SCOLT@60

A WORLD LANGUAGE JAM SESSION

NASHVILLE, TN   MAR. 20-22, 2025

DIMENSIONS 2025
Volume 60

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Review and Acceptance Procedures SCOLT Dimensions

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in *Dimensions* begin by the authors emailing manuscripts to the Editor-in-Chief at SCOLT at <u>Dimension@SCOLT.org</u> or <u>prucks@gsu.edu.</u> The Editor then uses a double-blind peer review process to review the manuscripts. That is, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and information identifying schools and colleges cited in articles are removed from the manuscripts prior to review by members of the Editorial Board, all of whom are published professionals, committed to second language education at research universities. Neither the author(s) nor the reviewers know the identity of one another during the review process. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two members of the Editorial Board, and one of the following recommendations is made: "accept as is," "request a second draft with minor revisions," "request a second draft with major revisions," or "do not publish." The Editor then requests second drafts of manuscripts that receive favorable ratings on the initial draft. These revised manuscripts are reviewed a second time before a final decision to publish is made.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Dimensions* 2025 invited prospective authors at all levels of language teaching to submit original work for publication consideration without having to commit to presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Starting as a conference proceeding under the name *Dimension* with the organization's inception in 1967, the journal has long been the official peer-reviewed journal of SCOLT that annually publishes national and international authors. Recognizing the plurality of dimensions of teaching and learning languages represented by authors in the journal, the Board voted to change the journal's name to *Dimensions* in 2023. Contributing authors' research findings and pedagogical implications are shared at the SCOLT conference opening ceremony with attendees and beyond.

To improve visibility of the authors' work, the Board voted to publish the journal on the SCOLT website in an open access format for all publications from 2003 to present. SCOLT *Dimensions* is indexed with the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education that connects 12 million users—researchers, educators, policy makers, and students from 238 countries. ERIC metric biannual reports indicate that *Dimension*(s) articles are being viewed or downloaded over 6,000 times a year. SCOLT *Dimensions* is dedicated to the advancement of the teaching and learning of world languages and cultures and warmly welcomes a wide readership.

2025 Editorial Board for SCOLT Dimensions

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dimensions 2026, Special Issue

Plurilingual Language Learning: European and U.S. Perspectives

Coeditors: Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks (Georgia State University, U.S.) and Dr. Christiane Fäcke (University of Augsburg, Germany)

Dimensions is the official peer-refereed journal of the U.S. Southern Conference on Language Learning and Teaching (SCOLT). This special issue will focus on plurilingual language learning and bridging language education fields from Europe and the United States. The intended purpose is to share an understanding of the terms *plurilingual* (individual) and *multilingual* (societal) widely used in Europe and internationally as they relate to the terms *bilingual* and *multilingual* (individual and societal) and *translanguaging* (action) that are more commonly used in the Anglophone world. This call for papers aims to inspire diverse researchers to share their understanding of theories, policies, practices, and what plurilingual language education might look like in different contexts (educational, geographical, political, etc.) comparatively or uniquely in their own state (U.S.) or country (Europe). Accordingly, this special issue focuses on the following questions:

1. Which issues are most pressing to language education fields between the U.S. and Europe and why?
2. In which way do social contexts, language policies, and language prestige influence language education in the U.S. and in Europe?
3. In what ways does learning world/foreign languages (e.g., Arabic, French, Japanese, or Spanish) compare in the U.S. to Europe?
4. What are the teaching practices in language education on both continents? How are plurilingual aspects respected and practiced and why?
5. Which instructional and multilingual/plurilingual practices are most beneficial to increase successful communication and relationship building?

Submissions guidelines can be found at: https://www.scolt.org/dimensions
Access to previous publications (open access, indexed, highly visible format—annual reports from ERIC indicate nearly 3,000 downloads per year) is found at: https://www.scolt.org/scolt-dimensions-volumes/

For additional information, please contact Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks, at prucks@gsu.edu or Dimensions@SCOLT.org or Coeditor, Dr. Christiane Fäcke, at christiane.faecke@philhist.uni-augsburg.de.

Please contact the editors early with intent to submit. Priority will be given to submissions received by the August 1st, 2025 deadline.

Introduction

Elevate, Innovate, Celebrate

The Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) held its annual conference March 7-9, 2024, at the Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia in collaboration with the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology (SEALLT) and the Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG). Starting as a conference proceeding publication with the organization's inception in 1967 under the title "the SCOLT *Dimension*," this journal has long been the organization's official double blinded, peer-reviewed journal. Recognizing the multiplicity of dimensions concerning the teaching and learning languages represented by authors in the journal, the SCOLT Board voted to change the journal's name to SCOLT *Dimensions* in 2023. *Dimensions* remains dedicated to the advancement of the teaching and learning of world languages and cultures, specifically languages other than English.

Dimensions publishes national and international authors once a year, sharing their research findings and pedagogical implications with conference attendees and beyond. The journal is indexed with the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education that connects 12 million users—researchers, educators, policy makers, and students from 238 countries. Bi-annual ERIC metrics reports revealed over 6,000 views and downloads of *Dimension(s)* publications during 2024. The innovative research from this year's volume by national authors is presented at the opening ceremony of the SCOLT 2025 conference, themed *A World Language Jam Session* in the Music City, Nashville, Tennessee. The articles in this issue aimed to inform language teachers and researchers about best teaching practices in the foreign language classroom including reading practices, cultural instruction, and online resources to support instruction with high-level teaching practices; information about career readiness and target language internships at the language program level; and concludes with an investigation of reasons why world language teachers are staying in the classroom rather than the more prevalent research on why they may be leaving the profession.

This year's volume begins with a chapter in which authors **Jane E. Hardy** *(Wabash College)* and **Victoria Rodrigo** *(Georgia State University)* describe the extensive reading approach to language learning that encourages learners to read a large quantity of easy reading material to develop proficiency, drawing from research in both first and second language learning. The authors explain what extensive reading is, why it is important, and how it can be incorporated as part of a world language curriculum. The authors provide a review of research on the effectiveness of extensive reading in several different languages and recommend extensive reading resources, including open access materials, to facilitate the implementation of extensive reading

for teachers and practitioners. The links to materials in this chapter are invaluable to world language students across all ages.

In Chapter 2, **Gregory De La Piedra** *(St. Petersburg College)* purports the integration of free listing tasks to the field of World Languages Education to inform real world language use in a Spanish classroom, drawing from a data-collection method used by cultural anthropologists, language historians and linguists (Nolan, 2002; Ryan et al., 2000; Weller & Romney, 1988; Wolfram & Schillings-Estes, 1998). Free listing tasks are interviews in which a researcher asks targeted groups of respondents to list words or expressions that come to mind for a given cultural topic. This study focused on a free listing task collected from working class Mexicans about fiestas y celebraciones [parties and celebrations]. Although this topic is routinely included in introductory Spanish language teaching materials, common terms or slang used by Spanish speaking populations that U.S. students are most likely to interact with may not be included in instruction, creating a communication gap. The principal objective of the author's use of free-listing task interviews described in this study was to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity among Spanish language students by learning about *fiestas y celebraciones* through the words of the native speakers themselves. His work not only identifies the terms Latinx speakers might commonly use when describing parties but also provides example activities that Spanish educators might use in their own classroom.

Next, in Chapter 3, author **Sara Ahnell** *(Auburn University)* aims to identify print resources and approaches available to support world language teachers' integration of High-Level Teaching Practices (HLTP)s into instructional design for Novice learners in middle and high school classrooms (grades 6-12). The author analyzed various resources including several ACTFL publications, select world language methods textbooks, and documents from departments of education across 13 states in the SCOLT region. The author found that teachers in this Southeastern region have access to numerous resources for implementing the HLTP of backward design, including proficiency goals for each level and state standards that are aligned with the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). However, comprehensive instructional approaches or models to create proficiency-based, contextualized curricula integrating the other HLTPs were limited.

In Chapter 4, **Mathias Guerreiro-Aires** *(Georgia State University)* and **Paula Garrett-Rucks** *(Georgia State University)* identify the shift over the past two decades in higher education, with U.S. universities placing more emphasis on career readiness and internships becoming an integral part of academia (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021). Furthermore, they note the increasing diversity of university student populations (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023), which has drawn more attention to issues of equity and access to career readiness initiatives such as internships (Greenman et al., 2022). The authors report on the disparities that exist for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, such as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students, from their White

peers not only in internships participation but also in enrollment in world language courses, particularly at upper levels of study (Glenn & Wassell, 2018). Accordingly, the authors put forth a call for research about internship experiences that require target language use for world language students, notably about minoritized students' experiences.

In the final chapter, **Laura Guglani** *(Fairmont State University)* presents findings from her study on the challenges and opportunities of teaching a world language in West Virginia. The author's data come from ethnographic interviews with ten Spanish teachers currently teaching throughout the state. Through thematic analysis, eight themes emerged: Lack of Exposure to Cultural Diversity, Lack of Qualified Teachers, Toll on Mental Health, Pressure to Defend the Value of World Languages, Remaining in West Virginia, Passing on the Love of Language and Cultural Learning, Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, and Strong Professional Support Systems. Understanding current challenges and opportunities of teaching world languages in this context can not only inform professional development but might also provide teacher readers with relatable experiences they might otherwise feel in isolation.

As Editor, I worked collaboratively with the Editorial Review Board of *Dimensions* in a double blind, peer-review process of these manuscripts. I would like to extend my gratitude to members of the board for having shared their knowledge and expertise reviewing the articles for *Dimensions 2025*. These individuals are leaders in the field and I greatly appreciate their time and energy. On behalf of the editorial team, I believe that readers will find the articles in this edition informative and inspiring. I would like to extend my gratitude to (1) the authors for contributing their work to *Dimensions*, (2) members of the Editorial Review Board for assisting their colleagues in the preparation of the articles, and (3) the SCOLT Sponsors and Patrons for their ongoing financial support that makes *Dimensions* possible.

The Editor,

Paula Garrett-Rucks
Georgia State University

1

Incorporating Extensive Reading into the Foreign Language Curriculum

Jane E. Hardy
Wabash College

Victoria Rodrigo
Georgia State University

Abstract

Extensive reading is an approach to language learning that encourages learners to read a large quantity of easy reading material. A substantial body of research confirms the effectiveness of this approach for developing proficiency in both first (L1) and second (L2) languages. This paper explains what extensive reading is, why it is important, and how it can be incorporated as part of a language curriculum. The paper also provides a review of research on the effectiveness of extensive reading in several different languages and recommends many extensive reading resources, including open access materials, to facilitate the implementation of extensive reading for teachers and practitioners.

Keywords: *Extensive reading, intensive reading, reading resources, foreign language learning, language curriculum.*

Introduction

Foreign language (L2) departments have traditionally been founded on the study of literature, yet it is common for foreign language students to dislike reading in another language and therefore avoid reading. This is likely due to the way that reading is traditionally taught in the foreign language classroom, where readings primarily serve the purpose of highlighting grammatical structures or thematic vocabulary. Authentic L2 readings tend to be too difficult for students to read independently without using a dictionary or relying on the support of an instructor. In this article, we will present a different approach to reading, extensive reading, which increases students' language proficiency while promoting positive attitudes toward L2 reading, ultimately leading to long-term reading habits.

1. What is Extensive Reading?

In a nutshell, extensive reading consists of reading quickly large amounts of easy and varied self-selected material to build fluency and consolidate language knowledge. The purpose of reading is to read for pleasure or to get new information, and the reading itself should be its own reward. In their seminal 1998 book *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*, Day & Bamford present the following 10 tenets of extensive reading:

1. Students read as much as possible.
2. Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students.
3. A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available.
4. Learners select what they want to read.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading is individual and silent.
8. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

Engaging in easy reading seems counter-intuitive to both students and language instructors as a strategy for language improvement. How can students' language proficiency improve if they are not challenging themselves and reading something difficult? In fact, by choosing readings that are at or slightly below a learner's proficiency level, a language learner can break out of what Nuttall (2005) describes as the "vicious circle of the weak reader" (p. 127). In this circle, readers do not understand what they are reading, they read slowly, they do not enjoy reading, they do not read much, and the cycle continues. Learners are discouraged from reading, so they read little, and they do not improve their reading skills. If reading material is easy, students can understand, enjoy the reading, read relatively quickly and thereby develop greater reading fluency and a "virtuous circle of the good reader" will start. (This will be discussed further in Section 2.1.3.)

By providing a wide variety of materials, learners can read something that *they* enjoy rather than being obligated to read something chosen by their teacher. The teacher's role, then, is not to select reading materials for learners, but to provide appropriate materials from which the learner can choose, to explain the purpose of reading extensively, and to serve as a model reader who also enjoys reading for pleasure. In fact, when students are engaged in silent sustained reading during class time, the teacher is advised to read too, thereby forming a classroom reading community.

To further understand extensive reading, it can be contrasted with *intensive reading*, which characterizes the way reading is more commonly taught in foreign language classrooms. The two differ in the purpose, focus, material, amount, and speed of reading, as summarized in Table 1, adapted from Day & Bamford (1998) pp. 5-6:

Table 1

Comparison of Intensive and Extensive Reading

Variable	Intensive Reading	Extensive Reading
Class Goal	Read accurately	**Read fluently**
Reading Purpose	Answer questions	**Get information**
	Study	**Enjoy**
Focus	Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation	**Meaning**
Material	Teacher chooses	**Student chooses**
	Often difficult	**Easy**
Amount	Not much	**A lot**
Speed	Slower	**Faster**
Method	Must finish	**Change books if you don't like it**
	Use a dictionary	**No dictionary use**

There are many reasons, backed up by research, to incorporate extensive reading as a component of language study. First, it utilizes implicit learning processes that lead to automaticity, and it promotes autonomous learning. Furthermore, students who engage in extensive reading increase their reading speed and fluency, and they develop greater knowledge of vocabulary, text structure, and content. These benefits and others will be further explored in Section 2.

2. Why Is Extensive Reading Important?

Extensive reading is important because it provides benefits at three levels: Linguistic, Affective, and Cognitive. In what follows, we will present the most important findings of the impact of extensive reading from the studies that support it.

2.1 Linguistic Benefits

Krashen (2004) in *The Power of Reading* has been influential in promoting the idea that extensive reading should be an integral part of language curricula, both in L1 and L2. In his book, he discusses the linguistic benefits of extensive reading and reviews research on the role of reading in language acquisition. He and other scholars reviewed conclude that reading a wide variety of texts for pleasure is one of the most effective ways to enhance language skills because it leads to significant gains

in language development, including vocabulary and spelling, grammar and writing style, reading comprehension and fluency, and overall language development.

2.1.1 Vocabulary Acquisition and Spelling Improvement

Extensive reading has been widely recognized for its positive impact on vocabulary acquisition and spelling development. By exposing learners to a large amount of words in meaningful, varied and repeated contexts, extensive reading helps learners internalize new vocabulary, enlarge their vocabulary size, and correct spelling (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Horst, 2005; Krashen,1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Nation, 2014; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Rodrigo, 2009). Repeated exposure in various contexts is essential for vocabulary learning (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).

Other studies (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Krashen, 2004; Polak & Krashen, 1988; Stanovich & West, 1989) show a strong relationship between extensive reading and spelling improvement. Frequent exposure to correctly spelled words through reading helps learners internalize orthographic patterns, leading to better spelling in their writing as they become more familiar with common spelling rules and exceptions.

2.1.2 Grammar Acquisition and Writing Style

There is also a connection between extensive and pleasure reading and the improvement of grammatical knowledge (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 1999; Lee & Krashen, 2002). Similarly, extensive reading plays a significant role in improving writing style. Learners who engaged in extensive reading showed significant improvements in their writing skills, including the development of a more sophisticated writing style (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Lai, 1993; Sakurai, 2017); better organization, use of varied sentence structures, stronger coherence across the text, and the use of more complex sentence structures (Mermelstein, 2015); use of diverse sentence patterns and idiomatic expressions (Constantino, 1995); and more precise vocabulary and language use (Tsang, 1996) with increased writing fluency (Lai, 1993).

2.1.3 Reading Comprehension and Reading Fluency

Extensive reading has been shown to significantly improve reading comprehension by affording learners regular exposure to reading in a low-stress environment, which facilitates language skill development and allows learners to develop a deeper understanding and interpretation of texts (Elley, 1991; Nuttall, 2005; Suk, 2017; Yamashita, 2008). In terms of fluency, extensive reading significantly improves reading fluency by increasing reading speed and accuracy, by promoting automaticity in word recognition and processing (Grabe, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2004). Moreover, Grabe and Stoller (2019) provided an analysis of how extensive reading contributes to the development of decoding skills and overall reading comprehension in both first (L1) and second (L2) language contexts.

