However, unlike Patty, she never expressed receiving pushback from parents, students, or administrators regarding the cultural curriculum she employed nor did she express her positionality and background as making her vulnerable like Sofia. These critical moments of discomfort can impact our practice by prompting us to examine and question our positionalities (Schwartz, 2023).

All teachers shared unique activities that they've implemented in their classes, especially beginning at level three. It is important to share that these three teachers work within the same district, which uniquely prioritizes WL education in ways that many others do not due to the presence of an administrator with a WL background overseeing the district's WL programming. As Maddie shared, the WL program has invested time in developing central themes that are designed to support integrated performance assessments, AAPPL proficiency exams, and achievement of the Seal of Biliteracy. The amount and depth of cultural, critical, and socially relevant lessons that the teachers shared from their personal teaching repertoires seem to be relative to the number of years they have been in practice. As the 23-year veteran teacher, Maddie, stated, "it has taken *years* to accumulate, to research, and to find resources". Meanwhile, after her second year of teaching, Sofia was hopeful for funding to access more authentic materials for her classroom and seeking support from colleagues for curricular planning.

Both experienced teachers, Patty and Maddie, were versed in using and leaning into the standards to support and guide their teaching. Notably, Patty called out the IB curriculum as being more supportive of teaching cultural, critical, and socially relevant issues, even over the ACTFL standards. Perhaps the five areas of the IB standards (Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organization, and Sharing the Planet) offer a framework that better engages Kubota's (2003) suggested four Ds for cultural instruction: *descriptive* rather than prescriptive, focus on *diversity* including diaspora and hybridity, cultural shifts are *dynamic*, and culture is *discursive*, invented by discourse and influenced by power and politics. While Sofia never directly implicated standards in our conversations and engagements, she suggests the discursivity of culture in that it is inextricably linked to language; we only know culture as it is

communicated through language. The IB standards also have the potential to assist WL programs (or teachers and teacher cohorts who work without supportive WL administration) in centering content in their instruction over a grammar-vocabulary syllabus. The ACTFL standards have made efforts in shifting towards a more content-centric focus by elevating the Culture (products, practices, perspectives) standard, but it is decidedly more vague than what the IB standards present.

The second research question asks about teachers' perceptions of the utility of CCBI for their classrooms. All three participating teachers were enthusiastic about the pedagogical strategies they learned at the institute and the evidence they witnessed of improved student outcomes, including both communicative skills and content knowledge. Sofia mentioned that reframing valuable whole-group interactions into smaller group tasks could simultaneously save time and increase individual student engagement. All teachers viewed the norm-setting as a useful entry point and necessary for community building, which is essential for supporting interaction in the WL classroom. Nonetheless, all teachers felt overwhelmed at the "steep climb" or ideological shift that CCBI might entail, requiring significant planning. This sense of being overwhelmed was exacerbated, especially for Maddie and Patty, by feeling pressured to have to conduct the productive tasks (IC-JPAs and JPAs) in the TL. Ultimately, the three teachers minimally implemented CCBI tasks, if at all, in the fall semester following the institute. This reality will be further explored in Chapter 5, where an ecological lens of teacher agency will be used to come to a fuller understanding of teachers' reactions, decisions, and actions regarding CCBI pedagogy.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter four presents the three case studies of the participating WL teachers. These narratives offer a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of each teacher's experience as they engaged with CCBI pedagogy and considered its applications for their unique classroom contexts. Reflective of Farrell's (2015) FRP, the narratives began with background on the teachers' philosophies and principles regarding teaching cultural content and supporting interaction in their classrooms. Next, teachers reflected on the theoretical and methodological possibilities that CCBI offered to the WL classroom. Finally, teachers set goals for future implementation of

CCBI for their classrooms. Throughout the case studies, there is evidence of collaborative dialogue as teachers worked together in a community of practice to troubleshoot classroom practices and refine their understanding of CCBI, debating its applicability to WL teaching and learning. This chapter concludes with a cross-case analysis, further exploring how the case study methodology was used to respond to the first two research questions.

## CHAPTER 5: Discussion on Teacher Agency and Overall Implications

### Interpretation of the Findings Using an Ecological Lense of Teacher Agency

While Chapter four primarily addressed research questions one and two through instrumental case studies, Chapter five focuses on answering research question three by offering an interpretation of the findings using an ecological lens of teacher agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2015).

3. How do participating teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms?

An ecological lens of teacher agency focuses heavily on the individual actor within their own unique context (present), as influenced by their life histories (past) and aspirations (future) (Priestley et al., 2015). First, I will discuss each of the three temporal dimensions of teacher agency, considering collective evidence across all participants from Chapter four's findings. I will conclude with a summary of teacher agency and implications for research, policy, and practice.

As Emirbayer and Mische stated, “by differentiating between the different dimensions of agency, we can help to account for the variability and change in actors’ capacities for imaginative and critical intervention in the diverse contexts within which they act” (p. 970). Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting participant cases, I might come to a more nuanced understanding of whether participants view CCBI as an *imaginative and critical intervention* suited for WL teaching and learning.

#### ***Iterational (Past): Life and Professional Histories***

Within the ecological frame of teacher agency, the iterational dimension (past) examines how teachers’ life histories and professional histories influence their decision-making. It refers specifically to “the selective reactivation of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions and institutions over time” (Emirbayer & Mische, p. 971). Teachers exhibit agency in myriad ways because of multiple, complex, and shifting identities (De Costa & Norton, 2017), unique backgrounds, individual professional autonomy, and changing student populations (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Tao and Gao (2017) argue that the

relationship between teacher agency and identity commitment is interdependent; a teacher's identity commitment is essential to enact teacher agency for continuing professional development. Similarly, Banegas and Gerlach (2021) argue that "teacher identity and teacher agency operate in a synergistic space of mutual influence as a teacher's awareness of agency strengthens their identity as independent professionals, which in turn strengthens their capacity for further agency" (p. 3). An understanding of past histories, both personal and professional, can contribute to an understanding of teacher identity, and the professional choices and actions they take.

First, conceptualizing teacher identity as singular is problematic (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Rather, recognizing teacher identities as plural accounts for the "ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic identities of teachers in understanding who teachers are" and the fluidity of their continuous becoming (Kayi-Aydar, 2019, p. 5). In their interviews and questionnaires, both Sofia and Patty positioned themselves through their own ethnic and racial backgrounds in relation to teaching cultural and socially relevant topics in their classrooms. As Yazan and Lindahl contend, "Every act of agency and investment (or lack thereof) involves identity negotiation and enactment... teacher identity work is mostly characterized by continuous attempts to mediate and negotiate contradictory sources of identity at the nexus of individual aspirations and contextual constraints" (p. 3). A teacher's investment in language teaching can be compared to Norton's theory on language learners' investment (2013). "Investment must be seen within a sociological framework, and seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner's [or teacher's] desire and commitment to learn [teach] a language, and their complex and changing identity" (p. 6). Patty and Sofia both expressed tensions between their identities, professional duties, and aspirations, and contextual constraints. However, their commitment to or investment in teaching their students never seemed to waver.

Sofia immigrated to the US as a young teenager. Her experiences navigating US schools with limited English proficiency impacted her future professional goals to support language access through journalism, customer service, and language teaching. Sofia's immigrant identity liberated and constrained her teaching practice in various ways, serving as both a risk and a resource. In her first school, Sofia was reluctant to approach immigration as a critical topic for discussion because she felt unprepared to manage unpredictable student responses that might

disparage her identity directly and received little to no support from her non-immigrant colleagues. Lamar (2019) voiced similar perpetuating experiences of feeling unsupported, ignored, and devalued as a Latina educator in US public schools, leading her to leave the profession. It wasn't until Sofia changed schools and had the opportunity to teach heritage language learners that she felt her immigrant identity helped her to engage students in impactful community building in the classroom and connect with families based on a shared background.

Patty, who taught at Sofia's first school, referenced her Whiteness when we discussed teaching culture. In her IB curriculum, culture is part of every unit. She mentions "feeling false" for teaching about a culture with which she has little personal experience or exposure.

Because I teach IB, culture is part of every unit. Each unit is structured around elements of culture (that I know of, as a white woman) as well as reading, writing, listening, and speaking... I sometimes feel false for teaching about a culture I'm not very familiar with.

Her explicit interjection of "that I know of, as a white woman" in the following questionnaire response is indicative of her engaging in antiracist praxis as she offers a personal critical reflection on her Whiteness and how it impacts her teaching practices. Schwartz (2021) comments on Whiteness as a condition rather than a color,

We must not lose sight of 'the contingency, fluidity, and arbitrary nature of the category' (O'Connor, 2021, p. 360). He contends that 'White' is different from all other descriptors of race in that it cannot refer to a shared sense of social or political struggle, for instance.