2.1.4 Meta-analysis Studies on Extensive Reading

Meta-analysis studies present findings from multiple studies that compare extensive reading programs with traditional programs without extensive reading. The benefits of extensive reading have been consistently validated in all areas across different contexts and populations through meta-analysis studies (Jeon & Day, 2016; Kim, 2012; Krashen, 2007; Liu & Zhang, 2018; Mol & Bus, 2011; Nakanishi, 2015). These meta-analysis studies consistently show that extensive reading fosters literacy skills regardless of the language acquired (e.g., English, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, and Japanese) and whether it is a first language (L1), second language (L2), or heritage language. These benefits extend across diverse reader demographics, including children, adolescents, adults, and individuals with varying literacy levels. Furthermore, the advantages of ER are shown globally, including regions across North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. These studies emphasize the real power of reading and provide strong evidence supporting the implementation of ER in language education programs. However, one factor is important: the longer the extensive reading program, the greater the benefits observed. That means when implementing an extensive reading program, we must consider the variable of time as a significant factor to show the superiority of extensive reading in the linguistic variables. Bottom line: students must read a lot and understand what they are reading.

2.2 Affective Benefits

The affective variables such as attitude and motivation, reading habits, interest, anxiety and frustration, and overall enjoyment and self-confidence in their language skills are related to how the learner's reading experience is when facing a text. Extensive reading provides positive affective benefits for learners. Researchers agree that providing engaging and enjoyable reading experiences helps learners develop a positive attitude towards reading, fosters a love for books, satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Hardy, 2016; Mori, 2002; Tsang, 2010; Yamashita, 2013). This, in turn, boosts learners' motivation to read, which may promote the development of lifelong reading habits through the practice of regular and voluntary reading (Day & Bamford, 1998; Elley, 1991; Krashen, 2004; Yamashita, 2013).

We can promote interest in reading for our students, which is also important in promoting a positive attitude towards reading, by allowing them to choose books that match their preferences and interests, and by promoting a sense of accomplishment and success for finishing and understanding the reading (Rodrigo, 2024). Additionally, when providing learners with enjoyable and manageable reading experiences with texts that are appropriate for their proficiency level and interests, it reduces reading anxiety and frustration, and their comprehension, enjoyment, and interest increase, as well as confidence in their reading abilities (Liburd & Rodrigo, 2012; Rodrigo, 2011; Yamashita 2013). On the contrary, when students find the text difficult and their level of comprehension is low, their anxiety increases (Mardianti et al., 2021).

It is evident that extensive reading has a positive effect on affective factors, enhancing learners' overall reading experience and supporting their success in language acquisition. Affective variables play a crucial role in promoting the linguistic benefits of extensive reading because if students do not enjoy reading, they will be less likely to engage in reading regularly and, therefore, miss the opportunity to acquire language through reading. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention and prioritize these affective variables from the start.

2.3 Cognitive Benefits

Research has also shown that extensive reading offers significant cognitive benefits, including the potential to delay cognitive decline, enhance general knowledge, and support overall cognitive health. It is clear now that engaging in mentally stimulating activities like reading for pleasure will help us preserve cognitive functions and delay the onset of dementia-related symptoms later in life (Valenzuela & Sachdev, 2009; Wilson et al., 2013). Additionally, reading contributes to an increase in general knowledge by exposing us to diverse information from diverse perspectives (Mason & Krashen, 1997; Stern, 2009).

3. How Can I Implement Extensive Reading?

There are different ways that extensive reading can be incorporated into language programs. In a school with a rigid curriculum or where there is not support for extensive reading, teachers can organize extracurricular reading clubs. Learners can find motivation and encouragement by reading as part of a community of readers. On the other hand, if extensive reading is extra-curricular and voluntary, it is likely to be successful only for those learners who are highly self-motivated and already committed to reading.

3.1 Extensive Reading as a Stand-alone Class

Another option is to offer a stand-alone class focused entirely on extensive reading. Given the documented benefits of extensive reading, this is a model in which students can make noticeable improvements in their proficiency relatively quickly (Hardy, 2014). In this model, class time is devoted to in-class silent sustained reading, and the instructor also reads for pleasure while the students read, providing a positive model. Occasional class time can also be used for students to tell each other about the books they have read, forming a sense of community and providing recommendations to each other for books to read in the future. The teacher or the students themselves can set reading goals. Progress can be tracked by documenting the amount of time spent reading, the number of pages read, or the number of books read. Students can be held accountable by recording the amount read or the time spent reading in a reading log; by writing reflections or reactions to their readings; or by telling the instructor about the books they have read.

Hardy (2014) offers an excerpt from a college Spanish syllabus that provides a model for setting up a stand-alone extensive reading course in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Extensive Reading Course Syllabus Example

<u>**Requirements and Evaluation**</u>

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required. Students are expected to read silently in class and participate in occasional oral activities. Students who miss class or sleep during class may be penalized up to 10% of their final grade.

Reading logs: You will be asked to keep a record of all of your reading in Spanish. This information will be reported on a form provided by the professor that will be collected once per week.

Reading journals: Once per week you will be asked to write a reflection about the reading you have done during that week. Your reflections may contain information about the specific books that you have read, your interest in those books, the relative ease or difficulty of your reading, and any changes that you might notice in your reading ability or habits.

Grades: Final grades will be calculated as follows:

• Attendance and participation: 10%

• Reading logs/pages read: 70%

• Reading journals: 20%

Note: The students enrolled in this class differ in their reading speed and ability. Therefore, each student will establish an individual reading goal with the professor by the end of the second week of classes.

Reading outside of class: You should expect to read a minimum of seven hours per week outside of class. This does not include reading done in Spanish for another class. (In other words, you cannot "double count" reading for this class and another Spanish class.)

Another sample syllabus statement with instructions for students can be found in Hardy (2016, p. 18) in Figure 2.

One drawback of this and other approaches to implementing extensive reading is that they rely heavily on an honor system. One of the tenets of extensive reading (see Section 1) is that reading should be its own reward. Therefore, it is recommended that instructors not test their students over what they read extensively. Once students know that they will be tested, their focus shifts to understanding a reading to answer questions about it rather than reading for the sheer pleasure of it. At the same time, most instructors are required to assign grades to their students' work, so extensive reading can be "evaluated" based on student self-reports. Of course, this provides a potential opportunity for students to lie or exaggerate reports of how much they have read. However, we believe that the benefits of extensive reading are so great that it is worth the risk that an occasional student will attempt to game the system. In the end, it is the students themselves who miss out if they decide to not actually engage in reading.

Figure 2

Extensive Reading Instructions in Syllabus

- Choose **easy** books that **interest** you from the Department of Modern Languages collection or from the [local public library].
- Sign out books in the notebook that I bring to class. Please return each book as soon as you are finished with it so that other students might have a chance to read it. When you return a book, be sure to sign it back in.
- Do **not** use a dictionary while you are reading! If a book is too hard and there are too many unknown words, put it back and choose a different book.
- If a book is too easy or just not interesting to you, return it and choose a different one. Read only what you enjoy.
- Please handle the books with care and respect, as many other students will read them. Please do **not** write in them and use a bookmark rather than turning down the pages. They are expensive to replace, so I hope that they will last a long time.
- You will never be tested over the books that you read as part of Extensive Reading. However, I do ask you to complete a weekly reading log (*registro de lectura*) to document the amount of time, the number of pages, and the books that you read. These logs will also help me to determine the relative popularity and difficulty of the books in the collection, and they will enable me to recommend books for other students in the future. I will collect your reading logs once per week.
- We will have an occasional "book chat" (*conversatorio*) in class during which you and your classmates will tell each other about the books you have read.
- Most of our class time will be spent in "silent sustained reading" (SSR). You will also be expected to read a substantial amount outside of class.
- **Reading is silent and individual**. Please find **a quiet place to read without distractions**. Remove yourself physically from distractions such as the television, e-mail, social networking, phone calls and texting.
- You may **not** use class time to complete readings assigned for other classes.

3.2 Extensive Reading as an Additional Component of an Existing Class.

Another option for including extensive reading in the foreign language curriculum is by adding it as a component to an existing course or curriculum. This does not require changing a pre-existing curriculum in contexts where an instructor needs to follow a common syllabus. Instructors can require extensive reading as an additional assignment that can be done partly in class, as time allows, or as homework. Although instructors are often reluctant to give up class time for silent sustained reading, we believe that it is worth sacrificing some active instructional time for this purpose, especially when extensive reading is first introduced. Students today are regularly distracted by the dinging of their cell phones, incoming messages, and social media posts. For some, it can be difficult to sit quietly, separated from electronics, with nothing more than a book in hand. Allowing students some quiet time for this purpose can help them get "in the zone" and focus all their attention on a written text.

Students engaging in extensive reading as part of an existing course can document the amount of time they spend reading, the number of pages they read,

the number of books they have read, or by telling their classmates or their instructor about what they have read. Another alternative is to ask students to complete a simple book report, such as the one presented by Rodrigo & Hardy (2023) in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Extensive Reading Book Report Assignment

Today's Date: _____

Book Report: Fill this out even if you only read one page of the book.

Your name: _____   Class: _____

Title of book: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____

Time spent reading in class: _____   Time spent reading at home: _____

I read all/_____ pages of the book (Circle "all" or indicate the number of pages read.)

How did you like the book? (circle one)

Great! (I loved it.)

Good (I liked it.)

Okay (I didn't mind reading it.)

Boring/Stupid (I wish I hadn't read it.)

How difficult was the book for you to read? (circle one)

Easy

Okay

Difficult

Write your reaction to the book below. Continue on the back if you need more space:

This form does not test students' comprehension, but rather it is open-ended and asks students to reflect on what they have read. It also includes questions about a book's relative difficulty and level of interest. This information can provide useful feedback to instructors so that they can better guide students toward appropriate reading material and make informed decisions about what books to purchase for their classroom collections.

For larger language programs with multiple sections and instructors, assigning grades based on the number of pages or books read has proven effective. This approach is used at the second author's institution at the college level for beginner and low-intermediate learners. Using the free online *Serie Leamos* library (see Section 4.3), students can choose stories that interest them and read at a level where they feel confident. To earn credit, students must complete a general self-evaluation of the book by answering simple True/False questions, which they can do with the book open and up to three attempts. Completion of the task, rather than the accuracy of the comprehension questions, is what counts. We believe this method of accountability is non-threatening and non-frustrating for students, yet it may be necessary for large programs in institutions where course administration requires more traditional proof of commitment in exchange for a grade.

4. Material to Implement Extensive Reading

To promote extensive reading effectively, the reading material should be fun, easy, and frequent, as these elements are crucial for fostering a positive reading experience and developing a reading habit.

Fun reading material plays a crucial role in extensive reading programs because it engages students and makes reading enjoyable. When learners find the content interesting and entertaining, they are more likely to be motivated to read voluntarily. This intrinsic motivation is essential for extensive reading, which relies on learners choosing to read for pleasure rather than obligation. Playful reading material helps build a positive association with reading, turning it into an activity that students look forward to rather than a chore.

Easy reading material is equally important because it ensures that students can understand what they are reading without excessive effort. When texts are at the appropriate level, learners can grasp the majority of the content while still encountering some new vocabulary or grammatical structures. This balance is crucial because it allows learners to experience success and enjoyment in reading, which boosts their confidence and encourages them to continue. If the material is too difficult, students may become frustrated or discouraged, leading to a loss of interest in reading altogether.

Frequent reading is essential to develop a reading habit, which is the cornerstone of extensive reading programs. Regular exposure to reading helps reinforce language skills and makes reading a natural part of the learner's routine. The more frequently students read, the more they develop fluency, comprehension skills, and overall

language proficiency. As we have discussed in the previous section, frequent reading provides continuous exposure to new language input, which is crucial for language acquisition. By incorporating reading into their daily or weekly activities, students can develop a lasting habit that will support long-term language learning.

4.1 Graded Readers

Children's books are one option for extensive reading, particularly for less commonly taught languages for which more appropriate instructional materials are scarce or unavailable. However, children's books are not the best choice. The language in children's books can sound stilted since they are often written to be read aloud by adults, the vocabulary can be obscure, and the stories may appear childish or uninteresting to more mature readers.

The kind of reading material that is best for practicing extensive reading is graded readers (GR), which are simplified books specifically designed for language learners. GR are cataloged by different levels of difficulty, or "grades," which are determined by factors such as vocabulary range, sentence structure, grammar, and content complexity. Most publishers offer books that range from beginner to advanced levels, allowing learners to gradually build their reading skills as they advance. GR are an excellent tool to help readers reach the language competence and confidence needed to read authentic books. The topics covered by graded readers have a wide range of genres to appeal to diverse interests while maintaining linguistic simplicity. Additionally, many graded readers have illustrations, glossaries, comprehension questions, and exercises to aid comprehension and reinforce learning. All these features make graded readers an optimal tool for practicing extensive reading.

In our work on extensive reading, we have encountered educators who are critical of using graded readers for extensive reading because they are not "authentic materials." We strongly disagree. First, there is not a clear definition of what makes a text "authentic," although it is usually understood to mean a text written to communicate to an audience of native speakers. Books written for adult native speakers are authentic, but they are too difficult for all but the most advanced language learners. Even short stories, magazine articles, or short excerpts from novels are too challenging for beginning and intermediate language learners to understand without significant use of a dictionary and substantial support from a teacher. Such an activity becomes a tedious task of decoding rather than reading, and it removes the element of joy that one can experience in following a story or learning something new through fluent reading. Students who struggle to decode a difficult text can become frustrated, turning them away from reading and discouraging them from further reading.

Beyond the difficulty of reading "authentic texts," we argue that graded readers are, in fact, authentic as well as appropriate for language learners. As Day & Bamford (1998) point out in their chapter "The cult of authenticity and the myth of simplification," literature written for non-native speakers is authentic in that it is written with a goal of communicating to an audience, in this case an audience of language learners whose proficiency does not match that of native speakers. By

way of analogy, children's and young adult literature is written specifically to provide appropriate material for children and young adults. So, too, are books written at an appropriate level for language learners. As Day and Bamford (1998) state, "Because of its communicative intent, such material would be authentic and appropriately simple in language and concept" (p. 61).

Graded readers are clearly the best choice for extensive reading. The only downfall is the cost. The following publishers offer graded readers in several foreign languages and are divided by readership (children, adolescents and young adults), proficiency level (from below A1-beginning to C2-advanced), and genre. For those interested in learning more about graded readers, Rodrigo (2016) provides a detailed description of Spanish graded readers and their publishers.

- **CIDEB:** http://www.blackcat-cideb.com: Cideb has four levels and several languages: Spanish, French, Italian, German.

- **Command Performance Language Institute (CPLI):** //cpli.net/foreignlanguage: Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and Chinese.

- **ELI Publishing:** https://www.eligradedreaders.com/: Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, and Russian)

- **Lire en Français Facile:** https://www.hachettefle.com/collections/lff-lire-en-francais-facile: A wide variety of classic and contemporary French texts adapted for learners, with accompanying audio and comprehension activities.

- **CLE:** https://www.cle-international.com offers a comprehensive collection of graded readers, including both simplified classic literature and original stories, suitable for different language proficiency levels.

- **Teach Yourself:** https://readers.teachyourself.com/ offers short stories in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, and Russian, Brazilian Portuguese, Irish, Welsh, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Swedish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Turkish, and Danish.

- **Langescheidt:** https://www.langenscheidt.com is designed to enhance German language learning through engaging stories and comprehension exercises, suitable for learners from beginner to intermediate levels.

- **Scholastic:** https://www.scholastic.com has graded readers in Spanish and French, focusing on early literacy for young learners. The stories are engaging, with colorful illustrations and simple language to help children develop reading skills.

- **ANAYA:** www.anayaele.es: Spanish

- **DIFUSIÓN:** www.difusion.com/ele: Spanish

- **EDELSA:** www.edelsa.es: Spanish

- **EDINUMEN (Edi):** www.edinumen.es: Spanish

- **EnClave/ELE:** https://enclave-ele.net/lecturas-graduadas/: Spanish

- **SGEL:** www.sgel.es/ele: Spanish

4.2 Websites

Below is a list of website resources that can help foreign language instructors implement extensive reading in their classes. Most of them target L1 readers (children and adults), but if selected carefully, they can be used with language learners. Some are free and others have a cost.

https://booknet.com/es: Booknet is a platform with more than 40,000 books with free access. It is for high proficiency students who want to polish their Spanish. It contains all the genres: fantasy, science fiction, mystery, suspense, romance novels, thrillers, paranormal, terror, detective, humor, and non-fiction.

https://leerlibrosespanol.com/: Leer libros en español is another free Spanish library for high proficiency students which contains the best 100 books in different genres.

https://www.storyweaver.org.in: offers a variety of free children's books in many, many languages, levels and topics. The books can be read online or downloaded. The cost is free but after reading several books you will have to register.

https://www.education.com/stories/: This is an educational French website with interactive stories to teach kids reading. You have to sign up, but it is free. The site has pedagogical activities about the stories.

https://cuentosparadormir.com/: Cuentopia is a website for children to learn to read. To use the site, you have to download an app and sign up. It is not clear if it is free or not.

https://www.miscositas.com/: This site contains stories for children and language learners in several languages.

http://www.childrenslibrary.org/: The International Children's digital library contains children's books in Spanish and other languages. The books are free to read online and cover a wide range of genres, age groups, and languages.

https://www.Tadoku.org: has graded readers in Japanese across different levels.

https://litterature-jeunesse-libre.fr/: is a site that provides access to a variety of French children's books, available in digital format. The collection includes classic tales and contemporary stories.

https://www.iletaitunehistoire.com: contains a large selection of interactive stories and audiobooks for children in French. The site targets younger children and early readers.

https://leiturinha.com.br/: is a Brazilian site that offers a subscription service for children's books in Portuguese, with both digital and physical books. They also provide some free online content.

4.3 Serie Leamos – a Free Spanish Digital Library to Practice Pleasure Reading from the Beginning

Serie Leamos (SL) is a free digital Spanish library of engaging stories written and illustrated by students for students (www.serieleamos.gsu.edu). It was created for the purpose and need of providing comprehensible and interesting reading material that could allow language learners to practice pleasure reading from the beginning. In this interdisciplinary project between the Spanish program in the World Languages and Cultures department and the School of Art and Design at Georgia State University, intermediate Spanish students individually write a story that is later illustrated by art students creating a final product: a book for language learners. The stories in SL are short, can be read quickly, and are highly engaging. Although they look like children's books, they have powerful messages in simple language. The main features of SL are the following:

4.3.1. A Different Library and Reading Experience

SL is a different library and a different reading experience because writers, illustrators, and readers belong to the same community: language learners. Moreover, this reading project serves three purposes: (1) it is a creative writing activity for authors, (2) it is a real-world task for illustrators to include on their resumés, and (3) it is reading material for L2 readers.

4.3.2. Diverse Genres and Topics

SL has original stories that writers want to share with their audience. These stories are categorized and can be filtered by genre and topic. Together with fiction and non-fiction, there is now a third category, fictionalized experience, to point out stories that are based on a personal experience, but presented in a fictional way. For example, animals are the characters or the context of the story is not real. Also, each story is tagged with relevant themes or topics and a brief description of the plot (in Spanish and English) to help readers find stories that align with their interests

4.3.3. Language Levels

The language levels of SL stories are naturally determined by the writers, who use language that reflects their own proficiency. Stories are classified into four levels based on lexical and grammatical complexity, simplicity and linearity of the story and plot, length of the story, and how clearly the illustrations support the text. Some titles are available in multiple levels, offering both simplified and more advanced versions of the same story to target different learner needs. SL works well with beginners to intermediate learners.

4.3.4. Readership Options

SL reaches a broad audience, including young adults and children. The site allows users to filter stories by audience type, or select "All Ages" to access the entire library. Although SL was created for and by adult language learners for language learners at the college level, it has been a great reading source used by middle school teachers and dual language programs.

4.3.5. Additional Components

To aid comprehension, stories include a vocabulary list of key terms selected by the writers. For those seeking a deeper understanding, there is also a glossary of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs used in the story. After reading, learners can engage in comprehension and production activities to reinforce their understanding and practice new vocabulary. Stories are available in a flipbook format online, as downloadable PDFs for offline reading, and as audiobooks for an engaging storytelling experience.

All of these components and the flexibility of the site ensure that SL meets the diverse needs of its readers. That is why SL has been enthusiastically received by students, who expressed enjoyment, increased interest in reading, and greater confidence in their language skills, appreciating the sense of accomplishment for understanding stories in Spanish (Rodrigo, 2018; Rodrigo, 2024).

Conclusion

A large and growing body of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of extensive reading in improving vocabulary acquisition, spelling, grammar, writing style, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Extensive reading also promotes positive affect and even helps preserve cognitive functioning. Language instructors have several ways to integrate extensive reading into their teaching: Through a stand-alone course, as a complementary component of an existing curriculum, or even as an extracurricular activity. There are also several sources of appropriate reading material: Graded readers for beginners through advanced learners are available in multiple languages from commercial publishers; and there are many websites that offer free or low-cost online materials, most notably *Serie Leamos.* By implementing extensive reading, educators can use a powerful approach for developing language proficiency that can easily be incorporated into any language curriculum, giving their students a chance to experience the pleasure of reading and develop lifelong reading habits.

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2

Demonstrating a Free Listing Data Collection Approach to Cultural Instruction

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Abstract

Free listing tasks are a common data collection method used by cultural anthropologists, language historians and linguists (Nolan, 2002; Ryan et al., 2000; Weller & Romney, 1988; Wolfram & Schillings-Estes, 1998). These tasks are interviews in which a researcher asks groups of respondents to list words or expressions that come to mind for a given cultural topic. This study focused on a free listing task collected from working class Mexicans about fiestas y celebraciones [parties and celebrations]. Although this topic is routinely included in second language (L2) teaching materials, common terms or slang used by Spanish speaking populations that U.S. students are most likely to interact with may not be included in instruction, creating a communication gap. Accordingly, for this study a total of 32 working class Mexican people, who were born and raised in Mexico, were interviewed using a free listing data collection method. The interviews transpired in Palmetto and St. Petersburg, Florida and in the Costa Maya region of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Through a thematic analysis, (Quinlan, 2017; Robbins & Nolan, 2019) salient terms are identified and a comparison according to gender is presented. The principal objective of this endeavor was to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity among Spanish language students by learning about fiestas y celebraciones through the words of the native speakers themselves. Pedagogical implications and example practices are provided.

Keywords: Mexico, Culture, Parties, Celebrations, Free Listing, Cultural Perspectives, Spanish, Foreign Language Education, Sociolinguistics

Introduction

Language and culture scholars have devoted considerable attention to identifying patterns of variation that characterize the speech habits of social groups. Studies of various languages have shown that people frequently employ different speech styles, dialects and vocabularies when speaking in different social contexts and locations (Bonvillain, 1993; Moshood, 2020; Penny, 2000; Trudgill, 1983; Zhang

2023; Zhou & Fan, 2013). Work in sociolinguistics such as Budiarsa (2015) has revealed that people who belong to the same economic strata or occupational groups use colloquial expression as a way to identify with and accommodate other members of their respective stratum. The Cultures Standards, as provided by *The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, emphasize the need for second language (L2) students to learn about and better understand the cultural perspectives of native speakers (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, pp. 69-80). However, scholarly articles that target and investigate slang terms as a resource for subject matter that can be used to teach cultural perspectives in the (L2) classroom are not abundant. For these reasons, this paper aims to examine the patterns of slang usage among members of a common socio-economic group, working class Mexicans, through interviews that were conducted in two cities in Florida and Quintana Roo, Mexico. Regardless of the interview location, every interviewee was originally from and raised in Mexico.

The findings of this manuscript and an example of its application via a condensed reading will help introduce to L2 learners certain cultural perspectives held by the selected socio-economic group about a topic within their own culture. This paper targets high schoolers taking upper-level Spanish classes or college students who are enrolled in the elementary sequence of courses. Given most associate and bachelor's degree programs have a language requirement, these courses reach the greatest number of students, and they also frequently serve among the first introductions that students have to Spanish and the culture of its native speakers. Finally, Spanish instructors who use Open Educational Resources (OER) or popular introductory textbooks such as *Portales 2.0 Introductory Spanish* (Blanco, 2023) or *Dicho y Hecho 11th ed.* (Sobral & Potowski, 2023) will have little difficulty when incorporating a free listing-based condensed reading within their lesson plans.

Review of Literature

The concept of slang can be understood as the use of vernacular language, stigmatized words or technical jargon (Daniels, 1994). Although slang terms have been part of human languages for over 2000 years (Trudgill, 1983), linguists often struggle with a universal or standardized definition. The controversy over what constitutes slang is probably due to the lack of clear-cut criteria for what designates a given word as slang. Linguists Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes assert that slang words are those which carry a connotation of informality, serve as synonyms for more conventional words, have a relatively short life span, and have the special capacity to mark social solidarity among its users (1998). As an example of slang's prevalence in a given language, according to the findings of Wentworth and Flexner (1967), the average American knows approximately 10,000 to 20,000 words of which 2000 are slang terms, representing approximately ten percent of the total figure. Regarding slang use according to gender, scholarly work in sociolinguistics over time has torn down stereotypes like the slang of boys or men is more vulgar, while girl's or women's slang is less so (Bayard & Krishnayya, 2001; de Klerk, 1992; Forsskåhl, 2001; Hughes, 1992). In the case of vulgarity, rather than understanding it as a speech pattern that manifests according to gender norms, Risch (1987) contends the distinction is more accurately understood as a matter of public versus private

discourse rather than gender specific speech patterns.

Latin American Spanish displays tremendous dialectal diversity that has inspired an immense amount of scholarly work in linguistics to better understand and catalogue the language's various manifestations throughout its expansive geographic footprint. Examples of book length publications in this field include Cotton & Sharp (1988), de Rosario (1970), Fontanella de Weinberg (1976), and Zamora & Guitart (1988). In his book, John Lipski (1994) dedicates one chapter for each Latin American country to describe the uniqueness of its Spanish. His commentary outlines variation within each country, and among the countries, on a range of topics like etymology, lexicon, syntax, and pronunciation. When describing Latin American Spanish, Lipski remarks, "Latin American Spanish, when compared with the dialects of Spain, embodies the same sense of the exotic and the magical as the flora, fauna and civilizations which dazzled and amazed the first European observers" (p. 1). In a recent study, Tellez et al. (2023) analyze vocabulary and slang variation among Spanish speakers according to the country of origin of social media postings like Twitter tweets. Their study notes overlapping vocabulary patterns are common among neighboring countries, like Argentina and Uruguay or Mexico and neighboring Central American countries or Andean South American countries like Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. However, interesting exceptions to these patterns are noted as well such as postings originating from Paraguay exhibit more similarities with those coming from Colombia and Mexico than neighboring Bolivia and Argentina.

Spanish in the United States is spoken by more than 40 million people, and these speakers also manifest regional vocabulary and slang variation (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Among the reasons for this linguistic phenomenon, is the origin of the Spanish spoken by the inhabitants of the various regions across the country. Escobar & Potowski (2015) identify and describe seven sociolinguistic regions of Spanish speakers. The following summary of four of the regions highlights some of the more dominant population groups. In the Southwest region, Spanish speakers of Mexican descent lead. In Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Phoenix and Las Vegas, Mexican Spanish speakers account for over 75% of the overall Spanish speaking population. In the Northeast region, people of Puerto Rican ancestry and also from the Dominican Republic prevail. In Boston Puerto Ricans account for 28% of Spanish speakers while Dominicans represent 23%. The Southeast region also has a prominent Puerto Rican population and a significant Cuban population which accounts for 51% of Spanish speakers in the Miami-Hialeah metropolitan area. People of Mexican descent represent 79% of Chicago's Spanish speakers, the largest city of the Midwest region, while Spanish speaking people comprise 29% of the city's overall population. Escobar & Potowski also document that several other Latin American countries like Guatemala and El Salvador are represented across all these sociolinguistic regions, causing vocabulary and slang variation to manifest differently from place to place. As a result of such diversity, and in an effort to bridge communication gaps, Moreno & Garrett-Rucks (2021) observe the use of "general Spanish" among Spanish speakers calling it

> A natural effort by speakers to abide by mutually intelligible, shared linguistic norms as they interact with other speakers of the language.

> The effort is certainly linguistically unconscious and for the purpose
> of communicating. As speakers engage in this sort of negotiation for
> communication by necessity, they avoid local or regional norms and
> focus on norms that they seem to acknowledge as shared. (p. 76)

As an interesting aside, such a large and diverse Spanish speaking population in the U.S. has also created challenges pertaining to teaching Spanish to heritage speakers, such as sociolinguistic and cultural heterogeneity, and the implementation of suitable pedagogical approaches (Potowski & Lynch, 2014).

Among the many values a language has for its speakers, one that resonates with this study is its ability to serve as a window that provides a peek into the perspectives and even emotions of its users. Scholars like Teresa L. McCarty and others have advocated for and are authorities on the topic of Indigenous culture preservation and language rights (Coronel-Molina & McCarty, 2016; McCarty, 2008; McCarty et al., 2022; McCarty & Tiffany, 2014). In their study, McCarty et al. (2011) commented that Native American youth considered their ancestral languages "my cultural language" or "my blood language" (as cited in McCarty et al., 2014, p. 83). Such a description clearly denotes an emotional bond between people and language. Among Spanish speakers, a special bond has also developed with the language. As an example, Escobar & Potowski (2015) mention that Hispanic girls felt a unique affinity with Spanish when celebrating their fifteenth birthday (*la quinceañera*), specifically when mass in church is conducted in Spanish. These girls commented that when mass is conducted in English "*le quitaba un toque especial* [it took away a special touch]" (p. 264).

This study posits that because words can carry cultural information, and language is the conduit through which cultural perspectives are transmitted among people over time, the undertaking of analyzing slang terms to obtain cultural content for the L2 classroom is a valid one. De La Piedra (2023) concurs when he describes the everyday language of native speakers as "a vast resource for culture understanding" and determines language has communicative value that "plays a central role in the transmission of culture from person to person, and generation to generation" (pp. 59-60). Furthermore, the potential of slang to act as a signal of interpersonal familiarity and group membership also provides the intellectual basis for investigating its manifestation and variation among working class Mexicans.

Scope and Goals of Study

Students prioritize cultural understanding as a motivation for taking a language course (Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992). Magna et al. (2012) document that students ranked the Communities, Communication and Culture standards from among the five C's, which today are defined by the *Standards* (2015), as their top three motivations for taking a language class. This hierarchy suggests that what L2 students most want out of taking a language course is to learn about the lives and customs of native speakers through the study of their language and culture, with the ultimate goal of obtaining the necessary skills that enable them to bridge cultural and communication gaps. The *Standards* (2015) state, "Now more than ever, Americans want and need to access directly knowledge and information generated by other countries and cultures in order to be active participants and partners in the global

community" (p.101). Accordingly, the present study draws attention to slang use and routine vocabulary that are collected directly from working class Mexicans, who are all originally from and raised in Mexico, as a window into their perspectives on a selected emic topic.

As an overview, working class people often receive an hourly wage only and they typically have the same basic common denominators such as limited exposure to higher education, employment in rural or urban labor jobs, or entry level employment in stores and small businesses (Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.). Examples of working class jobs include farm and construction laborers, landscapers, store cashiers, grocery baggers, market vendors, restaurant servers, or hotel and janitorial workers. Although the percentage of Mexico's population with tertiary educational attainment has increased from 16% of the population in 2008 to 23% in 2018, the majority continue to not hold certificates or diplomas from tertiary or higher education institutions. Therefore, most of Mexico's population belongs to this socio-economic group, and thus their perspectives concerning cultural topics reflect those held by the majority of the people (OECD, 2019).

Within the expansive list of job types where these hard-working people are employed, this manuscript's participating respondents include restaurant workers and servers, store clerks, hotel workers, flea market vendors of multiple types, and lastly landscaping, maintenance, janitorial and roofing laborers. These workers were selected because they are widely visible in the urban scene, where the author was more easily able to conduct interviews. With regards to restaurant servers, a significant aspect of their employment entails conversation with customers. Consequently, when compared with other workers, restaurant servers have conversational skills that make them unique which has interestingly resulted in previous scholarly investigation for this reason among others (Adams, 1998; Juddin, 2017; Mirabelli, 2004).