Patty acknowledges how her Whiteness constrains her work as a cultural educator within her Spanish language teaching. Her Whiteness, as Schwartz (2021) contends, may leave her blind or ambivalent to certain perspectives or experiences of the cultural group in question. It was apparent throughout the fieldwork that Patty and Sofia missed the opportunity to collaborate with each other at their once-shared place of employment. Their classrooms were physically distanced from each other. They were also assigned to significantly different populations of learners and course designs that relied on different curricular resources. Collaboration between these two practitioners might have offered important mentoring between novice and veteran teachers with distinct life histories. Collegiality, mentoring, and critical friendships give space to troubleshoot classroom challenges and pedagogical goals (Richards, 2010). Solidarity building amongst

language educators helps to build self-efficacy and exercise agency, which also serves as a model for K-12 student agency (Austin & Kearney, 2022).

Maddie's life history focused on her own language education more than anything. She juxtaposed her secondary Spanish studies with her collegiate studies and formative semester abroad in Mexico. Her high school Spanish teachers focused on grammar and vocabulary and "never, ever spoke Spanish in class." In college, her professors exclusively spoke Spanish. She credits much of her language proficiency to her collegiate studies and her time in Mexico. Based on this personal experience, Maddie believes that exposure to and interaction with the target language is critical for language acquisition. Accordingly, this life history has shaped her practice as a language teacher, as demonstrated through her exuberant celebration of being accused of running a Spanish immersion classroom by a critical parent. Similarly, Pattie expressed "embarrassment" when resorting to English during instruction. Both Maddie and Patty have been language teachers for decades. They both regularly referenced the IB and World Readiness Standards, including ACTFL's guidance that "language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom" (ACTFL, 2010).

On the other hand, Sofia was ambivalent towards maximizing the TL in the classroom, valuing a more bilingual atmosphere, especially in the lower levels and non-heritage courses. Mirabadi (2024) argues that teacher identities, which shape teacher agency, are also "closely intertwined with the development and expression of plurilingual teacher identities" (p. 16). Even in WL classrooms in the US, where there is no politically mandated language policy aside from ACTFL's recommendation, tension can exist between plurilingual and monolingual identities and professional practices. Mirabadi (2024) writes,

Those adhering to a monolingual perspective, despite occasional plurilingual practices, face internal conflicts due to the clash between ingrained monolingual beliefs and new plurilingual methods (Pauwels, 2014). This conflict highlights the restrictive aspect of agency, where teachers are constrained by previous conditioning and dominant policies favoring monolingual instruction (p. 18).

Patty and Maddie's longstanding professional identities as WL teachers have ingrained in them certain values around exclusive TL use, which may constrain their ability to conceptualize CCBI for their present classrooms. This will be discussed further in the following section. Conversely,

Priestley et al. (2015) suggest that “teachers with significant experience of working in other professions might have a wider repertoire for manoeuvre when faced with the challenges and ambiguities of the teacher’s day-to-day work” (p. 32). Sofia’s unique and extensive professional practice prior to teaching (journalism, customer service, language access), coupled with her immigrant identity, may make her more flexible and open toward plurilingual pedagogies such as CCBI.

### ***Projective (Future): Short and Long-term Goals***

The projective dimension accounts for teachers’ short-term and long-term goals and how these desires shape and lead to agentic action (Priestley et al., 2015). In studies on teacher agency in WL education, goal setting motivated agentic action toward multilingual advocacy work (Davis & Howlett, 2022), increased meaningful TL use during instructional time (Back, 2019), and encouraged teaching for social justice (Wassell et al., 2019). For this project, I understand short-term goals as the teachers’ motivations around participating in CCBI training, and the training elements that piqued their interests based on said motivations. Each teacher identified the long-term goals regarding academic-year plans for CCBI implementation at the conclusion of the summer training institute.

Each of the three participating teachers stated clear motivations for participating in CCBI training. In her 30<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, Patty was looking for a sense of renewal and inspiration, and to improve her questioning techniques. Sofia was searching for a professional learning community and hoped to begin her third year of teaching with more student-centered approaches. Maddie was interested in increasing student interaction in the online environment and hoped to develop tasks to support student engagement with current events.

These short-term goals primed each participant to gravitate toward certain concepts and interactive activities as presented at the CCBI summer institute. Patty found her inspiration in the Learning Pit (Nottingham, 2016), which she felt was an excellent illustration of how people learn through questioning to promote higher order thinking. This concept of ‘pushing students back into the pit’ helped her visualize the importance of planning complex and layered questions that would promote productive struggle during student conversations in class (Mellom et al., 2019). Similarly, Sofia was impressed with the ping-pong vs. pinball metaphor, which also leaned into the concept of productive struggle. This metaphor offered a clear visual representation of her

goal to increase student-centered instruction. Whereas a ping-pong match occurs between teacher and student, pinball requires the teacher to launch a question or task to the students and observe while they engage in a continued and sustained conversational tussle. If the ball drops, the teacher can launch it back out to re-engage the group through a follow-up question. In both “The Pit” and pinball, “talking through concepts and problem-solving collaboratively facilitates understanding. When the teacher dominates the talk, they – not the students – are doing most of the thinking” (Mellom et al., 2019, p. 8). Finally, Maddie, who hoped to increase student interaction, was particularly motivated by Pat Mora’s (2024) work on home language and multilingual identities. She felt the collaborative nature of the mosaic task (i.e., found poem) was a creative approach that could help students learn to digest texts such as news articles and cite effectively. This approach also puts the onus on students to do the thinking with regard to identifying proper textual support for their personal or group arguments.

Each teacher stated long-term goals in their final reflective journal at the end of the institute. Patty hoped to use collaborative conversations with her IB classes every other week of the semester, especially as they engaged with some of the deeper cultural topics they needed to discuss. Maddie also had the goal to create one CCBI-inspired activity per module in her level 2 classes or higher. There are four modules per level, lasting four and a half weeks, totaling four CCBI tasks. Sofia, the most novice teacher in the group who was in the process of transitioning schools and curriculum, had a less specific long-term goal. She simply hoped to have students interact more with the language spontaneously. Sofia was also late in submitting this journal entry, weeks after the institute had concluded, which may have interfered with the specificity of her goal. Nonetheless, it remained aligned with her hope for more student-centered teaching. Goals can be short-term and long-term and can vary in depth and scope. Developing aspirations and visualizing possible pathways and outcomes can, in part, motivate agentive achievements (Priestley et al., 2015).

### ***Practical-Evaluative (Present): Examining Cultural, Structural, and Material Realities***

The practical-evaluative dimension considers how the ecological conditions of the present environment can support or constrain teachers in their agentive moves (Priestley et al., 2015). As mentioned in chapter two, I view this dimension of teacher agency as a filter through which the iterational and projective dimensions must pass, thus shaping a teacher’s real-time

decisions and actions. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) refer to this dimension as when “newly imagined projects must be brought down to earth within the real-world circumstances” (p. 994). Priestley et al.’s (2015) model (**figure 2**), based on Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) theoretical descriptions, divides the practical-evaluative dimension into three distinct aspects: cultural, structural, and material. The following sections are organized into these subcategories.

**Cultural.** The cultural aspect of this dimension includes ideas, values, beliefs, discourses, and language. I understand this to include a teacher’s personal values and beliefs, similar to what is established in the iterational phase throughout one’s life and professional history, but specifically how these values are either supported or distorted by expectations of performativity (Priestley, et al., 2015, p. 107) within the field of language education, whether true or perceived by the practitioner themselves. In other words, the ‘culture’ of the profession.

As illustrated in each teacher case study, the three participating teachers discussed their values as teachers of Spanish language and cultures. These included changing fear into curiosity (Sofia), nurturing wider worldviews (Patty), and combating stereotypes (Maddie). They all highly valued student interaction, stating that it was essential for language proficiency development. When it came to considering CCBI pedagogy and designing collaborative and productive tasks for the language classroom, two teachers (Patty and Maddie) were particularly concerned with developing students’ language proficiency before they could engage in CCBI-designed tasks that centered cultural, critical, or socially relevant topics. This was evident in Patty’s desire to “build up the language first”, and Maddie’s long-term goal of implementing CCBI in levels two or higher, and both teachers valuing near-exclusive TL use in the classroom. Concerns around TL use arguably postponed or challenged their agency around executing CCBI tasks despite setting goals and voicing intent to implement the pedagogy.