The cultural topic selected for investigation is *fiestas y celebraciones* [parties and celebrations]. Apart from being a fun research topic, *fiestas y celebraciones* was selected because a widely known, appreciated and researched aspect concerning Mexico's festive culture is that people enjoy multiple holidays and celebrations throughout the year (Brautigam, 2016; Doering, 2006; Hoyt-Goldsmith, 2008; Porter, 1990). The following chronological list highlights various examples of Mexican holidays: January 6th (Three Kings Day), September 15th & 16th (The Shout of Padre Hidalgo & Independence Day), November 1st & 2nd (Day of the Dead), December 12th (Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe) and December 16th to 24th (The Posadas).

The practice of feasting at all levels of society during the Aztec era illustrates that *fiestas y celebraciones* were also central to the culture of Mexico's Pre-Columbian people (Smith et al., 2003). One example are the guild-based *pochteca* merchants who were known to organize rich feasts. Because they were categorized as commoners in Aztec society, successful *pochteca* were not permitted to show their abundant wealth publicly as it could offend the nobles. As a result, they would organize their famously extravagant feasts as a means to shed excessive riches (Maestri, 2021; Smith & Hicks, 2016). The *pochteca's* objective of maintaining financial balance also had a religious overtone as offerings were made during feasts to the merchant god Yacatecuhtil (Berdan & Smith, 2021). Finally, feasting could possibly be related to

the Mesoamerican philosophy of hot and cold equilibrium which permeated other aspects of science and life such as medicine, diet, plants, animals, and cosmology (Messer, 1987).

The prevalence of *fiestas y celebraciones* in Mexico's remote past and the many holidays on today's calendar explain why L2 teaching materials often incorporate segments on the various celebrations in Mexico. One example comes from the textbook *Portales 1.0 Introductory Spanish* which targets Mexican history and culture in every chapter via its *Fotonovela* series (Blanco, 2017). Although "the textbook continues to serve as the cornerstone of World Language instruction in many post-secondary classrooms" (Huhn, 2018, p. 3), Hardwood (2014) and Ur (2009) point out, "no textbook can ever completely meet the needs of a class" (as cited in Le Gal, 2018, p. 13). This is especially the case with language and culture instruction offered by globally used textbooks and the resulting conflicts that occur within the local cultural contexts of learners and instructors alike (Gray, 2000; Le Gal, 2018). To help bridge this gap, O'Keefe et al. (2007) advocate for teaching materials that include examples of *real* spoken language of native speakers so that students better grasp language nuance and variation. In a similar vein, Hardwood (2005) contends, "A range of expert and student corpora which feature various spoken and written genres and various disciplines should be used for awareness raising" (p. 154). To that end, because the culture instruction found in teaching materials can benefit by including the language of everyday conversation, and given language is a peek into the perspectives of users, and given the interests that students have in learning about culture and communicating with native speakers, this study uses free listing data collection to investigate common terms and slang that working class Mexican people routinely use on the topic of *fiestas y celebraciones*. By analyzing their everyday language, this paper focuses on similarities and differences between the male and female perspectives on the selected cultural topic, and it highlights the manner in which various terms convey a perspective on *fiestas y celebraciones* that overlaps with the Mexican *feria* [festival or fair]. The free listing data are then synthesized into a condensed reading that instructors can use in the L2 classroom for the purpose of sharing these perspectives with students, with the ultimate goal of increasing their awareness and sensitivity regarding Mexico and the culture of its people.

Free Listing

Free listing tasks are a common data collection method used by social scientists such as cultural anthropologists and linguists (Quinlan, 2017; Robbins & Nolan, 2019; Ryan et al., 2000; Weller & Romney, 1988; Wolfram & Schillings-Estes, 1998). Free listing tasks are interviews in which a researcher will ask groups of respondents to list as many words or expressions that come to mind for a given cultural topic. Tables are then produced to organize the responses and these serve as the centerpiece of data for analysis, interpretation and discussion. For example, Nolan (2002) employs free listing research to classify indigenous flora according to the knowledge that two groups of local residents demonstrate about these plants in Little Dixie, a seven-county vernacular region of central Missouri.

Methods and Procedures

A total of 32 interviews were conducted to collect data during March-June, 2024. The data were collected in Florida (Palmetto and St. Petersburg) and the Costa Maya region of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Quintana Roo, a state located on Mexico's Caribbean coast, is one of the most important tourist destinations in the country and it offers a variety of working class employment to people from around the country in venues like resorts, theme parks, cruise ship ports, and a multitude of shops and restaurants. Every respondent was randomly selected, and an equal number of female and male respondents participated. In addition, as previously mentioned, a central characteristic shared by all the respondents is every person is originally from and was raised in Mexico, and they hold working-class jobs. Nearly half of Mexico's 31 states, from across eight regions of the country, plus the federal district are represented by the respondent group, and thus the findings of this study broadly reflect Mexican perspectives on the selected cultural topic.

To conduct interviews, the author walked the streets and entered various places of business already profiled. He would then randomly approach a person who was at work but not overly busy at the time. The respondents were often on break. The author carried his faculty identification badge and a hard copy of a previously published article on Mexican culture so the respondents could validate his credentials. During initial introductions, the author displayed his institution's identification badge and publication, and shared that he was gathering data via brief interviews for an upcoming article about Mexican culture that focuses on *fiestas y celebraciones*. The author then asked the two questions mentioned below. Conversations were not recorded, instead, the author wrote every response that each respondent said in a research notebook. More specifically, the responses were numerically recorded according to their order of mention as each respondent answered the questions. Finally, at the end of the interview, the respondents were asked their age, state or city of origin and if necessary, their employment. This information was recorded in the research notebook as well.

For the sake of creating a more amicable exchange, after the initial introductions were finished, the author and respondents agreed to speak informal Spanish, which uses *tú* [you, informal] verb conjugations. Informal Spanish was proposed because the author estimated that he was older than most of the respondents and it was a gesture they seemed to appreciate, resulting in lively and entertaining interview sessions. The interviews were divided into two main questions: 1) *¿Me puedes decir todas las expresiones, palabras o sinónimos que te vienen a la mente cuando yo digo las palabras: fiestas y celebracions?* [Can you tell me all the expressions, words or synonyms that come to your mind when I say the words: parties and celebrations?]. 2) *¿Me puedes decir todas las cosas que son requisitos para que una fiesta o celebración sea buena y divertida?* [Can you tell me all the things that are requirements so that a party or celebration is good and fun?].

Data collection interviews that occurred in St. Petersburg, Florida were conducted at three Mexican stores *El Maguey, Mexico Lindo and Chile Verde and two Mexican restaurants Carmelitas and Taquitos*. Also in St. Petersburg, a roofing laborer was interviewed who was part of a crew working on several of the campus buildings

at the author's place of employment. In Palmetto, Florida, interviews were conducted at the popular Mexican flea market *La Pulga* [the flea]. In the Costa Maya region of Quintana Roo, data collection efforts took place at locations such as shopping plazas, restaurants and a hotel.

In total, 16 female respondents and 16 male respondents were interviewed. The mean age of the women is 40.4 years, and the men 38.5 years. The following tables describe the number of respondents interviewed per location and their native region from within Mexico (Please see Appendix A for an overview of each respondent's state or city of origin).

Table 1

Location of Interviews

Name of Location	Males	Females
Carmelitas, St. Petersburg FL	1	0
Chile Verde, St. Petersburg FL	1	0
El Maguey, St. Petersburg FL	0	2
Mexico Lindo, St. Petersburg FL	1	0
St. Petersburg College, St. Petersburg FL	1	0
Taquitos, St. Petersburg FL	0	1

Table 2

Number of Respondents from Each Mexican Region

Mexican Region	Males	Females
Baja California	0	0
Bajío	0	1
Central Mexico	3	2
Chiapas & Tabasco	1	2
Northern Mexico	2	2
Oaxaca	0	1
Pacific Coast	1	2
Veracruz	2	1
Yucatan Peninsula	7	5

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews, a total of four free list spreadsheets were produced in order to organize and analyze the results. Two free lists were produced for each interview question. The responses listed by the male respondents are organized in free lists 1a and 2a, and those mentioned by the female respondents are organized in free lists 1b and 2b. Free lists 1a and 1b reflect the responses to the first interview question regarding the expressions, words and synonyms respondents could recall upon hearing the terms *fiestas y celebraciones*. Free lists 2a and 2b reflect the responses to the second interview question regarding the requirements of a good

party. As seen in the free lists, the column labeled *Frequency* shows the total number of times a term was mentioned across all the interviews. The column labeled *Order of Mention* shows the number of times a respondent mentioned the term among his or her top three terms, while answering each interview question (Please see Appendix B to review the complete free list spreadsheets and Appendix C for a glossary of all the terms shown in free lists 1a and 1b).

Tables 3 and 4 were produced to highlight the top six most commonly mentioned terms from free lists 1a and 1b, in response to the first interview question.

Table 3

Male Respondents - Words and Expressions for Parties and Celebration

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *La pachanga* [party]	12	9	1	2
2. *La pari* [party]	5	2	1	2
3. *El reventón* [explosion or bash]	5	1	3	1
4. *El desmadre* [big mess]	4	0	3	1
5. *El convivio* [get together]	4	0	2	1
6. *La celebración* [celebration]	3	1	1	1

Table 4

Female Respondents - Words and Expressions for Parties and Celebration

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *La pachanga* [party]	9	4	4	0
2. *El convivio* [get together]	7	1	2	1
3. *La pari* [party]	5	4	1	0
4. *La celebración* [celebration]	4	3	1	0
5. *El reventón* [explosion or bash]	4	1	0	2
6. *El aniversario* [anniversary]	2	1	0	1

Tables 3 and 4 show the word *pachanga* has the highest frequency of mention, twelve times by male respondents and nine times by female respondents. The term's order of mention is routinely first, second or third on both tables; it is clearly a salient colloquialism for Mexicans. While in Mexican Spanish the term *pachanga* is a commonly used synonym for the word *fiesta*, Moore (2001) makes a compelling case that the word is of Cuban origin. In Cuba, *pachanga* is synonymous with the dance music party culture of working-class Cubans, and it specifically refers to, "the ambience of a party" (p.152). It appears the Cuban musical legacy woven within the meaning of the term *pachanga* manifests in Mexican slang because the word itself

is used as a synonym for *fiesta*, and a good *fiesta* is a lively occasion with music and dancing. As seen below in Tables 5 and 6, the terms *música* [music], *bailar* [to dance] and *buen ambiente* [good ambience] support this assertion as all three are frequently mentioned requirements of a good party.

The top six terms as shown in Table 3 are: *la pachanga, la pari, el reventón, el desmadre, el convivio* and *la celebración*. The term *la pari* is borrowed from the English word party. The term *el reventón* comes from the verb *reventarse* which means 'to explode'. For example, the sentence: *El globo se revienta* means 'the ballon explodes'. In a colloquial sense, *el reventón* is similar to the English word 'bash'. The term *el desmadr*e is a vulgarity that can mean a mess or something disorderly. The term *el convivio* comes from the verb *convivir* which means 'to live together or interact', and finally *celebración* is a cognate of the English word celebration.

The top six terms as shown in Table 4 are: *la pachanga, el convivio, la pari, la celebración, el reventón,* and *el aniversario*. Interestingly, both tables display a nearly identical top six with the exception of #4 *el desmadre* mentioned by the men and #6 *el aniversario* by the women. The presence of the term *el desmadre* as the fourth most mentioned term among the male respondents, and its complete absence among the female respondents, hints at the perspective that men view parties and celebrations as occasions to let loose more so than women. As shown in Appendix B, this assertion is supported by other terms from free list 1a such as #11 *echar unas chelas* [to drink/throw back some beers], #16 *echar desmadre* [to cause a big mess], #18 *la gorra* [a term that refers to crashing a party or going to a party uninvited], #19 *tomar cerveza* [to drink beer], #21 *el chupe* [a colloquialism that comes from the verb *chupar*, which means 'to suck', and it means to drink in excess], #22 *el relajo* [although not a vulgarity, this term is a synonym of *el desmadre*], and #25 *la comelona* [a colloquialism that comes from the verb *comer*, which means 'to eat', and it means to eat in excess]. Free list 1b shows that female respondents also listed terms that convey the idea of letting loose while at a party, but they are fewer in number than those mentioned by male respondents. Examples of these terms include #12 *el bodorrio* [a colloquialism that means a rowdy party], #15 *la peda* [a vulgarity that means drunkenness], and #19 *el conbeber* [this term combines the verbs *convivir* and *beber*, which means 'to drink', and it conveys the idea of a get together where people enjoy drinks].

Tables 5 and 6 were produced to highlight the top six most commonly mentioned terms in response to the second interview question, and they show significant overlap between the respondent groups. Both tables show the terms *música, comida, bailar* and *buen ambiente* and these party requirements often appear within the first three terms the respondents listed. Further, female respondents mentioned *bebidas* six times, while the men specifically named #3 *cerveza* eleven times and #4 *tequila* six times. The order of mention column shows these drinking related terms were routinely listed among their top three requirements of a good party. A clear perspective that both men and women share is that good parties are those that have an engaging environment and feature music, dancing, food and drinks.

Table 5

Male Respondents – Requirements for a Good Party

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *Música* [music]	16	7	0	6
2. *Comida* [food]	15	1	5	4
3. *Cerveza* [beer]	11	5	1	4
4. *Tequila*	6	0	3	1
5. *Bailar* [to dance]	6	0	2	1
6. *Buen ambiente* [good ambience]	6	0	1	1

Table 6

Female Respondents – Requirements for a Good Party

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *Comida* [food]	14	7	4	1
2. *Buena música* [good music]	14	6	2	5
3. *Buen ambiente* [good ambience]	9	0	1	3
4. *Bailar* [to dance]	7	0	2	0
5. *Bebidas* [drinks]	6	0	2	2
6. *Cerveza* [beer]	4	1	0	1

Nevertheless, by analyzing every party requirement the male and female respondents shared, as seen in free lists 2a and 2b via Appendix B, a bifurcation along gender lines can be deduced regarding the perspectives and expectations working class Mexican men and women have for parties. Simply stated, the free lists support the notion that male respondents view parties and celebrations as occasions to let loose more so than their female counterparts. Free list 2a shows male respondents included the terms #10 *mujeres* [women] and #11 *chicas* [girls] as requirements of a good party. Along with the presence of the opposite sex, the men also mentioned more terms related to being rowdy, drinking and even drug use, for example: #7 *alcohol*, #8 *bebidas*, #17 *cocaína* [cocaine], #18 *licor* [liquor], #22 *ambulancia* [ambulance], #27 *gente desmadrosa* [rowdy people], #28 *marijuana* and #29 *mezcal* [a type of hard liquor]. The terms *alcohol* and *bebidas* were mentioned four times each, and the terms *mujeres* and *chicas* were mentioned five times combined. Although the other terms were only listed once apiece, they jointly denote a common outlook about *fiestas y celebraciones* that the male respondents maintained.

Free list 2b shows the female perspective regarding parties is centered on spending time and sharing a meal with friends and family. The following terms support this assertion: #7 *tacos*, #8 *amigos* [friends], #9 *muchas personas* [many people], #13 *familiares* [relatives], #14 *alitas* [chicken wings], #17 BBQ, #18 *botanas* [snacks], #20 *buena salsa* [good hot sauce], #22 *pastel* [cake], #23 *agua* [water], #25

café [coffee], and #29 *pizza*. While some of these terms were only mentioned one time, it is the thematic consistency of food related words throughout free list 2b that collectively portrays this female perspective. In addition, the women mentioned *amigos*, *muchas personas* and *familiares* eight times combined. Table 4 reinforces the friends and family viewpoint as well with #6 *el aniversario*, a term that only the women used as a synonym for *fiestas y celebraciones*. Furthermore, free list 2b shows that female respondents did not mention the opposite sex, *hombres* [men], even one time, nor did they mention any terms besides those related to drinking that could convey a perspective of parties as being a wild time.

Male respondents also listed some terms that convey a perspective of parties as family-oriented events. For example, free list 1a shows that one man mentioned #14 *el cumpleaños* [birthday], and it was the first term in his order of mention. Free list 2a offers several family focused party requirements shared by the men, such as: #12 *refresocos* [sodas], #13 *piñata*, #14 *dulces* [candies], #15 *familiares*, #16 *pastel*, #21 *aguas frescas* [flavored waters], #26 *decoraciones* [decorations] and #31 *payasos* [clowns]. However, because these terms are mixed with various others that have a more unruly implication, the men display a two-pronged perspective about parties and celebrations to a greater extent than the women. On the one hand, men see parties as family time and on the other they view parties as occasions to carouse while meeting and interacting with the opposite sex. As a reminder to the reader, the difference between the mean age of the male and female respondent groups is only two years. Therefore, the terms mentioned by the men do not reflect a significantly younger group that is potentially more boisterous than their female counterparts.