Since the 1970s, communicative approaches to WL education have dominated the field, including task-based language teaching (TBLT) and Content-Based instruction (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Communicative approaches have been further supported by the social turn in SLA, which criticized an imbalance in the field that favored cognitivist theories over social and contextual orientations, specifically troubling deficit perspectives and the idealized native-speaker (Firth & Wagner, 1997). In recent decades, scholars and practitioners have advocated for a more participatory approach to language teaching (i.e., Glynn et al., 2018; Hackman, 2005;

Reagan & Osborn, 2021; Schwartz, 2023) which supports identity work, reflection, diversity, interaction, empathy, and action towards justice. Despite the W-RSLL's (NSFLEP, 1999/2015) intent to identify content and culture as essential to supporting communicative goals in the language classroom, some argue that these language proficiency standards do not adequately promote students and teachers' reflexive and interpretive skills (Kramsch, 2014) in viewing culture as dynamic and discursive (Kubota, 2003), nor do they explicitly state social justice, equity and discrimination (Austin, 2016; Hines-Gaither & Accilien, 2022) as important topics within language, identity, society, and culture. Furthermore, the three teachers' school district has implemented Integrated Performance Assessments and ACTFL's AAPPL exam as major end-of-course assessments. These performance assessments measure language proficiency and communicative task performance but are not guaranteed to incorporate cultural knowledge, cultural competencies, and critical perspectives (Adair-Hauk et al., 2013; LTI, 2024).

Situating the three teachers within a professional context (both nationally and locally) that primarily prioritizes language proficiency goals, it is not surprising that language acquisition is a major contributing factor for these teachers as they consider curriculum planning and task creation. "Performativity," as Priestley et al. (2015) state, "is not simply the demand for teachers to 'perform', but rather a pressure to perform in particular ways, most notably in terms defined and measured by external actors" (p. 107). The professional expectation of WL teachers is to produce students who can speak another language, as guided by proficiency targets and measured by proficiency exams. As was seen with Patty, when she discussed needing to "build up the language" or "come up with the language first," there was a separation between language learning and content-driven collaborative conversations, which CCBI pedagogy tries to dispel. Language and literacy development happens *as a result of* engaging in purposeful conversations with peers (Mellom et al., 2019). Separating language learning from task-based learning is more representative of Task Supported Language Teaching (TSLT), a 'weak version' of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in which tasks are used as support within more traditional language teaching that centers explicit attention to linguistic forms. Alternatively, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), the 'strong version,' uses tasks as the primary mode to experience and engage with the language (Ellis, 2017, p. 109). CCBI and TBLT align in that language and literacy develop as a result of engaging in content-centered tasks. CCBI offers an

additional critical angle not guaranteed through TBLT in that it prioritizes developing student dispositions to engage civilly and incorporates questioning to promote critical thinking around content beyond linguistic recasts (see Chapter 2). As Patty considers integrating CCBI into her classroom, she leans more readily towards a TSLT approach where she has to help students establish appropriate TL vocabulary and grammar skills before they can engage in the task. With TBLT, students simultaneously learn the grammar and vocabulary at hand as a result of task engagement.

As mentioned in the literature review in chapter two, TBLT and TSLT have a robust research agenda, demonstrating support for effective SLA. In addition, as reflected in teachers' beliefs and values about changing fear to curiosity, nurturing wider world views, and combatting stereotypes, maintaining a critical or social agenda in the WL classroom is important to the participating teachers since they see it as part of their professional duty. Crookes and Ziegler's (2021) perspective on combining TBLT and Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) agendas could help teachers mobilize ACTFL's attempts to promote cultural and content-driven language education. However, as Long (2015) puts it, incorporating a participatory perspective in TBLT is at the "discretion of the teacher" (p. 8), and based on the present findings, language teachers are under more scrutiny for producing communicatively proficient students over wider worldviews, participatory citizenship, and emancipatory thinking. Therefore, while WL teachers might view CCBI that includes both CLP and TBLT philosophies as desirable, constraints dictate that a CCBI or TBLT that prioritizes *proficiency* might be mobilized before considering critical or socially relevant perspectives as complementary and equally important.

**Structural.** The structural aspect of the practical-evaluative (present) dimension includes social structures and relational resources that support or constrain the achievement of agency (Priestly et al., 2015). I have identified multiple facets within this category of the practical-evaluative dimension. They include the influence of academic standards (ACTFL, State, and IB) on mobilizing critical topics and task-based approaches, teachers' current job expectations (preps, administrative demands, etc.), feelings of overwhelm regarding the PD content, norm-setting as an entry point, and the benefits of a community of practice.

Two of the three teachers specifically referenced standards regularly throughout the study. As previously mentioned, Patty struggled to negotiate a balance between TL teaching and

learning through collaborative conversations using CCBI techniques, perhaps due to the pressure teachers feel to develop students' linguistic proficiency (Asay et al., 2019; Baggett, 2018) at the expense of cultural and content-based instruction. However, Patty specifically identified the IB standards, even beyond ACTFL, as a professional structure that provided leverage to engage her classes in cultural, critical, and socially relevant topics, even in the face of restrictive laws banning such content in the local public schools (Prohibited Concepts, 2022/2025). Patty was matter-of-fact about engaging students in conversations about climate change, racism, and other “fairly liberal” topics. She was confident that the parameters set forth by the IB standards, coupled with her administration's support, would protect her from any intense repercussions. Despite Patty's feelings of “falseness” when trying to teach about cultures with which she is less familiar, the IB standards allow her to explore contested topics more freely with her students. Her ability to lean into the IB standards and the IB expectations around deep questioning is more representative of Kubota's (2003) four Ds, recognizing culture not as prescriptive but rather discursive and dynamic.

Maddie also actively referenced ACTFL and state standards, especially as they involved expectations around student interaction, interpersonal communication, and the use of authentic resources (i.e. “tailor the task, not the text”) (ACTFL, n.d.). The attention she gives to these aspects of the standards also aligns with her reflections on the evolution of her practice as a language teacher. She once focused heavily on vocabulary and grammar and has shifted significantly over her 23-year tenure to center student interaction, communicative competence, and socially relevant content-based topics. Maddie also utilizes the ACTFL standards to express frustration around the inappropriate use of IEPs, interfering with students' abilities to achieve course outcomes regarding interpersonal communication. Keeping Maddie's priorities in mind, *practically* (Priestley et al., 2015), she was motivated by her projective goals to implement a JPA once per module. However, the *evaluative* reality of what was possible in her classroom was constrained by shortened class periods, increased class preps, and top-down orders in the virtual school. Despite her enthusiasm to design a mosaic activity, Maddie stated, “I'm so overwhelmed with the amount of paperwork tasks they expect us to do on a daily basis that I feel like planning is getting shut behind” and “teaching is getting put to second place.”

In their daily reflective journals and the follow-up focus group, all three participants expressed feeling overwhelmed by the content offered in the CCBI summer institute. Similar to Neubauer and Wesely's (2023) findings about WL teachers' use of conferences as professional development, overwhelm did not mean a lack of clarity around principals, pedagogy, and goals but rather enthusiasm for the plethora of strategies to reach said goals. Patty enthusiastically exclaimed in the focus group that she was "crazy" about what she was seeing but implied that it would take an ideological shift in the district to really see the intended effects. Relatedly, Sofia attempted to recruit the CCBI staff to do training in their district, but in a discussion with Maddie during the institute, she struggled to identify specific tasks to implement in her own class. In the final focus group, Maddie stated, "It was just so much information. You just kind of absorbed it, and then you have to step back and think about it...eventually it'll start showing up in our teaching as we have more time to process it". Neubauer and Wesely (2023) shared that their participants felt "freed" by the opportunity to choose from so many new ideas but then paralyzed when it came to mobilizing techniques day to day (p. 8). The authors suggest attitudes and practices to contend with overwhelm. These attitudes include being courageous in trying new things and being gracious in allowing yourself not to do it perfectly in the early stages. In practice, one might choose a singular focus and engage in notetaking and reflection to support goals for the next academic term. This can help to identify and prioritize a few action items.

CCBI's initial step of norm-setting to support collaborative conversations and community building (Mellom et al., 2019) was the easiest entry point (Glynn et al., 2018) for the participating teachers. Norm setting was ultimately the only CCBI-inspired action the teachers identified as having accomplished during the course of the study. Patty began the semester establishing norms with her students, which they actively referred to during the first few weeks. However, the co-constructed norms were eventually set aside and forgotten. Sofia spent weeks working on community building in her Spanish for Heritage Speakers class, specifically addressing what she viewed as discrimination against three 'newcomer' students who were struggling to integrate socially. She felt that consistent small-group interaction led to improved engagement across all students and developed leadership qualities in the newcomers. She credited her efforts in this to her CCBI training, even though it was not step-by-step as we had learned to do in the institute. Maddie intended to engage in norm-setting to support better student

agency around positive communicative dispositions in the online space. However, she was usurped by ‘camera-on’ demands at the district level and found herself policing rather than encouraging student agency.

Finally, the findings in chapter four provide evidence that a community of practice can help practitioners troubleshoot ideas and hold each other accountable as they try new approaches. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) contend that

The primary locus of agency in its practical-evaluative dimension lies in the *contextualization* of social experience...Through deliberation with others (or sometimes, self-reflexively, with themselves) about the pragmatic and normative exigencies of lived situations, actors gain in the capacity to make considered decisions that may challenge received patterns of action (p. 994).