Another interesting perspective the free list data show is an overtone regarding Mexican *ferias* [festival or fair]. In Mexico, *ferias* are held throughout the country and they are typically outdoor community festivals that often occur in rural areas. They include carnival rides, live music, dancing, drinking, games, abundant food, fireworks and public events like parades. Free list 1b shows that two female respondents mentioned the term #11 *la feria* as a synonym for *fiestas y celebraciones*, and both women are from the Chiapas & Tabasco region of Mexico as seen in Table 2. Free list 2b shows a variety of terms that convey elements of a Mexican *feria* such as #15 *rueda* [at a *feria*, a *rueda* means a Ferris wheel], #19 *fuegos* [fireworks], #21 *grupo de música* [music group or band] and #24 *castillos* [castle-like structures that are used at *ferias* to display spectacular fireworks]. These terms were mentioned by the same two respondents as well as another who is from the neighboring Oaxaca region. Similarly, free list 2a shows male respondents mentioned two party requirements that pertain to live music, #19 *mariachis* and #20 *banda* [music band].

Two examples of major festivals that occur annually in Mexico are *La Fiesta Grande de Enero* [The big party of January] from January 8-23 in the city of Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas and the famous *La Guelaguetza* festival which is held every July in Oaxaca. While both of these events are major celebrations that have their own unique history and characteristics, they entail multiple outdoor festivities that are consistent with Mexican *ferias*. Instructors who may want to share content with students about these festivals can explore *¡La Fiesta Grande de Chiapas!* (Visit Chiapas, 2024) and the popular children's book *We're Going to the Guelaguetza* (Butron & Guzman,

2023). Because they mentioned multiple party requirements related to *ferias* and they use the term *la feria* as a synonym for the word *fiesta or celebración*, it appears the respondents, in particular those from southeastern regions of Mexico, maintain a perspective on parties and celebrations as events that are interwoven with the concept of a Mexican *feria*.

Pedagogical Implications

The incorporation of this study's free list data within L2 teaching materials is perhaps best accomplished as a complement to current subject matter on *fiestas y celebraciones* because the data convey unique insights that people have about this cultural topic. The author suggests the use of condensed readings that summarize the findings derived from collecting and analyzing the data. For instance, towards the end of a unit on Mexican holidays, the reading offered below could be used to facilitate an in-class discussion that takes learners beyond a routine overview on given celebration and into the mindset of the people who actually observe these events. With this glimpse, L2 students could compare and contrast these points of view with their own, which is an instructional goal that provides an opportunity for them reflect, thereby increasing their cultural awareness. The English version is more appropriate for introductory Spanish 1 and 2 classes. However, should an instructor choose to challenge upper-level high school students or those taking the third course of the college-level elementary sequence, a Spanish translation has been provided in Appendix D.

Free listing data collection is a common research tool among cultural anthropologists (Nolan, 2002; Ryan et al., 2000). This method employs random interviews among people who share similar backgrounds. During each interview, the same key questions are repeated about a selected cultural topic and the researcher writes down the terms each person states, in the order in which they were mentioned. These terms are then analyzed to glean patterns of overlap and difference regarding the respondents' perspectives about the cultural topic. Free list research has shown that working class Mexicans use over 40 different synonymic terms in reference to *fiestas y celebraciones* [parties and celebrations], and they understand "good parties" as those that have music, dancing, drinks, a festive ambience and abundant food. Men and women routinely call parties a pachanga which is a colloquialism that possibly stems from Cuba's dance music party culture, referring to "the ambience of a party" (Moore, 2001, p.152). Mexicans also refer to parties as un *reventón* [an explosion or bash], which comes from the verb *reventarse* [to explode], and un *convivio* [a get together], which comes from the verb *convivir* [to live or interact with others].

Free listing data show there is some divergence between the male and female perspectives regarding parties and celebrations. For many women, the focus of a party is spending time with friends and

family, and the goal is to celebrate events like anniversaries. When they mentioned the requirements of good parties, female respondents stated the term *comida* [food] most often. They also listed multiple terms related to food like *tacos, alitas* [chicken wings], *botanas* [snacks], *buena salsa* [good salsa], *pastel* [cake] and *café* [coffee] along with other friends and family-oriented terms like *amigos* [friends] and *familiares* [relatives]. As synonyms for the word *fiesta or celebración*, women mentioned terms like *convivio* [get together], *aniversario* [anniversary], and *reunión* [reunion].

Male respondents understood parties and celebrations as family-oriented occasions as well, and mentioned some of the same synonyms such as *convivio* and *reunión*. Like the women, the men mentioned party requirements such as *familiares* and *pastel*, and they listed others like *refrescos* [sodas], *dulces* [sweets], and *payasos* [clowns] which convey a party where children are present. However, the male respondents also maintained a perspective that parties and celebrations are moments to let loose with friends while interacting with the opposite sex. Men sometimes use the term *desmadre* [a vulgarity that means a big mess] as a synonym for *fiesta or celebración* whereas none of the female respondents mentioned this colloquialism. Male respondents also mentioned *mujeres* [women] or *chicas* [girls], and *gente desmadrosa* [rowdy people] as requirements of a good party along with numerous alcohol related terms such as *cerveza* [beer], *tequila*, *licor* [liquor] and *mezcal* [a type of hard liquor]. Not one woman mentioned *hombres* [men] as a requirement of a good party, and while female respondents mentioned drinking related terms, they were fewer in number by comparison.

The data also identify an interesting overtone specific to the perception of a good party and elements of a Mexican *feria* [festival or fair]. *Ferias* are outdoor community festivals, often held in rural areas throughout the country, which include games, carnival-style rides like the Ferris wheel, live music, fireworks and parades in addition to the common attributes of a good party mentioned above. Three female respondents from southeastern Mexico mentioned terms like *juegos* [games], *rueda* [Ferris wheel], *fuegos* [fireworks], *grupo de música* [music group or band] and *castillos* [large castle-like structures that display elaborate fireworks] when they were asked to list the requirements of a good party. Two male respondents listed *mariachis* and *banda* [music band] which pertain to live music. Finally, two respondents also used the term *la fiera* as a direct synonym for the terms *fiesta or celebración*. Collectively, the data suggest that for working class Mexicans, perhaps in particular for those who are from southeast Mexico, parties and celebrations are a cultural event that is interwoven with *las fieras*.

By giving numerous examples of *real* language collected directly from working class Mexican people, this reading offers L2 students a glimpse into their perspectives on *fiestas y celebraciones*. Considering the previously outlined prevalence of Spanish speakers who are of Mexican descent throughout the United States, and the integral role parties and celebrations play within their culture, students should learn these words and colloquialisms, and the cultural perspectives they convey. In a class discussion format, students can compare their own perspectives with those mentioned in the reading to find points of commonality and difference. Apart from being fun and engaging, this exercise can help to reduce barriers between common people from Mexico and L2 students because when overlapping perspectives regarding cultural topics are discovered, the divides between people are more easily bridged. This outcome is a central objective of L2 education, and the inclusion of subject matter derived via free listing research will certainly support educators in this undertaking. The *Standards* expressly point out, "all students need to understand diverse cultural perspectives that exist both within the United States and other countries in order to function appropriately in varied cultural and linguistic contexts that they may encounter in their future" (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p. 68). The combination of this simple, yet meaningful, condensed reading and a corresponding in-class discussion activity strives to directly address this critical mandate.

Future Research

Any language represents an extensive arena for the study of cultural perspectives. Spanish is robust due to its number of global speakers and the language's expansive geographical footprint. The author's choice of *fiestas y celebraciones* as the targeted culture topic for this small study is a first step into an array of topics worthy of analysis. Additionally, while this paper targets Spanish and the cultural perspectives of working-class Mexicans, free listing research is certainly not limited to one language, group of people or country. Instead, researchers have an immeasurable number of avenues they could explore in the effort to expand the use of this research tool in the field of Foreign Language Education (FLE). As an example, a study could be done on the topic of relationships, beauty and aesthetics. A researcher could ask respondents to list terms that come to mind when they are asked: What is your notion of an ideal partner? How does this person look? What are the qualities about this person that you value most? Subject matter derived from this data could be used to complement instruction about Valentine's Day or *El día del amor y la amistad* [The day of love and friendship] as it is called in Mexico. Another research topic would be to compare and contrast the manner in which a multi-national holiday is observed. For example, how do the Mexican and American Christmas seasons differ? Respondents could list terms when answering questions like: What do you most look forward to when the Christmas season arrives? What are the things or events that make this season special for you and your family? Furthermore, apart from comparisons on the basis of gender, studies could compare respondent groups on the basis of urban vs. rural communities, geographical factors like coastal vs. mountainous regions, or between different generations of people from the same community. In summary, by

using instructional content derived from free listing research as a complement that enriches current instruction in the L2 classroom, the author contends students will become more culturally informed and aware. This outcome provides the means for students to more easily interact with native speakers, which is the first domino to fall in an effect that can lead to new amicable relationships between groups of people who come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important goal of L2 instruction is to help students become acquainted with, and knowledgeable about, the cultural perspectives of other societies. This knowledge is necessary to not only better understand the language itself, but also to successfully meet and interact with native speakers in an increasingly globalized environment. When this outcome is not achieved, García (1992) calls it "cross-cultural miscommunication" (p. 387), and Green and Smith (1983) articulate the same negative result as a "frame clash" (as cited in García, 1992, p. 389). Clearly, neither of these two results is desirable. To help foster this central learning objective, this study highlights free listing-based research. This method employs random interviews to obtain pertinent cultural data directly from targeted respondent groups regarding their perspectives about a selected topic, from within their own culture.

The targeted respondents for this paper are working class Mexicans, who are all originally from and were raised in Mexico. Free listing data collection helped to assemble an equally divided group of 32 male and female respondents who collectively represent eight regions of Mexico and the nation's capital city. This group of people listed over 40 synonymic terms and expressions for the cultural topic *fiestas y celebraciones*. In addition, the respondents mentioned more than three dozen items they consider to be requirements of a good party. Apart from the sheer number and variety, the lists of terms are very descriptive and they cast a unique light onto the perspectives and expectations that working class Mexican people have about parties and celebrations, which unquestionably play an integral role in their culture. Based on this data, a condensed reading was produced to demonstrate how cultural content derived from free listing research can be easily used by educators to enhance instruction by introducing L2 students to the perspectives of native speakers in a distinct way.

While free listing may presently be an under-utilized research approach in the field of FLE, this manuscript illustrates that it has the potential to produce subject matter that can play a meaningful role in today's language classrooms. This paper and its findings correlate well with the *Standards*' premise that "culture cannot be understood as being static in terms of its products, practices, and underlying perspectives" (p. 70). Moreover, the results of this paper further endorse the concept of targeting colloquial expression as a resource for teachable material regarding the perspectives people have on topics within their own culture. The free listing data have shown that cultural topics are dominated by a corpus of culturally salient terms that groups of people share, as well as a large number of novel terms unique

to individual speakers. An analysis of these terms yielded multiple insights into the values, beliefs and perceptions among the respondents with respect to the selected topic. It is hoped that this research will lend further validation to the importance and merit of analyzing the words of everyday conversation as a mirror that reflects a candid portrait of culture. The benefit of sharing that portrait with L2 students, and the increased cultural competence and sensitivity they will enjoy as a result, makes similar future research needed and certainly warranted. In short, researchers must continue to look for new ways to harvest cultural data, and in doing so, provide students with instruction that will help bring linguistically and culturally diverse communities together.

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Appendix A

Respondents' Origins

Male respondents from each state or city:

Coahuila:	1
Durango:	1
Hidalgo:	1
Michoacán:	1
Puebla:	1
The State of Mexico:	1
Quintana Roo:	4
Tabasco:	1
Veracruz:	2
Yucatán:	3

Female respondents from each state or city:

Chiapas:	1
Durango:	1
Guanajuato:	1
Guerrero:	1
Mexico City:	1
Michoacán:	1
Oaxaca:	1
Puebla:	1
*Quetzaltenango, Guatemala:	1
Quintana Roo:	4
Tamaulipas:	1
Veracruz:	1
Yucatán:	1

Appendix B

(1) Complete Free List for Words and Expressions Used for Parties and Celebrations

1a. Male Respondents

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1<u>st</u>	2<u>nd</u>	3<u>rd</u>
1. *La pachanga* [party]	12	9	1	2
2. *La pari* [party]	5	2	1	2
3. *El reventón* [explosion/bash]	5	1	3	1
4. *El desmadre* [big mess]	4	0	3	1
5. *El convivio* [get together]	4	0	2	1
6. *La celebración* [celebration]	3	1	1	1
7. *El reve* [explosion/bash]	3	0	1	2
8. *El bailongo* [dance party]	3	0	2	0
9. *El guateque* [house party]	3	0	0	1
10. *El cotorreo* [a party where people mingle and talk]	2	0	0	1
11. *Echar unas chelas* [to drink/throw back some beers]	2	0	0	1
12. *La comemoración* [commemoration]	1	1	0	0
13. *La convivencia* [get together]	1	1	0	0
14. *El cumpleaños* [birthday]	1	1	0	0
15. *El dieciséis de septiembre* [sixteenth of September]	1	1	0	0
16. *Echar desmadre* [to cause ruckus or a big mess]	1	1	0	0
17. *La festividad* [festivity]	1	0	1	0
18. *La gorra* [a party that has been crashed]	1	0	1	0
19. *Tomar cerveza* [to drink beer]	1	0	1	0
20. *El baile* [the dance]	1	0	0	1
21. *El chupe* [a party with abundant drinks]	1	0	0	1
22. *El relajo* [rowdy party]	1	0	0	1
23. *Vámonos de pato de perro* [an expression that means to go on a bar crawl or from house to house]	1	0	0	1
24. *El borrlongo* [wild party]	1	0	0	0
25. *La comelona* [a party with abundant food]	1	0	0	0
26. *El toquín* [music party]	1	0	0	0

1b. Female Respondents

Term	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *La pachanga* [party]	9	4	4	0
2. *El convivio* [get together]	7	1	2	1
3. *La pari* [party]	5	4	1	0
4. *La celebración* [celebration]	4	3	1	0
5. *El reventón* [explosion/bash]	4	1	0	2
6. *El aniversario* [anniversary]	2	1	0	1
7. *La reunión* [reunion]	2	1	0	1
8. *El cumpleaños* [birthday]	2	0	1	1
9. *La diversión* [entertainment/fun time]	2	0	1	1
10. *Vamos a divertirnos* [let's go have fun]	2	0	1	1
11. *La feria* [festival/fair]	2	0	0	1
12. *El bodorrio* [rowdy party]	1	1	0	0
13. *La parranda* [binge]	1	0	1	0
14. *Ir a convivir* [to go get together]	1	0	1	0
15. *La peda* [a vulgarity that means a drunken party]	1	0	1	0
16. *El cotorreo* [a party where people mingle and talk]	1	0	0	1
17. *Irse de fiesta* [to go out partying]	1	0	0	1
18. *La carnita asada* [an event that serves roasted meat]	1	0	0	0
19. *El conbeber* [a get together with drinks]	1	0	0	0
20. *El concierto* [concert]	1	0	0	0
21. *El guateque* [house party]	1	0	0	0
22. *Ir a chismear* [to go gossip]	1	0	0	0
23. *La reunión familiar* [family reunion]	1	0	0	0
24. *El traje* [potluck]	1	0	0	0

(2) Complete Free List for Words and Expressions Used for Requirements for a Good Party

2a. Male Respondents

Item	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *Música* [music]	16	7	0	6
2. *Comida* [food]	15	1	5	4
3. *Cerveza* [beer]	11	5	1	4
4. *Tequila*	6	0	3	1
5. *Bailar* [to dance]	6	0	2	1
6. *Buen ambiente* [good ambience]	6	0	1	1
7. *Alcohol*	4	2	2	0
8. *Bebidas* [drinks]	4	0	1	1
9. *Amigos* [friends]	3	0	0	0
10. *Mujeres* [women]	3	0	0	0
11. *Chicas* [girls]	2	1	0	1
12. *Refrescos* [sodas]	2	0	1	0
13. *Piñata*	2	0	0	1
14. *Dulces* [sweets]	2	0	0	0
15. *Familiares* [relatives]	2	0	0	0
16. *Pastel* [cake]	2	0	0	0
17. *Cocaína* [cocaine]	1	1	0	0
18. *Licor* [liquor]	1	1	0	0
19. *Mariachis*	1	1	0	0
20. *Banda* [music band]	1	0	1	0
21. *Aguas frescas* [fresh/flavored waters]	1	0	0	0
22. *Ambulanica* [ambulance]	1	0	0	0
23. *Botanas* [snacks]	1	0	0	0
24. *Buen anfitrión* [good host]	1	0	0	0
25. *Carnitas* [good meats]	1	0	0	0
26. *Decoraciones* [decorations]	1	0	0	0
27. *Gente desmadrosa* [rowdy people]	1	0	0	0
28. *Marijuana*	1	0	0	0
29. *Mezcal* [a type of hard liquor]	1	0	0	0
30. *Mucha gente* [many people]	1	0	0	0
31. *Payasos* [clowns]	1	0	0	0
32. *Uno que otro gay* [one or two gay men]	1	0	0	0

2b. Female Respondents

Item	Frequency	Order of Mention		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1. *Comida* [food]	14	7	4	1
2. *Buena música* [good music]	14	6	2	5
3. *Buen ambiente* [good ambience]	9	0	1	3
4. *Bailar* [to dance]	7	0	2	0
5. *Bebidas* [drinks]	6	0	2	2
6. *Cerveza* [beer]	4	1	0	1
7. *Tacos*	4	0	2	0
8. *Amigos* [friends]	3	0	0	0
9. *Muchas personas* [many people]	3	0	0	0
10. *Alcohol*	2	1	0	1
11. *Juegos* [games]	2	0	2	0
12. *Cantar* [to sing]	2	0	0	0
13. *Familiares* [relatives]	2	0	0	0
14. *Alitas* [chicken wings]	1	1	0	0
15. *Rueda* [wheel/Ferris wheel]	1	1	0	0
16. *Tequila*	1	1	0	0
17. *BBQ*	1	0	1	0
18. *Botanas* [snacks]	1	0	1	0
19. *Fuegos* [fireworks]	1	0	1	0
20. *Buena salsa* [good hot sauce]	1	0	0	1
21. *Grupo de música* [music group]	1	0	0	1
22. *Pastel* [cake]	1	0	0	1
23. *Agua* [water]	1	0	0	0
24. *Castillos* [fireworks castles]	1	0	0	0
25. *Café* [coffee]	1	0	0	0
26. *Contar chistes* [to tell jokes]	1	0	0	0
27. *Evento de deportes* [sports event]	1	0	0	0
28. *Invitados* [guests]	1	0	0	0
29. *Pizza*	1	0	0	0

3

Resources and Approaches for Integrating High-Leverage Teaching Practices: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

   Implementing high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) for language learning can help ensure teachers create and deliver a high-quality curriculum, especially when working with Novice learners who require more scaffolded instruction. This study aimed to fill a gap by identifying print resources and approaches available to support world language teachers' integration of HLTPs into instructional design for Novice learners in middle and high school classrooms (grades 6-12). In the Fall of 2022, various resources were analyzed according to their use in assisting teachers with integrating HLTPs, state standards, and current second language acquisition (SLA) research into instructional design. These resources included several ACTFL publications, select world language methods textbooks, and documents from departments of education across 13 states in the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) region.

   The analysis found that teachers in this Southeastern region have access to numerous resources for implementing the HLTP of backward design, including proficiency goals for each level and state standards that are aligned with the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). However, comprehensive instructional approaches or models to create proficiency-based, contextualized curricula integrating the other nine HLTPs were limited. The findings highlight a lack of adequate guidance and resources for streamlined instructional design to assist teachers in integrating HLTPs when working with Novice language learners in grades 6-12, particularly after proficiency and communicative goals have been established.

Keywords: *High-leverage teaching practices, instructional design, pedagogical content knowledge, language teaching resources, novice language learners*

Introduction

     Attention to pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and its development in pre-service and in-service teachers is crucial for improving student outcomes in many content areas (Baumert et al., 2010; Evens et al., 2016, 2019; Shulman, 1986, 1987). Watzke (2007) found that ineffective teaching practices of pre-service world

language teachers could become permanent if those teachers did not continue developing their PCK. Research by Evens et al. (2019) showed that both pre-service and in-service teachers of French demonstrated similar PCK, signifying that simply spending more time in the classroom does not equate to increased PCK or expertise. Language teachers need specific professional development and support to improve their PCK to positively impact student outcomes.

High-Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) serve as a platform to define those essential practices for world language teaching, and their integration into instructional design is a possible way to develop the PCK of teachers both in training and in the field (Ball & Forzani, 2009, 2011; Davin & Troyan, 2015; Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Hlas & Hlas, 2012). World language teachers with well-developed PCK, advanced proficiency or higher in the target language, and sound understanding of how to integrate the 10 HLTPs into instruction have the potential to improve student outcomes significantly (Borden, 2022; Davin & Troyan, 2015; Vyn, Wesely, & Neubauer, 2019).

While Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021) do an excellent job in outlining each language learning specific HLTP, what they do not do, nor do they aim to do in their work, is integrate them into an instructional approach or model to facilitate instructional design. Many in-service and pre-service teachers, especially those with less developed PCK, may need a more direct approach to integrating HLTPs for language learning into an instructional framework. Ritz and Sherf (2023) found that while many teachers in the field may be taking steps to implement proficiency-based instruction, they need more support in how to implement HLTPs into instruction. This study addresses what print resources are available for pre-service and in-service language teachers looking to integrate HLTPs in creating instruction for Novice learners.

The author conducted a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) to systematically identify what resources and approaches are currently available to language teachers looking to integrate HLTPs when creating instruction for Novice students in the 6-12 classroom. The resources analyzed in this content analysis were not pre-made curricula such as commercially available textbook series. While textbooks can be utilized as a resource when creating instruction, this study aimed not to analyze pedagogical materials already produced and ready to deliver to students but rather resources teachers can use to create their own materials integrating authentic texts using HLTPs. The inferences and interpretations drawn from this content analysis are intended to allow for a clear understanding of what approaches, frameworks, or models, if any, a language teacher could easily access and utilize when creating instruction integrating HLTPs for a Novice level classroom in a middle or high school setting.

Literature Review

The underlying conceptual theories and frameworks that gird the 10 HLTPs for language learning are extensive. The 10 HLTPs for language learning fit into ACTFL's six core practices and the larger context of world language instruction research and practice aimed at assisting world language teachers in the field. The ACTFL core practices and related 10 HLTPs can be grouped as follows: (1) establishing mean-

ingful and purposeful context for language instruction, developing contextualized performance assessments, and planning with an iterative backward design model; (2) facilitating target language comprehensibility, designing communicative activities, and using the target language 90% or more of class time while building a discourse community; (3) teaching grammar in context with a focus on meaning before form with the PACE model (i.e., presenting (P) a story to highlight a grammatical structure, drawing students' attention (A) to the structure, co-constructing (C) the grammar pattern with students, and extending (E) with related activities; (4) incorporating authentic cultural resources and guiding learners to interpret authentic texts, products, practices, and perspectives; and (5) providing appropriate corrective feedback (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Swanson & Abbott, 2015). Glisan & Donato (2017, 2021) provide a succinct list of the ten HLTP summarized as follows:

- HLTP #1: Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility
- HLTP #2: Building a Classroom Discourse Community
- HLTP #3: Guiding Learners to Interpret and Discuss Authentic Texts
- HLTP #4: Focusing on Form in a Dialogic Context Through PACE
- HLTP #5: Focusing on Cultural Products, Practices, Perspectives in a Dialogic Context
- HLTP #6: Providing Oral Corrective Feedback to Improve Learner Performance
- HLTP #7: Establishing a Meaningful and Purposeful Context for Language Instruction
- HLTP #8: Planning for Instruction Using an Iterative Process for Backward Design
- HLTP #9: Engaging Learners in Purposeful Written Communication
- HLTP #10: Developing Contextualized Performance Assessments

Promoted by ACTFL and based in SLA research and pedagogy, high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) have been clearly defined by language education scholars Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021). However, HLTPs do not purport to be a part of any sort of comprehensive instructional approach or method for pre- or in-service teachers: "the authors opted not to include entire sample lessons that illustrate each HLTP so as not to create a misunderstanding that there is only one way for the practices to be enacted within lessons" (p. 12). While teaching practices and methodologies for language learning are already highly variable across classrooms in the US, resources containing an approach or method integrating HLTPs could be beneficial to pre-service teachers and teachers already in the field (Borden, 2022; Lacorte & Suárez García, 2014).

Although HLTPs are necessary in outlining those essential practices that should be incorporated into the design and delivery of world language instruction, their practical application and integration into instructional design may remain out of reach for many of those currently teaching in the field (Ritz & Sherf, 2023). This author believes that teachers could benefit from a more prescriptive but not restrictive, highly scaffolded framework when approaching instructional design and implementation. An approach encompassing and integrating the standards and research-based core practices, which form the foundation of high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) for language learning, could facilitate instructional design and

ensure the integration of the HLTPs. This type of framework is especially needed when designing high-quality instruction for Novice learners who require highly scaffolded instruction to function in the target language due to their limited language proficiency.

The epistemological assumptions for this paper are aligned with a constructivist and sociocultural perspective, especially Vygotsky's definition of scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD of the learner is the range in which the learner can function in the target language without help. In the world language classroom, the teacher's role is to design instruction that is targeted to the students' ZPD and provide the gradual release of assistance, which is the foundation of the concept of scaffolding.

Even in a middle or high school setting with total beginners, language should serve as a mediational tool for language acquisition, meaning that the instruction should be conducted exclusively or near-exclusively in the target language (Swanson & Abbott, 2015; Vyn, Wesely, & Neubauer, 2019). This is the essence of sociocultural theory as it relates to language instruction (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Because Novice learners have such limited language proficiency, the teacher's instruction in the target language needs to match the students' ZPD and be well-planned and highly scaffolded with a focus on ensuring input that is comprehensible (i.e., i+1) and engaging for students (Krashen, 1982). The lower the language proficiency of the learners, the better thought out the instruction must be in the middle or high settings to keep input and instruction comprehensible, age-appropriate, and compelling in the target language.

Many commercially available textbooks created for world language students and teachers in grades 6-12 level lag behind current research in second language acquisition and do not assist the teacher in sufficiently integrating HLTPs (Aski, 2003, 2005; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Many textbooks in world language teachers' classrooms contain what Lee & VanPatten (2003) refer to as attractive window dressing—a visually appealing but rigid and targeted-grammatical syllabus with accompanying mechanical activities. Teachers working with these materials have a greater need to use the textbook as a resource rather than a complete curriculum and often need to create their own materials, especially to introduce authentic texts to Novice learners. However, even units and lessons taken from textbooks with more effective instructional materials must be adapted to a particular group of students and their ZPD, requiring some sort of instructional model or framework for the creation of high-quality lessons. The goal of this content analysis was not to analyze world language curricula but to analyze resources available for instructional design for teaching Novice learners in 6-12 classroom.

As many commercially available middle and high school world language textbooks may still not be aligned with ACTFL core practices and HLTPs, the necessity of creating instruction is apparent for world language teachers (Aski, 2005, 2003; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Many teachers in the field are hindered by the overwhelming demands of attempting to create this type of instruction without adequate practice-based training or a solid instructional approach or model (Ritz & Sherf, 2023). In addition to a lack of effective

pedagogical materials such as a textbook, secondary teachers are often presented with professional development (PD) that is not specific to world language pedagogy or second language acquisition, such as generic workshops on student learning and classroom management, although recent research is scant on professional development offerings for language teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Horwitz, 2005; Peyton, 1997; Steele et al., 2009). These factors illustrate the need for a comprehensive approach or model for instructional design when teaching Novice learners that can be used beginning in pre-service teaching and throughout a world language teacher's career (Knight, 2020; Steele et al., 2009).

Professional development specific to second language acquisition can be difficult to come by in the case that administrators are limited in funding for registration and travel to offsite professional conferences or workshops. Many of the materials available for PD or instructional design in-person, in print, or online are often too generic or nebulous to be used effectively or straightforwardly by busy practicing world language teachers (Steele et al., 2009). For example, the language learning HLTP #1, called *facilitating target language comprehensibility*, is highly complex as many smaller practices contribute to its effectiveness (Glisan & Donato, 2017). These smaller practices can be deconstructed further into instructional moves, which can be further broken into sub-practices, also called micro-practices. One of the main challenges for world language teachers is designing instruction under tight time constraints for multiple levels and groups. To make the HLTPs more practical, they could be deconstructed into manageable, digestible steps that fit into an instructional approach or model. Organized in such a way, teachers could better create and deliver high-quality materials and instruction based on core practices relatively quickly and efficiently.

This study explored what resources are currently available to teachers seeking to integrate HLTPs for language learning into their classroom instruction at the middle and high school levels for Novice learners. The following questions guided the content analysis:

1. What easily accessible resources and materials, if any, can assist language teachers in developing their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) using High-Leverage Teaching Practices for language learning?
2. How do these materials assist teachers in integrating High-Leverage Teaching Practices for language learning into instructional design for Novice learners in middle and high school language classrooms?

Methods

The author employed Krippendorff's (2018) qualitative content analysis methodology to make "valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) and the contexts of their use" (p. 24). Documents and resources were selected that would represent what an average teacher in the field could easily access for free on the Internet and some commercially available print publications that can be purchased from ACTFL or other publishers. Several popular methods textbooks for world language pedagogy that a typical language teacher might own were also included.

A sample region of the United States was chosen to investigate the resources available using state department websites for world languages grades 6-12 in Fall

of 2022. This region was composed of a group of 13 states that form the regional language organization called the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), excluding the Virgin Islands because online world language standards materials were unavailable at the time of data collection. For each state in the region, the state department website was accessed to gather available materials for teachers of world languages in grades 6-12. See Appendix A for a list of the states in the selected region for this content analysis and the types of resources provided on each state department's website.

In addition to the materials provided by this sample of states in the region, other available online resources from the ACTFL website were included. See Appendix B for the types of information provided by the ACTFL website. The final sources selected for analysis were publications created for in-service and pre-service teachers. These included relevant ACTFL publications and a sample of popular, often-used textbooks for world language methods courses. See Appendix C for a list of these texts. While many of the methods books pre-date the HTLPs, most of them provide thorough explanations and examples of most of the HLTPs, even if they do not refer to them as such.

Data Analysis and Coding Procedure

The documents examined contain hundreds of pages of beneficial information and research relevant to world language instruction. However, the main aim of the study was to determine if any provided comprehensive instructional approaches or models for teaching Novice learners that would be easily accessible to a pre- or in-service language teacher.

For state resources found in Appendix A, each resource was accessed in Fall of 2022 and uploaded into the qualitative analysis software MAXQDA2022. This software is used to organize, code, and analyze qualitative data, and in this study, it served to store and code the many documents and resources examined. Resources such as state standards included large volumes of information, with most state department standards documents between 50 and 100 pages each. For example, South Carolina's state standards for World Languages reached 160 pages. MAXQDA2022, the qualitative data analysis software, was instrumental in that it could handle large amounts of text data.

The procedure was to upload sources into the software and then sort the resources based on type (i.e., standards, proficiency goals, guides, sample lessons, templates, etc.). The next step was to locate relevant passages of each text, code them, and find the relevant themes across the materials. Regarding a coding frame, categories and features emerged in the documents across states. A coding matrix, as articulated by Krippendorff (2018), was created and a sample is provided in Appendix D.

For the publications listed on Appendix C, the author followed a process similar to that of the sources from Appendix A. Each text was uploaded into the MAXQDA2022 qualitative data analysis software. The author located relevant passages of texts that specifically focused on instructional design and then coded each section for whether each text provided any comprehensive instructional model or framework, lesson planning templates, sample lessons, etc. The author then

identified themes within each text and across texts.

Findings

As shown in Appendix A, 100% of states (n=13) provided standards and proficiency goals, and all states in the region provided access to documents outlining standards and proficiency goals for world languages. Some states provided supplemental resources such as guides, generic lessons, unit templates, or samples of pre-made curriculum materials. The bulk of state and national resources included countless courses of study and standards, proficiency goals, benchmarks, and sample student tasks, which are helpful for incorporating HLTP #8 using backward design as an iterative process (Glisan & Donato, 2021). However, none of the documents provided by state department websites offered comprehensive instructional models or approaches for creating curricula.

Each state's standards and proficiency goals were unified and aligned with the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (ACTFL National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The features common to each state's standards documents emphasize the 5 Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) and three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Seven of the 13 states provided supplemental materials, as listed in Appendix A.