By attending the institute together, the participating world language teachers and I were able to contextualize the pedagogical implications of CCBI for the specific needs and realities of the WL classroom. By first establishing our group norms (Figure 3 in Appendix E) at the institute, and engaging intensively as a cohort, we had the time and the tools to create “a non-judgmental, open climate of discussion which welcomes multiple and contradictory views in a safe environment” (Farrell, 2015). Like Maddie did with Sofia on the third day of the institute, participants checked in with each other about their implementation plans and other motivating ideas. During the final focus group, Patty encouraged Sofia to be open about her life history as an immigrant with her students because they would likely find it either eye-opening or relevant to their own experiences.

Within Patty’s case study, there is a dialogue between the three participants where the group collectively troubleshoots Patty’s issue of engaging her heritage students on topics that evoke emotion. Earlier in the conversation, which wasn’t presented in the case study clip, Sofia had similar struggles with her heritage students. Her students would effectively engage with each other, but were much more reserved when sharing opinions or experiences with the whole class. In this conversation, we concluded that utilizing productive tasks from CCBI could support learner accountability and lessen the emotional burden or personal pressure an individual student feels when speaking in front of peers. Here, agency is acknowledged not as an individual’s actions, but rather a shared, socially situated activity in which a collective can consider the “who-what-where-why-when-and-how” (Block, 2021, p. 65) of their surroundings. Teacher

agency is supported and motivated through working collectively, which in turn has the potential to “alter [the] environment to make it more conducive to the success of [the project]” (Davis & Howlett, 2022, p. 7).

**Material.** Teacher agency is not an individual capacity but rather it is “achieved through concrete contexts-for-action” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 34). The material aspect of the practical evaluative dimension includes the physical environment (i.e. context) and available resources. Like poststructuralist definitions of identity, where identity is plural, fluid, negotiated and contested (Block, 2007; Norton, 2013) through discourse and socio-ecological realities, post-humanist and new materialist onto-epistemological orientations demand an increasing consideration for the relationship between the social and material world (Siffrinn & Coda, 2024). These orientations acknowledge the entanglement between knowing and being, and that our identity realizations are inevitably tied to and shaped by our “entanglements [with] matter and meaning” (Siffrinn & Coda, 2024, p. 3). Similar to Priestley’s ecological framework for teacher agency, Siffrinn and Coda illustrate “assemblage thinking” as strategic in that it draws attention to how individual materials (matter) within the network contribute to the functioning of the whole.

A teacher’s most immediate and influential physical context is their classroom and the tangible resources within. Maddie, a veteran teacher, speaks of the years it has taken her to collect the resources needed to develop units that she believes are critical or socially relevant (Coca-colonization of Mexico, local immigrant resources, and the Dirty War of the 70s and 80s, etc.). Sofia, an early-career teacher, wishes for funds to outfit her classroom with meaningful cultural products, texts, and media. Their classrooms’ physical layout and modality influence how these three teachers feel they can mobilize collaborative conversations effectively. Maddie feels that online learning, with breakout rooms, is a very effective environment to support collaborative work. As the instructor, she can pop in and out of the breakouts and can record the sessions to help keep students accountable and provide feedback. Nonetheless, Maddie’s older students struggle more than her younger, middle grades. Maddie feels that those who abruptly transitioned to online learning during COVID struggle more overall, while newer generations of online learners will continue to be more successful in this modality. Patty describes her classroom as different than pre-COVID days. She dislikes having students in pairs by row, which

is a new school expectation to which she has had to adapt from her former clusters or table groups. This desk arrangement has not stopped her from engaging students in small groups, but now she tends towards “shoulder partners”. Moving desks is an additional, albeit minor, hurdle that requires extra effort. At the summer institute, the videos shown to demonstrate CCBI in action always included a shared tabletop or area where students can lay out the materials for their productive tasks (t-charts, sorting activities, mosaic pieces, etc.). This suggests a preferred way to promote collaborative learning, supported by the physical layout of the learning environment.

Students undeniably play a critical role in the assemblage or network (Siffrinn & Coda, 2024) of “matter” that make up teaching and learning. Students act as resources and are what constitute the classroom environment. Siffrinn and Coda contend that “matter is active, that it participates in the ongoing and often unpredictable, processes of the world’s production” (p. 3). The student makeup of any given class period greatly impacts a teacher’s planning and instruction. No two Spanish II courses are alike, given the student makeup and unique and unpredictable interactions between and across individuals. Individual students’ needs and group dynamics vary given the idiosyncratic interactions between personalities, life histories, and personal goals present in the room. In Sofia’s case, there was an evaluative need to support newcomers in her Spanish class for heritage learners. Therefore, she drew upon the CCBI pedagogical values she learned at the summer institute, specifically relationship-building and collaborative dispositions, and worked hard to promote them amongst her students. Similarly, Patty tussled with differing needs across IB student groups and heritage learner classes. Multicultural group dynamics is one of the five components of social justice education (Hackman, 2005) and is central to mobilizing and achieving the other four components (content mastery, and tools for critical analysis, personal reflection, and social change).

## **Summary of Findings**

In this chapter I have aimed to answer research question number three, how do participating teachers enact agency in implementing CCBI pedagogy in their WL classrooms? Arguably, all teachers demonstrated agentic action when deciding to participate in the professional development opportunity. Their decision to participate in the training was facilitated by the research team making the opportunity available, covering or pardoning costs, and offering

PD credits. These structures or benefits enabled their participation. However, the time and travel required likely limited other teachers from taking equal advantage. Nonetheless, the three participating teachers recognized early on that CCBI as professional development aligned with their professional goals, which reflect their personal and professional histories and identities. There is an “intricate relationship” between teacher agency and identity (Tao & Gao, 2017, p. 346) that can be sustained through professional development, which assists them in becoming the teachers they want to be (Priestley et al., 2015)

Teachers as agents can act either actively or passively, and their agentic moves can include resistance, ambivalence, and approval (Tao & Gao, 2017). Similarly, Priestley et al. (2015) argue that agency should not be conflated with action given that agency “involves *intentionality*, the capacity to formulate possibilities for action, active consideration of such possibilities and the exercise of choice” (p. 23, original italics). All of the teachers expressed resistance as they questioned or struggled to visualize how to implement CCBI in a secondary WL classroom. Their enthusiasm for the process and potential for positive student outcomes were tempered by feeling overwhelmed by what it would require to implement CCBI at an expert level. “While teachers may come to a situation equipped with substantial capacity (e.g. skills and knowledge) and strong educational aspirations, innovation may simply prove to be too difficult, or too risky to enact.” (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 34). Neubauer and Wesely (2023), in their review of WL teachers’ use of conferences as professional development, found that “new ideas require courage” (p. 9). Their participating teachers reflected on the need to recognize that implementing new pedagogy is rarely perfect, smooth, or easy. Perseverance through these challenges is how we can refine our practice in meaningful ways. Finally, among the three participating teachers, there was collective ambivalence regarding students’ ability to navigate JPAs in the TL, which complicated initiating CCBI pedagogy in the classroom.

Nonetheless, the participating teachers approved of CCBI in multiple ways, recognizing its suitability for the WL classroom. This included (1) actively implementing classroom norms and other strategies to foster collaborative dispositions and community building (2) recognizing that IC-JPAs and JPAs hold promise in fostering student interaction to develop interpersonal skills as promoted by ACTFL and IB standards, and (3) affirming the student-centered approach, which engages students in higher-order thinking through questioning techniques and collective

negotiation, and includes goal setting and personal reflection. These affirmations are aligned with the goals of critical pedagogy and teaching for social justice (Glynn et al., 2018). At various points during the summer professional development, each teacher indicated in different ways that the benefits of CCBI extended beyond the classroom. Patty exclaimed that “CCBI kids could be in Congress, and wouldn’t that be wonderful?” Sofia recognized that students’ academic and social skills would extend into dinner conversations with their parents, better enabling them to communicate about what they learned at school, thus supporting social-emotional relationships at home. Maddie was confident that engaging in CCBI-designed tasks would extend to other academic content areas, supporting students’ skills in writing and effectively citing textual evidence. CCBI has positive impacts on writing, fosters student autonomy, and creates empathy and boosts social emotional learning, amongst others (Mellom et al., 2019)

At the conclusion of the final focus group, Maddie and Sofia agreed that WL teachers, in particular, are professionally prepared to relate to the theoretical aims and pedagogical goals presented at the CCBI institute. Collectively, this evidence of WL teacher agency and overall support for CCBI encourages continued theoretical investigations and practical application exploration for WL teaching and learning.

### **Implications for Practice**

The implications of this study for WL education, and specifically WL teachers, are multipronged. First, this study encourages critical reflective practice as a process by which WL teachers might explore their own teacher identity, contemplate theory, and engage in goal setting to align their personal beliefs, professional priorities, and classroom practices. As critically reflective practitioners, we prioritize the effective application of technical knowledge and consider the underlying assumptions and (un)intended consequences of methods, curricula, and assessment both in and beyond our classrooms (Reagan & Osborn, 2021). In WL education, these consequences include misalignment in achieving proficiency targets as well as issues of ethics, equity, and social justice. Furthermore, I hope this work encourages critical reflection as something that is best done in dialogue with others. Taking a critical stance to reflection “involves reflecting with another group of teachers in a non-judgmental, open climate of discussion which welcomes multiple and contradictory views in a safe environment” (Farrell,

2015, p. 99). Aside from each participating teacher committing time and effort to this project, we collectively debated the possibilities CCBI offered to WL teaching and learning. Spending time together at and after the institute, collectively exploring the topics as a WL cohort, and leaning into the supportive environment established by the co-created norms (Figure 3 in Appendix E), we were able to engage effectively and with curiosity.

Second, it is important to highlight the critical role that high-quality professional development plays in supporting teacher agency, teacher motivation, and professional engagement. Quality PD should include active and authentic learning, opportunities to collaborate and receive coaching, and be content-area specific (see Neubauer & Wesely, 2023). In order for PD to effectively complement teaching practices and professional realities, teachers must also contend with overwhelm and the ability to persist if what the PD presents is deemed valuable and applicable to their personal teaching contexts. I am reminded again of Dewey's (1933) three attitudes that support or inhibit our ability to reflect on our interactions and experiences. These attitudes are (1) *open-mindedness* or allowing oneself to entertain alternate perspectives regardless of one's own; (2) *whole-heartedness*, or throwing oneself fully into the task, and (3) *responsibility*, concerning morality rather than intellect which grounds inquiry in real-life implications. Through critical reflective practice, and quality PD that supports personal and professional growth, we as practitioners must grant ourselves permission to try new and daring pedagogy even when it proves difficult or does not initially go as planned. Learn, implement, reflect, dialogue, and try again.

Finally, I hope to encourage other WL teachers to consider CCBI as an entry point to engage in critical language pedagogy, teaching for social justice, and task-based learning. This instructional-conversations pedagogy prioritizes individual goal setting and community engagement in order to develop and foster communicative dispositions. These dispositions help students use language to problem-solve collaboratively, civilly, and effectively toward a shared goal. As mentioned, a central component of social justice education is a teacher's ability to manage multicultural group dynamics (Hackmann, 2005). If this central component is successfully in place, the other aspects of social justice education can better be supported: content mastery and factual information, tools for critical analysis, tools for social action and change, and tools for personal reflection (Hackman, 2005; Glynn et al., 2018).

## Implications for Research

This work contributes to applied linguistics and language education scholarship by applying theories on language teacher agency (LTA) within WL teaching and learning. LTA, as seen through Sewell's (1992, 2004) post-structuralist lens, Priestley et al.'s (2015) ecological interpretation, or others (Bandura, 2000; Feryok, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Pantić, 2015), has only recently and minimally been applied to better understand WL teacher agency in US contexts (Black, 2019; Davis & Howlett, 2022; Wassell et al., 2019). Examining WL teacher agency might help us to understand how WL teachers negotiate schemas and resources (Sewell, 1992, 2004) in their US schools and whether they feel empowered or constrained to implement change. Through this understanding, we might continue to uncover ways to legitimate and justify the WL classroom as a transformative space (Reagan & Osborn, 2021).

This work also contributes to the paucity of research on critical reflective practice in language teacher education. While critical reflective practice intentionally supports the development of teacher practitioner self-awareness, ultimately the goal is to harness this self-awareness "to forge moral visions and readiness for action" (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). In their scoping review of reflective practice in second language teacher education between 2010-2020, Anani Sarab and Mardian (2023) found that of the 92 articles reviewed, only nine of them utilized Farrell's framework for reflecting on practice (2015), which they identified as uniquely reflexive and reflective. This multidimensional approach utilizes reflection to "generate awareness of pedagogical practices and improve self-analysis and awareness" (Anani Sarab & Mardian, 2023, p. 780). Consequently, the majority of studies they reviewed were descriptive in nature, with less attention given to comparative and critical levels of reflection. Additionally, most studies relied on written forms of reflection rather than spoken and dialogic reflective engagement, as done here, which can challenge personal perspectives, increase confidence, and empower action (Farrell, 2015). Finally, Anani Sarab and Mardian's search parameters suggest that these studies predominantly represented TESOL perspectives. With only nine utilizing Farrell's more critically reflective approach, the numbers for WL education are likely to be smaller. If, as language educators, we practice engaging in critical reflection with the goal of aligning our identities and positionalities with our moral visions and contexts for action, we will be better prepared to support our students in doing the same.

Continuing beyond the social turn in SLA that highlights knowing and being as contextually sensitive, we push towards post-structural and new materialist onto-epistemologies that demand diverse ways of investigating complex entanglements and intersectionalities of individual identities, teaching and learning, and the classroom (Siffrinn & Coda, 2024). This multi-case study implemented various data production methods (questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, field notes, researcher and participant reflective journaling, and focus group). Pairing these methods with a longitudinal timeline, classroom observations, materials or document analysis (teacher and student-produced), repeated focus group collaborations, and even ‘artfulness’ (Pozzebon et al., 2014) or arts-based research, would have increased opportunities for the CCBI pedagogical system to unfold and take hold in the teachers’ classrooms, enhancing the depth of each case study as well as the potential for pedagogical action. As Schwandt and Gates (2018) contend, “cases are always both simultaneously found and made” (p. 354). Therefore, selecting the methods to investigate any case is inextricably linked not only to how they are understood but also how they continue to develop and take shape.

### **Implications for Policy**

It is vital to address the historical context and current political environment within which this research was conducted, how this context may influence initiatives such as CCBI for WLs, and the possibilities that grassroots movements like CCBI offer towards upending monolingual linguistic ideologies. The U.S. has a long history of linguistic diversity, which has been forcibly shaped by colonizers and settlers over time. As Wiley and Garcia (2016) state,

Policy debates about the role of language in education amidst the multilingualism of the present can be seen as new iterations in the ongoing contestation and negotiation of peoples of a heterogeneous society in a diverse world, shaped by forces of globalization and struggles related to power, status, and access to resources, and identity. (p. 50)

This statement acknowledges the impact of globalization on our society. In this sense, supporting multilingualism and intercultural competence directly and positively impacts economic, social, and cognitive advancement. Nonetheless, the promotion of Americanization, supported by English Only sentiments and policies, has dominated the past century of language education policy. This monolingual ideology has roots in xenophobic attitudes amplified by Civil War and

World War eras. Despite legal pushbacks from parents through *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923) and *Farrington C. Tokushige* (1927), which helped support access to foreign and heritage language education, ultimately, states were not required to promote these efforts. As a result, foreign language education began to see a steady decline and English Only sentiments continued to shape how ESL coursework was administered (Wiley & Garcia, 2016). With the passing of *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974), parents won the right for their non-English-speaking children to receive accommodations in learning English. However, this often meant supporting English learners through English Only practices (Wiley & Garcia, 2016), denying the benefits of plurilingual literacy development. As this research suggests, CCBI offers pedagogical guidance in helping students develop collaborative dispositions, communicative competence, and literacy skills in ways that are mutually inclusive of first and additional languages.

Today, the current administration has swiftly implemented an English as Official Language policy with the intent to frame English as the unifying language for civic engagement and governmental efficiency. ACTFL has released statements in reaction to this White House Executive Order, which is cosigned by 23 additional language (teacher) associations. ACTFL's statement on establishing English as the official language rejects the administration's underlying exclusionary messaging and states,

While there is little doubt that English proficiency is valuable for communication and economic opportunity, policies that formally elevate one language at the expense of others fail to recognize the rich linguistic diversity that has long been the strength of our nation. ACTFL President Milton Alan Turner notes, "Designating English as an official language is intended to have a chilling effect on speakers of other languages. We should be affirming the multilingual heritage of our country and ensuring that all citizens and residents can fully participate in society. Official English almost always equals English Only. (ACTFL, 2025)

ACTFL's statement addresses the longstanding historical pride in our diverse nation and the counterproductive and divisive nature of these Orders, due to positioning some communities as less valuable than others. ACTFL encourages focusing on multilingual efforts, which in turn strengthens the economy, bolsters national security, and enhances international diplomacy (ACTFL, 2025). This statement mirrors Wiley and Garcia's (2016) statement above, which honors the assets of a heterogeneous multilingual society.