All states proposed similar proficiency goals for the Novice level, with students reaching Novice Mid proficiency by the end of Level 1 and Novice High by the end of Level 2 of a modern language such as Spanish, French, or German. Appendix E shows an example of proficiency goals for all levels and in each mode of communication for the state of Virginia. This type of chart was common in documents from state departments of education, and proficiency goals were consistent across the states selected. Brief, sample task descriptions in all modes of communication and Can-Do statements were also prominent features for all states. While the sample tasks and Can-Do statements varied slightly from state to state, there was a strong sense of unity regarding what teachers and students should be able to do at each level. While this type of information is essential in planning instruction employing HLTP #8 with backward design, it does not provide teachers with any instructional model or approach for creating curricula to improve students' proficiency once goals and Can-Do statements are identified.

An abundance of information can be easily accessed during the backward design phase of creating overall course goals, unit goals, lesson goals, performance assessments, and vertical planning. However, states did not propose any specific approach or model for instructional design in creating a curriculum integrating other HLTPs to assist teachers and students in reaching these goals. None of the resources, including state department documents from the sample states, ACTFL Website articles, or publications, proposed or advocated for any specific instructional approach or model to integrate HLTPs into instruction except the PACE model used to teach grammar in a dialogic context (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002; Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016). The PACE model is also promoted by ACTFL and is mentioned in some state department materials as the preferred way to teach grammar. It is also part of HLTP #4 called "focusing on form in a dialogic context through PACE"

(Glisan & Donato, 2017). The methods textbook, *Teacher's Handbook*, by Shrum and Glisan (2016) describes this model in detail and provided a sample lesson in the appendix on how this would be used in the classroom for Novice learners. Yet, a comprehensive approach or model incorporating other HLTPs for instructional design for Novice learners was not present in any of the documents analyzed.

The ACTFL-sponsored book series on High-Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) by Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021) clearly identifies and describes the practices, but they do not propose any comprehensive instructional approach or model to apply these practices, nor do they claim to. The authors provide useful tools after explaining each HLTP in the form of checklists, charts, and rubrics. These tools benefit teachers who want to assess their implementation of the HLTPs, yet lack explicit guidance for creating instruction.

Discussion

The findings from the data analysis of the various resources selected for this content analysis can be categorized into four themes.

1. Unified State Standards, Courses of Study, and Proficiency Goals Aligned with World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning

All 13 states sampled were highly unified in their standards, courses of study, and proficiency benchmarks. There was no difference between states on what proficiency level students should reach at the end of each level in 6-12 world language classrooms. All the standards, courses of study, and proficiency goals were based on the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* (ACTFL National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and proficiency benchmarks in all three modes of communication. (ACTFL, 2011, 2021, 2024). The 5 Cs were also a strong focus and incorporated into each state's standards. HLTPs were not mentioned explicitly in any state department documents, but there were indirect mentions of many practices, such as guiding learners to use authentic texts and making input comprehensible.

The only variation in materials provided by state departments of education was the inclusion of supplemental resources. Seven of the 13 states added additional resources, such as examples of pre-made instruction (e.g., sample lessons, units, templates, etc.). However, these were of varying quality, and none included any straightforward instructional approach, model, or strategies for a teacher to create her own instruction. Integration of HLTPs in the other sources the author analyzed, such as ACTFL resources, publications, and methods textbooks, provide ample information on backward planning and incorporating standards into communicative goals that contextualize and frame thematic units. Once teachers have utilized the necessary resources to determine goals and content, such as state and national standards, they must create their own instructional materials. Straightforward instructional approaches, models, and strategies for lesson and learning activity design to achieve proficiency goals for Novice learners in the context of state and national standards, regardless of language, are noticeably lacking.

2. HLTPs for Language Learning Support Standards and Proficiency Goals

HLTPs give teachers concrete practices to help them better understand what type of teaching will allow their students to reach the goals outlined by state and national organizations. They complement the materials available from state education

departments, such as the standards and proficiency goals. However, they are simply a collection of deconstructed practices, not an integrated instructional approach or model (Glisan & Donato, 2017). This lack of practical implementation support leaves teachers attempting to create instruction with an obvious gap in applying the theory of integrating these practices into instructional design and delivery.

As noted earlier, HLTPs and the related publications that describe them are not comprehensive instructional approaches or models. This content analysis revealed that no widely available, comprehensive instructional approach exists to integrate these practices into a cohesive framework. Classroom language teachers, especially under the increased demands of post-COVID-19 education, need a structured approach that provides scaffolding and support for daily instructional planning. Unfortunately, such an approach is not currently widely available.

3. Curriculum Design is a Local Decision with Textbooks Not Required and Serving as a Resource; Authentic Resources Required

Multiple states explicitly express that curriculum is a decision to be made at the local level by individual districts and teachers. For example, the standards documents from the state of Georgia's Department of Education (2007, p. 2) urge this:

> The most common tool available to modern language teachers is the textbook; however, it should not dictate the curriculum. Whenever possible, teachers should access and use authentic materials. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use the ever-expanding resources available on the Internet and other media sources, as well. Culturally authentic materials that add relevance to linguistic and cultural components of language study are readily accessible. [...] topics should be combined into coherent thematic units and taught in context. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for Modern Languages encourages language taught in a communicative context and discourage language taught in isolation.

Several other states echo this recommendation that textbooks are not required and should only serve as a resource in creating curriculum, but all state standards explicitly require the implementation of authentic materials into courses, including at the Novice level. Telling teachers to seek out their own materials from the internet and then teach those topics and texts in contextualized, proficiency-based, thematic units strongly necessitates the teacher's creation of instruction with appropriate scaffolding to allow Novice students to comprehend the texts. However, little to no guidance is given on creating instruction except that the choice is up to local districts and classroom teachers. Teachers need more support than what is currently readily available to them to create the instruction urged by their standards and state education departments (Ritz & Sherf, 2023).

4. Comprehensive Instructional Approaches or Models to Create Curriculum, Including Lessons and Learning Activities, are Scarce or Nonexistent

Publications by ACTFL on instructional design in the Keys series provided little in the way of complete instructional models or strategy integration within a comprehensive approach. The sponsored ACTFL text explicitly geared towards

instructional design, *The Keys to Planning for Learning* (Clementi & Terrill, 2017), devotes a sizeable portion of the book to discussing learning goals and backward design. Understanding backward design is undoubtedly helpful to teachers and not inherently problematic, except that the text is unbalanced in that the proportion focused on instructional design, such as lesson planning to meet those goals, is minimal. Out of 262 pages, only a few of those pages focus explicitly on instructional design and the recommendations are generic. For example, the lesson design template includes the following stages: gain attention/activate prior knowledge, provide input, elicit performance/provide feedback, assess performance/closure, and enhance retention/transfer (Clementi & Terrill, 2017, p. 62). The authors only give an example of one sample lesson to review these cycles, and the descriptions are brief. There is no detailed narrative lesson plan to accompany the template, and teachers must extrapolate from the template to design their own lessons.

One concern that became apparent about methods textbooks like Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's Handbook* (2016), Omaggio Hadley's *Teaching Language in Context* (2001), and Lee and VanPatten's *Making Communicative Language Happen* (2003), is that while they contain large quantities of excellent information, research, and more explicit explanation of instructional design than the other sources, they are likely too dense for many teachers to easily use when creating instruction under time constraints in their own classrooms. *Common Ground: Second Language Theory Goes to the Classroom* (Henshaw & Hawkins, 2022) is arguably the most reader friendly. All the methods texts provide concrete examples of many outstanding instructional techniques and strategies, but these can be hidden in the hundreds of pages of text.

Without a more concise approach to incorporate research-based strategies and HLTPs promoted by these texts that is practical and easily accessible, teachers may fail to integrate HLTPs or resort to using outdated textbooks or ineffective methods (Aski, 2003, 2005; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Ritz & Sherf, 2023; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Most materials available to teachers for curriculum design are either pre-made materials of varying quality or generic unit and lesson design templates. Resources from state departments of education and other publications are seemingly lacking instructional approaches or models for creating and delivering instruction.

Implications

There are abundant resources available for teachers on what their students should be achieving in world language classrooms, including standards, "Can-Do Statements," proficiency goals, and sample student tasks (ACTFL, 2011, 2021, 2024). This information is easily accessible online and in print through various documents provided by ACTFL, state departments of education, and methods textbooks. HLTPs and ACTFL core practices for language learning are clearly defined (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Swanson & Abbott, 2015). However, there remains a lack of practical application guides for teachers on how exactly they could create and deliver instruction in an organized and concrete fashion to reach those goals. Where information on instructional design is available to teachers, as seen in textbooks and other publications examined in this content analysis, it is either too dense, vague, theoretical, or challenging to piece together for practical application.

A comprehensive instructional approach integrating the 10 HLTPs for language learning and ACTFL core practices would help both pre-service and in-service teachers who instruct Novice learners. The ideal approach should be well-organized and structured, enabling teachers to develop and deliver proficiency-based, contextualized instruction that is exclusively in the target language and easily comprehensible. It should provide Novice learners with consistent scaffolding and support while allowing teachers the flexibility and agency to infuse creativity and address the unique needs of their students.

Ahnell (2023) has proposed such an approach, the Integrated Communicative Approach (ICA), which offers teachers a way to create proficiency-based, contextualized units of instruction and assist them in the integration of HLTPs. These units, lessons, and activities are carefully sequenced and scaffolded to keep Novice language learners engaged and to improve their proficiency through comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), while supporting teachers in using the target language 90% or more of the time.

The Integrated Communicative Approach (ICA) is an instructional framework that integrates all 10 HLTPs and ACTFLs six core practices beginning with the creation of a contextualized performance assessment using a backward design model. The Integrated Communicative Approach framework provides four different lesson types to build an integrated, contextualized, communicative unit to facilitate language acquisition: (1) the Comprehensible Input Meaning-based Output (CIMO) model for vocabulary-focused lessons, (2) the CIMO-G model which incorporates a grammar (G) focus by combining the structure of processing instruction and the whole language approach of the PACE model, (3) the PGAP model for literacy-focused instruction using authentic texts, where PGAP stands for the stages of Pre-Reading, Guided Interaction, Assimilation, and Personalization, and (4) the Artifact Based Culture Capsule (ABCC), a model for the study of an artifact from the target culture to explore products, practices, and perspectives. An instructional framework like the Integrated Communicative Approach could provide pre-service and in-service world language teachers with fresh perspectives on instructional design and delivery methods and useful, practical resources for creating and implementing proficiency-based, contextualized language instruction for Novice learners.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The content analysis in this paper did not examine instructional approaches or strategies for implementing HLTPs that teachers may access through teacher preparation programs or professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, or conferences. It also did not analyze instructional materials that teachers may share within individual departments and districts or through professional learning communities, online marketplaces like Teachers Pay Teachers, or websites run by language consultants. It also did not examine which materials teachers access and utilize to plan and create instruction integrating HLTPs, which would be valuable for future research.

Further research could focus on developing a streamlined and accessible instructional framework, like the Integrated Communicative Approach, to integrate HLTPs when creating instruction for Novice learners in 6-12 world language

classrooms. This would be highly beneficial to language teachers today. Such a framework could leverage resources already available to teachers, as identified in this content analysis, given that these existing documents are vital to backward design and understanding of the other HLTPs. An instructional approach like this would support teachers in integrating existing materials (e.g., HLTPs, standards, proficiency goals, etc.) to create tailored instruction to meet the unique needs of Novice learners, particularly in middle and high school classrooms.

Conclusion

There are ample resources available to teachers on what students should be able to achieve in terms of proficiency at each level of instruction in the 6-12 world language classroom. HLTPs for language learning and core practices are well-defined. However, there is a lack of adequate resources for streamlined instructional design to integrate HLTPs when working with Novice learners, especially once communicative goals have been established. VanPatten and Simonsen (2022) underscore this gap plainly: "There is no research on the topic of best methods we can recommend or at least no current research. Research on particular methods died out in the 1980s [...] even ACTFL does not prescribe particular methods. Maybe it's best to forget about a 'best' method and to think instead about outcomes and how we can get there" (p. 228). While there may not be one best method, this study reveals that teachers have few, if any, effective and readily accessible methods to support them. Although this flexibility and freedom may empower teachers, it also places the burden of piecing together their own methods.

In response to these findings, a comprehensive instructional approach focusing on lesson planning and delivery—beginning with contextualized, culturally rich, comprehensible input, followed by activities exclusively in the target language that promote acquisition and meaning-based output with embedded formative assessment—is urgently needed to support world language teachers in the challenges they face today's classrooms. Ideally, this comprehensive approach would not be presented as another general curricular design discussion from a theoretical standpoint. Instead, it should aim to outline a practical and highly scaffolded framework that teachers can use to create proficiency-based, thematic instruction integrating high-leverage teaching practices. Such an approach is essential for bridging the gap between currently available materials and the resources teachers need today by integrating state and national standards, textbooks as resources, authentic texts, high-leverage teaching practices, and second language acquisition research. Understanding and implementing this type of approach could enhance the pedagogical content knowledge of current and future world language teachers, ultimately leading to positive impacts on student outcomes in middle and high school classrooms across the United States.

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Appendix A

List of States and Online Resources Provided

States	Type of Sources Available Online Through State Department Website	Supplemental Materials
Alabama	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Arkansas	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Florida	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Georgia	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Sample Units/Lessons	Yes
North Carolina	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Unpacking Document" similar to a Course of Study	Yes
Kentucky	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Louisiana	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Full Unit Outlines for Immersion in French and Spanish Lang Arts and Math, Thematic planning templates for generic units and lessons	Yes
Mississippi	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "World Language Teaching Guide" with basic information on field and research, Sample Lessons	Yes
South Carolina	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Resource Guide" with Sample Units for each level and immersion courses	Yes
Texas	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Tennessee	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Core Practices	Yes
Virginia	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Guide" with links for resources	Yes
West Virginia	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No

Appendix B

ACTFL Website Topics from the 2022 Main Resources Page

ACTFL Website Main Resources Page	Relevant Topic(s)
	Teaching and Learning Remotely
	Race, Diversity, and Social Justice
	ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners
	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012
	Can-Do Statements
	World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages
	Guiding Principles
	Assigning CEFR Ratings to ACTFL Assessments
Guiding Principles Page	ACTFL Core Practices Overview
	Backward Design
	Facilitate Target Language Comprehensibility
	Guide Learners Through Interpreting Authentic Resources
	Design Oral Interpersonal Communication Tasks
	Teach Grammar as a Concept and Use in Context
	Provide Appropriate Oral Feedback

Appendix C

World Language Curriculum and Instruction Publications

Author(s)	Title and Year Published	Published by ACTFL?
Henshaw and Hawkins	*Common Ground: Second Language Acquisition Theory Goes to the Classroom* (2022)	No
Glisan and Donato	*Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices, Volume 1* (2017)	Yes
Glisan and Donato	*Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices, Volume 2* (2021)	Yes
Clementi and Terrill	*The Keys to Planning for Learning, 2nd Ed.* (2017)	Yes
Grahn and McAlpine	*The Keys to Strategies for Language Instruction* (2017)	Yes
Shrum and Glisan	*Language Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction* (2015)	No
Lee and VanPatten	*Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* (2003)	No
Omaggio Hadley	*Teaching Language in Context* (2001)	No

Appendix D

Sample of Coding Matrix for Two States in Sampled Region

State	Type of Resource Provided					
AL	Standards/Course of Study	Model or Guide for Instructional Design Provided	Instructional Design Framework Based on Standards or HLTPs	Unit Planning or Lesson Template	Premade Curriculum Materials	Curriculum Materials are a Local Decision
	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes

Standards Include:				HLTPs mentioned: No Explicit HLTP Integration: No Indirect inclusion of HLTPs: Yes
5 Cs	3 Modes	Proficiency Targets	Sample Tasks/ Goals	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

State	Type of Resource Provided					
AK	Standards/Course of Study	Model or Guide for Instructional Design Provided	Instructional Design Framework Based on Standards or HLTPs	Unit Planning or Lesson Planning Template	Premade Curriculum Materials	Curriculum Materials are a Local Decision
	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes

Standards Include:				HLTPs mentioned: No Explicit HLTP Integration: No Indirect inclusion of HLTPs: Yes
5 Cs	3 Modes	Proficiency Targets	Sample Tasks/ Goals	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Appendix E

Example of a 2021 proficiency goal chart from Virginia Department of Education

The exit outcome expectations align to the ACTFL Proficiency Levels and are coded as follows:
- **NL** = Novice Low
- **NM** = Novice Mid
- **NH** = Novice High
- **IL** = Intermediate Low
- **IM** = Intermediate Mid
- **IH** = Intermediate High
- **AL** = Advanced Low
- **AM** = Advanced Mid

Modern Language Exit Proficiency Expectations for levels I and II difficulty rated languages, alphabetic languages, such as French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc.