The demographics of US K-12 enrollment of multilingual learners (EL students) has increased by over a million since 2000, which accounts for more than 10% of the overall student population (NCES, 2022). Dual-language (bilingual) programs have grown but, as some argue, have not reached their fullest potential (Wiley & Garcia, 2016). As the nation's multilingual demographics continue to diversify, so do students' language proficiency levels. Therefore, schools must contend with the complexities of students' language abilities and literacies that map out very differently across the bilingual continuum. Despite some criticism, dual-language programs and grassroots efforts such as the Seal of Biliteracy (SoBL) (Heineke & Davin, 2020) have gained national traction. This criticism includes inconsistent standards to which students are held, with English speakers learning a second language held to minimal standards and ELLs held to much higher expectations within relatively short periods of time (Heineke & Davin, 2020; Wiley & Garcia, 2016). These standards represent larger systemic issues around student performance expectations, but they are issues with which efforts like SoBL must contend. The linguistic diversification of U.S. student bodies has also resulted in WL classes being increasingly populated by multilingual learners. In other words, it is now common for Spanish classrooms to host a mix of L2 learners and heritage learners of Spanish. This reality demands a re-envisioning of language pedagogies that can cater to the plurilingual identities of our students.

The SoBL has now been endorsed by all fifty States and is being mobilized by districts (SoBL, 2025) in varying ways. While it takes time for districts to imagine, implement, and refine accessible and equitable approaches, SoBL encourages schools to put forth concerted efforts towards language proficiency and intercultural competence. Likewise, the tremendous growth of IB schools across the nation exemplifies educational stakeholders' desires to promote learning and excellence through intercultural understanding, including guaranteed access to language education (IBO, n.d.). These initiatives have been energized and mobilized not by policymakers but by stakeholders whose efforts are big enough to affect change. Building strong relationships within local educational communities (teachers, parents, students, administrators, universities) creates a solid base of support that is less susceptible to top-down political shifts.

Wiley and Garcia (2016) argue that the linguistic diversification of our student populations, our general national demographics, and our technologically connected world

demand that we re-envision language education to better respond to and serve students' lived realities. Recent language and linguistic scholarship troubles monolingual ideologies, viewing bi- and multilingualism as a fluid and singular linguistic repertoire rather than strict autonomous boundaries between national languages (Li, 2018). However, traditional language education, including ESL (further impacted by English Only policies) and WL (influenced by ACTFL's 90/10), remains focused on monolingual teaching approaches. This research positions CCBI as one pedagogical option that could function within an SoBL or IB curriculum to support dynamic collaborative learning that promotes intercultural competence and language proficiency without a compartmentalized focus on languages as separate and incommensurable.

Disseminating research through online presentations, publications, and public forums can build credibility in approaches such as CCBI and influence policy decisions. Involving teachers and students in the research process increases ownership and relevance of research findings. Professional development opportunities such as the CCBI summer institutes allow teachers to collaborate and think critically about pedagogical practices, student needs, and how policy initiatives influence these priorities, including the consideration of multilingual ideologies. Conversing across stakeholders and engaging with research briefs empowers teacher-administrators and school leaders to adopt meaningful and relevant policies for their communities and unique student populations.

## **Future Work**

Looking ahead, I will continue to explore how student-centered pedagogies that develop communicative dispositions, like CCBI, can support critical language pedagogy and teaching for social justice in the WL classroom. In this study, Patty suggested that it would be nice to work with students who have been utilizing this pedagogy throughout their education, thus capitalizing on learned dispositions in the language classroom. The team that does CCBI training at the Center for Multilingual-learner Education, Research, and Innovative Teaching (MERIT, formerly CLASE) at the University of Georgia has established strong partnerships with surrounding school districts. These participating district administrators have enthusiastically supported training their teachers based on promising student outcomes (Jackson Co. Schools et al., 2023). It would be beneficial to compare my findings from a district otherwise unfamiliar with the

pedagogy with WL teachers from a district where CCBI has been embraced and mobilized across K-12 grade bands. This also aligns with my passion for researching effective efforts toward improved vertical articulation in K-16 WL education (Detwiler, forthcoming). By investigating and promoting ways to develop language students' dispositions for civil communicative discourse, language teachers can increase meaningful interpersonal second language development and better support effective multicultural group dynamics (Hackman, 2005). These skills can serve students in disrupting imbalances in power and hegemonic discourse both in and outside of the classroom.

Because I opted for a teacher agency lens in this study, I was hesitant to demand that the teacher participants create original productive tasks (student task cards) and follow up via classroom observations, despite initial plans to do so. Demanding a product felt contrary to examining teachers' decisions and actions based on their own goals and contexts. In future studies, I would like to follow WL teachers as they implement instructional conversations more completely and iteratively and engage in reflective exercises with them to understand the impact of the approach. In the interest of maintaining a commitment to participatory action research, I would like to explore group dynamics that support a *power-with* structure rather than *power-over*. Whereas *power-over* is characterized by a facilitator (or member) exerting more influence and control over group decisions and outcomes, *power-with* centers co-agency and fulfilling interests through shared support and empowerment without imposing on others (Farrell, 2015; Kreisberg, 1992). This requires committed collaboration, reflection, mindfulness, and careful goal alignment.

I aspire for my work to contribute to the participatory turn in instructed second language acquisition, oriented towards social justice and critical language pedagogies (i.e., Coda et al., 2024; Glynn et al., 2018; Hackman, 2005; Licata et al., 2023; Reagan & Osborn, 2021; Schwartz, 2023). Through mobilizing critical reflective practice (Farrell, 2015), various frameworks involving teacher agency (i.e., Bandura, 2000; Feryok, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Pantić, 2015; Priestley et al., 2015), and other participatory models of collaborative investigations, I hope to utilize my research platform to identify shared goals with instructors and advance WL pedagogy. Primarily, I would like to prioritize approaches that increase language acquisition through socially relevant content-rich curriculum, and that center peer and

community interaction and engagement. Whether creating original units for social justice (Glynn et al., 2018) or altering existing curriculum to enhance relevance and encourage criticality (Licata et al., 2023), we might collectively integrate critical approaches that align with unique student needs and school and community contexts, thus supporting teachers and students to drive towards collective social action.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Informed Consent

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#### Consent for Research Participation

**Research Study Title:** Centering Culture in World Language Classrooms through Collaborative Conversation Based Instruction: Teacher's Reflections on CCBI Pedagogy

**Researcher(s):** Liv Halaas Detwiler, University of Tennessee Knoxville

Dr. James Coda, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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#### *Why am I being asked to be in this research study?*

We are asking you to be in this research study because you are a World Language (WL) teacher working in Knox County or in surrounding districts who has expressed interest in attending The University of Georgia's Center for Latino Academic Success in Educations' (CLASE) institute training in Collaborative Conversation Based Instruction (CCBI) at UGA's Gwinnett satellite campus in Lawrenceville, GA.

#### *What is this research study about?*

The purpose of this research is to understand teachers' experiences with and evaluations of Collaborative Conversation Based Instruction (CCBI) as a method for approaching cultural, critical, and socially relevant conversations in world language classrooms.

As a participant, you will engage in the following research activities:

- Submit a **written personal teaching philosophy** about your views on (1) culture in the WL classroom and (2) student interaction in the language classroom.
- Engage in **one pre-institute and one post-institute interview** via Zoom with researcher.
- Submit **brief reflection journals** (via Google forms) at the end of each of the 4 CCBI training sessions.
- **Share your original CCBI task and materials** with the researcher (will not be shared, only for researcher's reference).

Participating in this study includes a tuition waiver for a 4-day training in CCBI before classroom implementation.

#### *How long will I be in the research study?*

If you agree to be a part of this study, your participation will involve the following time commitments beyond attendance at the CCBI institute:

| <b>Task/Experience</b>                                            | <b>Estimated Time</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Submit personal teaching philosophy in writing prior to institute | Up to 1 hr.           |
| Initial individual interview prior to institute                   | 30 min.               |
| Creation of CCBI task                                             | 1-2 hours             |
| Implementation of task during fall 2024 semester.                 | 1 hour                |
| Final individual interview to reflect on CCBI process and method  | 1 hour                |

***What will happen if I say “Yes, I want to be in this research study”?***

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to communicate with the research team consistently throughout the phases of the research, as listed above. Please be aware of the following details:

- Tuition for UGA/CLASE’s CCBI institute will be included for all study participants (\$850). Please view institute details here: <https://coe.uga.edu/outreach/programs/clase-professional-development/>
- Both breakfast and lunch will be served each day at the institute at no cost to you. You will be on your own in the evenings, the cost of dinner is your responsibility.
- A hotel stay for four nights will be arranged and paid for near the institute site at no cost to you. Any charges beyond the base rate for the room will be your responsibility.
- Mileage can be reimbursed through UTK at your request.
- Professional Development credits may be granted at the discretion of your school district administrator. If interested, please discuss with your school administrator prior to committing to attend the institute.

***What happens if I say “No, I do not want to be in this research study”?***

Participating in this study is voluntary.

Given the time commitment and travel required to attend the CCBI institute, please be sure to review CLASE's website on CCBI pedagogy (above), as well as the study-specific tasks to ensure that your interests and priorities align with our mission.

***What happens if I say “Yes” but change my mind later?***

You can stop participating at any time over the course of this study.

If you decide to stop before the study is completed, please contact the PI, Dr. James Coda ([jcoda@utk.edu](mailto:jcoda@utk.edu)), or Co-PI Liv Detwiler ([ldetwile@vols.utk.edu](mailto:ldetwile@vols.utk.edu)).

If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, any previously collected recordings from classroom observations will not be included in the final research. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your CCBI tuition waiver will no longer be valid, nor can it be used towards future CCBI institutes.

***Are there any possible risks to me?***

We are not aware of any risks associated with being in this study.

We are not responsible for any risks associated with travel to and from the CLASE Institute training site. While at CLASE institute, basic first aid will be available. If physical injury occurs during training, please seek assistance from a healthcare provider and notify the Co-PI, Liv Detwiler, at (423)426-7537.

The University of Tennessee does not automatically pay for medical claims or give other compensation for injuries or other problems.

***Are there any benefits to being in this research study?***

Benefits for participating in this study include:

- Complimentary tuition to CLASE Institute in CCBI Pedagogy (\$850 value)
- Hotel stay (four nights at \$122 = \$488 value)
- Mileage reimbursement from UTK if requested
- Possible PD credits (as negotiated by you, the participant, with your district administration)

Your participation may help us to learn more about the possible benefits and/or challenges of CCBI pedagogy in world language classrooms. We hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

***Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?***

We will protect the confidentiality of your information by using pseudonyms and removing any identifiable information (people's names, school names, etc.). Video recordings will only be viewed by the research team in order to create transcriptions that are anonymized.

If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name, image, and other personal information will not be used.

Otter.ai will be used to process transcripts from recorded interviews. Otter.ai may use participant transcript information for testing, tuning, optimizing, validating, or otherwise enhancing the analytics, models, or algorithms underlying the service.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what information came from you. Although it is unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information that we collect about you. These include:

- People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville who oversee research to make sure it is conducted properly.
- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.

***What will happen to my information after this study is over?***

We will keep your information to use for future research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be kept secure and stored separately from your research data collected as part of the study.

***Will I be paid for being in this research study?***

Institute tuition and some travel costs will be covered, as outlined above. There is no other compensation for participating in this study.

***Will it cost me anything to be in this research study?***

Costs may be associated with travel to and from Lawrenceville, GA. Mileage can be refunded through UTK at your request. During the in-person training sessions, breakfast and lunch are provided. You will be responsible for the cost of dinners and any additional charges accrued at the hotel beyond the nightly room rate.

***What else do I need to know?***

- Between 2-5 teachers will take part in this study.
- We may need to stop your participation in the study without your consent if you are unresponsive to requests for communication and task engagement.
- We will keep you informed of any changes that are made over the course of the study. If this happens, you may be asked to sign a new consent form.

***Who can answer my questions about this research study?***

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, contact the researchers,

**Liv Detwiler**

[ldetwile@vols.utk.edu](mailto:ldetwile@vols.utk.edu)

(423)426-7537

Doctoral Student, Co-investigator

University of Tennessee Knoxville

Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

World Languages

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(865)974-6228

Faculty Supervisor, Principal Investigator

University of Tennessee Knoxville

Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

World Languages

For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

Institutional Review Board

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Phone: 865-974-7697

Email: [utkirb@utk.edu](mailto:utkirb@utk.edu)

***STATEMENT OF CONSENT***

I have read this form, and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact.

By signing this document, I agree to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of this document after I sign it.

---

Name of Adult Participant

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Signature of Adult Participant

---

Date

## **Appendix B: Pre-Interview Questionnaire on Teacher Philosophies**

### *World Language Teacher Philosophies: Being a WL teacher, teaching culture, and student interaction*

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study! I look forward to starting this process with you. Please use the following prompts to help me get to know you as a (language) teacher and your motivations for participating in the CCBI training this summer.

There are 2 sections to this questionnaire:

General information (6 short questions)

Personal teaching philosophy on a few topics (10 longer-response questions)

Once you submit your answers, I will contact you to set up our introductory interview where we can better get to know each other and reflect on these questions and answers.

Liv Detwiler

ldetwile@vols.utk.edu

(423)426-7537

*\* Indicates required question*

1. Email\*

### **Section 1: General Information**

Six brief questions - single words, lists, bullets are fine!

2. What is your name? \*

3. What languages do you teach? \*

4. What levels of language have you taught most recently? What levels do you anticipate teaching next school year? \*

5. What is the name of your current school?

6. How many years total have you taught a foreign/world language? \*

7. Is the language that you teach your first language? What other languages do you speak? \*

### **Section 2: Personal Teaching Philosophy, Values, and Practice**

Ten longer response questions

The following section asks more in-depth questions about your personal teaching philosophy, values, and practice around certain topics. Please write in full sentence/paragraph form, offering as much detail as you feel appropriate.

8. I became a world language teacher because... \*

9. Please finish this sentence: A world language teacher is like (a)...Because... \*

*(Example: A world language teacher is like a box of chocolates because...)*

10. How do you approach teaching culture in your classroom? \*

11. What are your perceptions related to the importance of teaching culture? \*

12. Have you ever incorporated lessons that you might define or describe as critical or socially relevant? Please describe. \*

13. What challenges have you experienced in planning or implementing cultural, critical or socially relevant lessons/activities? \*

14. What are your approaches to student interaction in your language classroom? (pair work, group work, specific tasks, etc.)? \*

15. What are your perceptions related to the importance of student interaction in the (language) classroom? \*

16. What challenges have you experienced regarding student interaction? \*

17. Please finish the following statement and offer additional details as desired. \*

*I am interested in participating in the CCBI training because...*

## **Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

### Research Project:

Teachers' Reflections on CCBI Pedagogy

### Participants:

Up to 5 World Language teachers in XXX County Schools

### Interviewer:

Liv Detwiler, M.A.

Doctoral Candidate

UTK Teacher Education in World Languages

### Recording Platform/Location:

Interviews will be conducted and recorded via Zoom. Transcriptions will be produced for analysis.

### Primary Research Question:

- (1) What are teachers' reflections on using CCBI as an approach to support equitable student interaction in the WL classroom?
- (2) What are teachers' reflections on using CCBI as an approach to support student discourse around cultural topics?

### Interview Style:

All interviews are semi-structured in nature. The following questions serve as a guide to initiate and focus conversation. However, the goal is for the exchange to evolve naturally, as guided by the participant. As such, the conversation may move beyond the questions listed here.

Initial Interview: Teacher philosophy and beliefs regarding teaching culture and student interaction

#### Interview Questions:

Q1: The teacher will be asked to share their beliefs about teaching culture in the World Language classroom.

1. How do you approach teaching culture in your classroom?
2. Do you experience any struggles with teaching culture in your classroom?
3. What would you like to do more of in terms of teaching culture?

Q2: The teacher will be asked about their experiences with promoting student interaction in the World Language classroom.

4. What are your beliefs about student interaction in the world language classroom?

5. In what ways do students interact with each other in your classroom?
6. Are you satisfied with the current status of student interaction in your classroom?

#### Exit Interview/Final Focus Group

##### Interview Questions:

Q1: The teacher will be asked to share reflections on how implementation of CCBI went in their classroom.

1. What were the successes?
2. What were the challenges?
3. What elements of CCBI, if any, will you continue to utilize in your classroom?

Q2: In what ways do you feel CCBI supports student interaction?

Q3: In what ways do you feel CCBI supports cultural lessons or critical conversations in the world language classroom?

**Appendix D: CCBI Daily Reflection Journal Prompts**

The following prompts will be sent to each participant through a Google Form link at the end of each of the four CCBI training days. The Google form will provide short-answer textboxes after each question.

Google form will be password protected, housed within Co-PI's UTK account.

**Days 1-3**

1. X, Y, and Z, were the major topics of today's training. What do you feel were your main takeaways?
2. Briefly describe any hesitations or doubts you might have about CCBI for your own classroom:
3. Briefly describe any ideas you're having, inspired by implementing CCBI in your classroom:

**Day 4** (none of the questions require a response)

1. How has this PD affected you professionally?
2. How has this PD affected you personally?
3. What are your goals moving forward?

## Appendix E: Group Norms for Collaborative Conversations

These norms were established by all CCBI summer institute participants and facilitators on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### Norm Reflection

- **Be professional** (e.g. maintain respectful and professional demeanor even in disagreements, be mindful of body language, facial expressions and eye contact, tone)
- **Be honest** (e.g. be willing to be vulnerable, use tools for interaction, like “I agree because” and “I respectfully disagree because” when disagreeing)
- **Have crucial conversations in a timely manner** (e.g. deal with potential conflict as they occur and not letting them fester, create a space where you feel comfortable to bring up opposing ideas without being combative - perhaps in private, disagree with ideas, not people)
- **Think of others & be patient** (e.g. allow others to complete their thoughts, allow wait time)
- **Maintain high energy - be enthusiastic** (hold ourselves accountable, *even after lunch!!*)
- **Actively participate** (everyone speaks up and shares their ideas, stay on task, be mindful of time and your own participation, ensure everyone has the space to participate)
- **Be open to new ideas and seek to understand** (e.g. don't shut down others, provide feedback, ask clarifying questions, piggyback off others' ideas, have a beginner's mind)
- **Listen to understand, not to just respond**

Which Norm would be hard for you during a heated conversation about a complex or controversial topic?

Choose that norm for yourself today and consider why that Norm is hard for you and what you might do to lean into it!

**Figure 3** CCBI Group Norms for Collaborative Conversations from July Summer Institute

## Appendix F: Example of Mosaic Productive Task

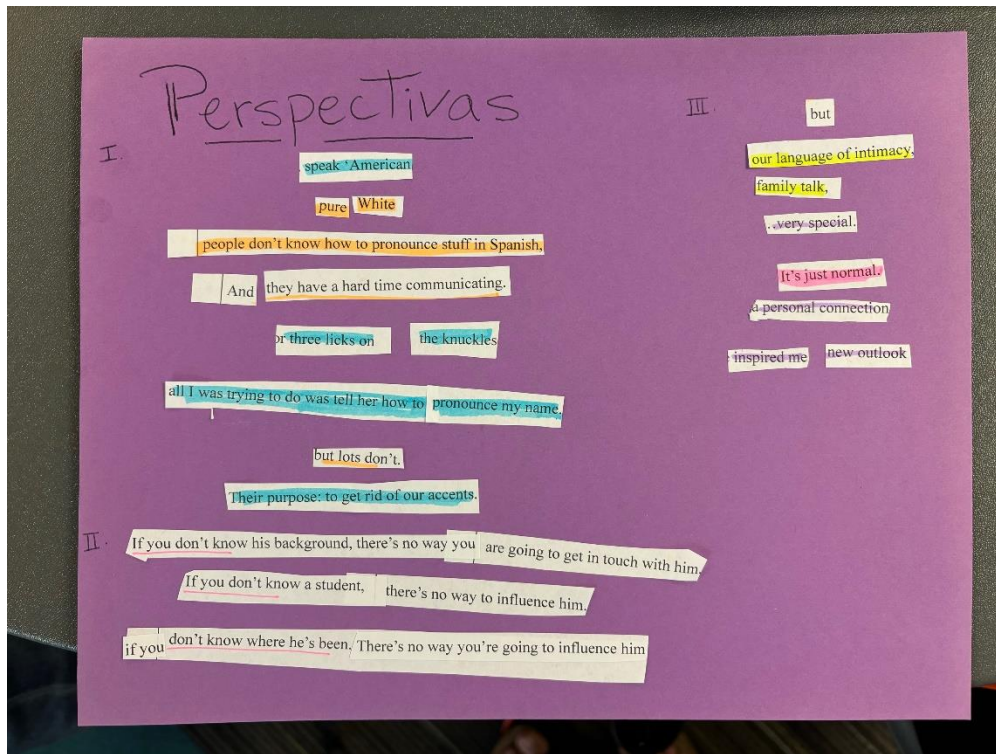


**Figure 4** Mosaic/Found Poem Group Productive Task

## Appendix G: Sample of IPA Analysis

*Table 7 Sample of IPA analysis*

| Experiential Statements                                              | Interview Transcript<br>(Bolded script=IN VIVO selections)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Exploratory Notes                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Restrictive context                                                  | 00:19:48.710 --> 00:19:52.960<br>Liv Halaas Detwiler: Yeah, I wanna go back to the <b>the discomfort piece</b> . What do you think, like you mentioned you are an immigrant, so maybe it could have been a sensitive topic to engage with your students on depending on their responses. But what were some of the things that made you hesitate as a new teacher to open up kind of more controversial topics?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | [Digging into her discomfort around being an immigrant and teaching about immigration.]                                                                   |
|                                                                      | 00:20:13.260 --> 00:20:14.810<br>Participant 3: Yeah, because well, <b>I feel where I live there's a strong presence of individuals that might not understand fully the aspects of being an immigrant in general</b> . And there... there's an association that if you look Hispanic, you're just maybe from one country, or your just here to work, <b>and they forget that they have, you know, like their national labs, which hires like half of their people from all over the world. There's a lot of aspects about immigration that are not even thought of or acknowledged. Even though we have a big state that has people from all over. We only still think of immigrants as these people that are blocking the border in masses, and we don't know why they're coming</b> . And I wasn't, as a new teacher, I still wondering because the par... my <b>students are attached to their parents, and I maybe didn't want to answer questions like, "Why are you talking about immigration if this is Spanish?"</b> | Place-based discrimination, lack of understanding of diverse immigrants experiences.<br><br>Countering stereotypes of what a "Hispanic" is assumed to be. |
|                                                                      | 00:21:35.050 --> 00:21:36.029<br>Liv Halaas Detwiler: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, fear of parent retribution or frustration from parents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Concern for angering/frustrating parents, particularly in her present context.                                                                            |
|                                                                      | 00:21:41.150 --> 00:21:44.650<br>Participant 3: Yeah. And I was like, <b>I don't want to deal with none of that. I'm just going to expose, expose them and give it another relevance to their own life as as young.... And also I was thinking about, but what's the some of the things that my student, they're in their own, their own youth, they can relate to this movie directly. So, I think that was important because this talks about someone that dreamed and tried, right? And I want them to feel that way and nothing is a limit. It's a language. Maybe they have to learn another language later on.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Finding ways to make it socially relevant but not controversial. Open them up to other possible ways of thinking.                                         |
| Diversity in immigrant experiences, contrary to local understandings |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                           |
| Parents as hindrance or threat                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                           |
| Socially relevant for youth (Neutral topics, like "goals/dreams")    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                           |

Table 7 Continued

|                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Novice teacher</b><br><b>Inexperience</b><br><b>Reticence</b> | <p>There's so many more steps to get to that dream. So, I put it that way. <b>As a new teacher. I didn't want to deal with things from home or politics, because, you know, they're happening so soon this... just too many "You say, I say". I didn't want to get into that.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Reticence to engage in political conversations because the world is already inundated with polarizing discourse. Desire to keep the class a positive/protected space.</p> |
| <b>[Researcher influence]</b>                                    | <p>00:22:36.960 --&gt; 00:22:37.790<br/> Liv Halaas Detwiler: Yeah, yeah, yeah. that makes so that makes me think. Or the way that I'm understanding it is that socially relevant approach is maybe more comfortable than a critical approach?</p> <p>00:22:50.200 --&gt; 00:22:50.930<br/> Participant 3: Mmm-hmmm. Okay. [Thinking]</p> <p>00:22:51.120 --&gt; 00:22:52.070<br/> Liv Halaas Detwiler: Make sense to you. Right?</p> <p>00:22:52.070 --&gt; 00:22:53.030<br/> Participant 3: It does.</p> | <p>[Again I try to clarify what she means by socially relevant]</p> <p>[Am I forcing the issues? I don't like how I phrased this.]</p>                                       |
| <b>[Clarifying questions]</b>                                    | <p>00:22:53.030 --&gt; 00:23:01.736<br/> Liv Halaas Detwiler: Critical is like the big topics like politics and identity, and like all of these things. But if we frame it in a way that's relevant to kids in their lives right now...?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Gendered language</b>                                         | <p>00:23:03.260 --&gt; 00:23:05.979<br/> Participant 3: Yeah, yes. I think that there's more... it becomes more meaningful if it's with the with the group that I'm targeting in this case. It's like, when I was mentioning in one class. Sometimes we say in the Spanish world recently came up this letter, the E, at the end of some words, and I did approach it a few times in these past 2 years, where I'll say, Okay, we say... let's see what would be good example...</p>                       | <p>She begins to discuss how she handles gendered language and informs students about neutral options, in a matter of fact way.</p>                                          |

## VITA

Liv W. H. Detwiler received her B.A. in Spanish and secondary education from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and her Master of Arts in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She pursued her doctoral studies in world language teacher education in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Her research interests include critical reflective practice, agency, identity, critical language pedagogy, K16 world language curricular articulation, and world language teacher preparation. She has taught Spanish at secondary and university levels in the US and collaborated for many years with the Concordia Language Villages.