MODE & Skill	Level I or 140 hours	Level II or 280 hours	Level III or 420 hours	Level IV or 560 hours	Level V or 700 hours	Level VI or 840 hours	Level VII or 980 hours	Level VIII or 1,120 hours
INTERPRETIVE Listening	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
INTERPRETIVE Reading	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
INTERPERSONAL Person-to-person	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	NM	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM

4

Minoritized Students' Internship Experiences in World Languages: A Call for Research

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Abstract

Higher education has undergone important shifts over the past two decades, with U.S. universities placing more emphasis on career readiness and internships becoming an integral part of academia (National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2021). Moreover, the student population in U.S. universities has become more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023), which has drawn more attention to issues of equity and access to career readiness initiatives such as internships (Greenman et al., 2022). Disparities exist for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, such as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students, from their White peers not only in internships participation but also in world language courses particularly at upper levels of study (Glenn & Wassell, 2018). Furthermore, little is known about internship experiences that require target language use for world language students, notably about minoritized students' experiences. This position paper summarizes key findings from the literature on internships and career readiness, reports on the disproportionately low number of minoritized students participating in internships and advanced world language study alike and calls for research to be conducted on students' internship experiences in world language programs, especially for minoritized students.

Keywords: Minoritized students, internships, world languages, career readiness, equity

Introduction

The United States has often been portrayed and perceived as a diverse and stable democracy. However, inequities prevail in its education system, which has led some scholars to rank the U.S. school system as one of the most unequal in the industrialized world (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Despite evidence of the professional benefits of world language study and internships, racial and ethnic disparities continue for historically marginalized racial and ethnic

communities, such as Black and Latinx students, henceforth termed *minoritized* students, to underline the social construction of the minority status as dependent on context (Glenn & Wassell, 2018). Research shows that minoritized students remain underrepresented in U.S. world language courses (Anya, 2011; Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Moore, 2005; Zárate-Sández, 2021) and participate in internships at lower rates than their White counterparts (Hora et al., 2021; National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2020). Accordingly, limited research has been conducted on the experiences of minoritized students in both world language courses (Anya, 2020) and internship programs (Hora et al., 2020), and to date, there is a lack of research on the experiences of minoritized students in world languages internship programs.

Barriers to internships and world language studies can reduce learning and career opportunities for minoritized students and place them at a disadvantage in the job market (Ali et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2020). Indeed, students who participate in internships develop multiple skills, have more opportunities to find jobs, and earn higher salaries (Finley, 2023; NACE, 2013; Rigsby et al., 2013). Moreover, in our increasingly globalized and interconnected world, intercultural competence and proficiency in a world language have become necessary skills, which explains why the demand for multilingual interculturally competent graduates is unprecedentedly high (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2019). Therefore, unequal access to world language courses and internship programs are among the most pressing issues in the field of World Languages as they contribute to keeping the U.S. education system, and U.S. society at large, inherently unequal. Making world language courses and internship programs more accessible to minoritized students could help reduce some of the inequities that still prevail in higher education and the workplace.

Literature Review

Career Readiness

Since the end of World War II, liberal education, which can be defined as "an approach to undergraduate education that promotes the integration of learning across the curriculum and cocurriculum [sic], and between academic and experiential learning, in order to develop specific learning outcomes that are essential for work, citizenship, and life," (American Association of Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], n.d.-a) has prevailed in the United States. With the rise of tuition costs and student debt over the past 20 years, universities in the United States are increasingly held accountable regarding the extent to which they prepare students for future careers and increase student *employability* (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018), which is "the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 12). To foster employability in an increasingly liberal, global, and competitive job market, students expect to develop their career readiness, also known as work readiness, while in college (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018). For these reasons, career readiness has grown in popularity in higher education.

Although interest in career readiness has grown in popularity in U.S. universities, this concept is rarely described in specific terms, so students often do not have a clear understanding of what career readiness entails or how to attain it (Simonsen, 2022). The NACE (2021) defined *career readiness* as "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management" (p. 1) and identified eight Career Readiness Competencies: (1) career and self-development, (2) communication, (3) critical thinking and problem-solving, (4) equity and inclusion, (5) leadership, (6) professionalism and work ethic, (7) teamwork and collaboration, and (8) digital technology.

Despite the prevalence of career readiness and employability initiatives in higher education, universities often fail to prepare students for their intended careers (Divan et al., 2019). One reason behind this issue is the fact that the job market evolves fast, so universities are expected to prepare students for jobs and fields that do not yet exist (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018). Furthermore, universities have not addressed issues of equity when developing career readiness initiatives despite NACE's (2021) inclusion of equity and inclusion as one of eight Career Readiness Competencies. Ignoring equity in career-readiness initiatives can perpetuate inequity in education and the corporate world (Greenman et al., 2022). Indeed, failing to emphasize equity in career readiness initiatives may prevent minoritized students from accessing and benefiting from professional opportunities to the same extent as White students, thus perpetuating an unequal educational system in which students cannot increase their *social mobility*, which can be defined as a "change in a person's socio-economic situation, either in relation to their parents (inter-generational mobility) or throughout their lifetime (intra-generational mobility)" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], n.d., What is Social Mobility section).

Career Readiness in World Language Studies

Career readiness has grown in popularity in the field of World Languages as well. ACTFL's (2012) proficiency guidelines state that students learning a world language who reach an Advanced proficiency level should be able to communicate in professional contexts using the target language. Moreover, ACTFL (2020) has posited that the overarching goal of world language instruction should be to help students reach the Advanced proficiency level and provide career readiness preparation. Although ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards provide a framework to foster world language students' ability to use the target language in different social functions and contexts (National Standards Collaborative Board [NSCB], 2015), they do not explicitly address career readiness in terms of problem-solving, equity, leadership, professionalism, and digital technology (Simonsen, 2022).

Historically, world language programs in U.S. universities have focused on literary studies and have not facilitated the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for the most common careers (Duggan, 2009; Simonsen, 2022). This trend is problematic at a time when most world language programs face decreasing enrollments (MLA, 2022) while students who may perceive that world language

programs cannot adequately prepare them for a career refrain from majoring in a world language. Simonsen (2022) proposed that language programs reduce their emphasis on literary and cultural studies to emphasize language for specific purposes (LSP) courses (e.g., Business French or Medical Spanish). Simonsen also advocated for the development of *language mediation*, which can be defined as the ability to act as a "social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes across modalities … and sometimes from one language to another" (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2020, p. 90). Moreover, a report by ACTFL (2019) identified translation as the most common language skill that employers lack and outsource, which is why Colina and Lafford (2017) argued that translation and interpretation should be emphasized in world language courses.

Internships

Employability is a strong motivator for students to attend college and higher education institutions are increasingly expected to produce career-ready graduates (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018). For this reason, internships have become an integral means of preparing college students for their intended careers. Indeed, in a survey conducted for the AAC&U, Finley (2023) found that 70% of employers would be 'much more likely' to consider a job candidate who had completed an internship and 71% reported being 'much more likely' to consider a job candidate who held a job or work-study position. Research on internships is growing and provides valuable insights into the internship experiences of university students.

Since the early 2000s, internships have become an important aspect of higher education after being designated as a high-impact practice (HIP), which are defined as learning experiences with significant educational benefits (AAC&U, n.d.-b). Even though the increase in the number of internships has led to more research on internships, the existing literature is limited by its ambiguity as researchers rarely define internships in specific terms (Hora et al., 2020) or tend to use a wider angle to frame their inquiry by adding insights from students who participate in other HIPs such as study abroad programs, exchange programs, practica, co-ops, and externships.

Internships can be defined as "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting" (NACE, 2023a, p. 1). Internships are a form of work-based learning (WBL), which has grown in popularity since the 1990s (Bailey et al., 2004). However, internships differ from other WBL experiences such as co-ops, apprenticeships, and practica. Hora et al. (2017) argued that one core difference between internships and other WBL experiences is the fact that internships are less regulated and standardized. Indeed, co-ops, apprenticeships, and practica are strictly regulated by federal and state standards and have clearly defined criteria and objectives. Conversely, internships rarely include clearly defined objectives and are not regulated as much as other types of WBL (Hora et al., 2017).

Internship Outcomes

Although limited research studies have been conducted on internship outcomes in the Arts and Humanities and few, if any, have been conducted in World Languages, previous research findings conducted in other disciplines as well as on the general student populations provide valuable insights into internship outcomes.

Professional Outcomes

Longitudinal studies have shown that internships have many positive effects on professional and career-related outcomes. Specifically, students with internship experience have a higher probability of getting job interviews (Baert et al., 2021), with Nunley et al. (2016) finding that internship experience increased job interview rates by 14%. Students with internship experience are also less likely to be unemployed (Silva et al., 2016) and are four times more likely to receive employment that aligns with their career goals (Callanan & Benzing, 2004). Former interns have higher incomes when entering the workforce (Margaryan et al., 2022) and spend less time searching for their first job after graduation (Oswald-Egg & Renold, 2021). Longitudinal studies have also demonstrated that participation in an internship increases employment retention, with former interns being more likely to remain in a position five years after graduation (Di Meglio et al., 2022).

Internships also have positive outcomes on *career adaptability*, which can be defined as "a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas" (Savickas, 2005, p. 51). Savickas (2005) argued that career adaptability is made of four psychological dimensions— also known as the 4Cs of adaptability—which are career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. Career concern is individuals' concerns with their vocational future, career control can be defined as individuals' feelings and beliefs that they are responsible for constructing their careers, career curiosity means that individuals are interested in learning about work opportunities, and career confidence is the ability to counter challenges and obstacles to achieve success. Ocampo et al. (2020) found that internship participation increased all four aspects of career adaptability and that students who did not participate in internships only increased the career concern dimension, indicating that students who do not participate in internships may experience higher levels of concerns regarding their future careers.

Hora et al. (2020) found that the most cited outcomes of an internship were its practicality (i.e., hands-on experience and real-world experience), the opportunity to try different career paths that may or may not interest students, and the opportunity to enter a field or specific company in which students want to work. Similarly, O'Connor et al. (2021) found that internships in a kinetics program positively informed students' learning because they provided students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in practical ways, network, engage in professional development, and develop professional skills such as resiliency, time management, and critical thinking. However, a few studies have shown that voluntary internships have higher professional outcomes than internships that are required for graduation. Jung and

Lee (2017) conducted a quantitative study on the effect of internship experience on the job performance of South Korean graduates and found that participants who had completed a voluntary internship reported higher professional outcomes and internship satisfaction.

Academics and Skill-Building

Research shows that internships have academic benefits. Binder et al. (2015) found in a large survey study conducted with 15,732 college students in the United Kingdom that internships had positive effects on students' grades and GPAs. Internships have also been linked to higher degrees of learning and the quality of work that one performs has been found to increase work engagement and organizational commitment (Drewery et al., 2019). D'abate et al. (2009) found that interns reported higher levels of satisfaction when they felt that their internship contributed to their learning. In a study conducted with 154 undergraduate interns, Downs et al. (2024) found that internships foster three meta-competencies: self-regulation (i.e., adaptability and coping skills) self-awareness (i.e., a sense of self or identity), and self-direction (i.e., responsibility-taking behavior and meta-learning). Kilgo et al.'s (2015) survey with 2,212 students from 17 different universities in the United States indicated that internship participation had significant positive outcomes on critical thinking, moral reasoning, intercultural engagement, and socially responsible leadership.

Research also shows that internships can bolster students' confidence. Renschler et al. (2023) found that students participating in an internship reported greater confidence in their résumé and significantly greater confidence when representing themselves during a job interview. Previous research also indicates that internships increase leadership skills. Crawford et al. (2014) conducted a study on the effect of internships on students' engagement in leadership experience. They recruited 111 participants enrolled in an introductory hospitality course, which served as a control group, and 219 participants enrolled in a senior-level internship course, which served as the experimental group. They analyzed the ways in which internships affect students' leadership skills in five key behaviors: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Crawford et al. (2014) found that students enrolled in the internship course scored higher in these five key behaviors than students in the control group, suggesting that internships increase students' leadership skills.

Factors Informing Outcomes and Satisfaction

Although little is known about the factors that inform the internship outcomes for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic minorities, a growing literature exists on the factors that inform internship outcomes and satisfaction for the general student populations. Research shows that internship attributes can affect internship outcomes. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that job characteristics (e.g., the variety of skills and activities in the internship program), responsibilities and independence given to interns, organizational factors (e.g., supervisor's support, encouragement from coworkers), gain of practical and theoretical knowledge,

professional growth, and contextual factors (e.g., flexible working hours and internship location) contributed to increased internship satisfaction. Interestingly, they found that task significance and credit requirement did not affect internship satisfaction and outcomes. Hora et al.'s (2017) study also provided valuable insights into internship factors that increase students' learning and perceived internship outcomes. Using survey methods, they found that participants assigned high ratings to the relationship between their internship and academic program, the clarity of task-related goals, and their degree of work autonomy. Additional findings emerged from focus groups in this study, especially the importance of alignment between academic programs and internships, indicating that internships allow students to apply the concepts they have learned in class. In other words, the study highlighted some important internship outcomes such as clear goals, autonomy, and relatedness to academic programs, which can contribute to students' satisfaction with their internship experiences. These findings indicate that internship stakeholders can increase students' internship satisfaction by considering important demographic, organizational, and contextual factors when designing internship opportunities.

The role of internship mentors and supervisors has been the focus of extensive research and has been found to increase intern's level of satisfaction with their internships. Ali et al. (2022) conducted a study with 6,802 recent graduates across 200 colleges and universities in the United States and found that supervisor support contributed to learning, internship satisfaction, and post-internship job offer acceptance. The researchers also found that students who had mentors or supervisors with whom they could share fears, anxieties, and emotions reported better outcomes, which implies that universities and employers need to facilitate strong mentor-mentee relationships. An important aspect of *socialization*, which is a process through which interns learn to navigate the workplace by networking and learning expectations for the job (Gardner & Kozlowski, 1993), is the relationship between intern and supervisor. A supervisor can provide psychological support, act as a coach, guide, or mentor, and provide feedback on performance and career plans (Carless et al., 2012). Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that university support factors, such as guidance from internship directors and internship offices, contributed to internship satisfaction, but Hora et al. (2020) found that supervisor mentoring was perceived as more valuable than supervisor support, indicating that receiving specific instructions and feedback on performance and career planning from supervisors increases internship satisfaction.

Some studies have investigated the ways in which demographic factors inform internship outcomes and satisfaction. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that several intern characteristics such as gender, age, positive attitude, and self-initiative contributed to interns' level of satisfaction with their internships. Women were more satisfied with their supervisors and task clarity than men, interns who were younger than 20 years old were more satisfied with the support from their internship office, supervisor, task clarity, learning opportunity, and work hours than interns who were older than 20 years old, and interns who had positive expectations and higher self-initiative reported greater satisfaction. Few studies (e.g., Lake, 2023) have also investigated internship outcomes in relation to race and ethnicity, which will be

discussed in the final section of the present literature review.

Internship Challenges

The existing literature on internships sheds some light on the challenges associated with internship participation as well as the obstacles that can prevent students from participating in an internship. The following section presents an overview of some of the empirical research findings on internship challenges and barriers for the general university student population. Specific challenges and barriers for minoritized students will be discussed in the third section of this literature review.

Structural Barriers

Various structural barriers reduce internship participation in the United States. In the most recent *National Survey of College Internships*, Hora et al. (2021) found that 67.3% of non-interns reported wanting to complete an internship but could not because of various obstacles. The most cited barriers were the lack of knowledge on how to find an internship (59.4%), a heavy course load (55.9%), cancellation of internships due to the COVID-19 pandemic (44.2%), lack of internship opportunities (41.3%), and the need to work a paid job (40.1%). In a longitudinal study conducted over four years, Hora et al. (2023) found additional obstacles to internship participation such as insufficient internship pay, the lack of transportation to get to the internship site, and family-related responsibilities such as childcare.

According to Gosh et al. (2023), participation in internships varies significantly across fields of study, with Arts and Humanities having the lowest ratio of internship participation for senior students (42%). Their survey also revealed that gaps between interest and participation exist in all fields. However, the largest gaps were found in the fields of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Social Service Professions, which may be an indication that not enough internship opportunities exist in these fields or that there is a lack of outreach initiatives between universities and professionals working in those fields. These findings can also explain the limited literature on internships in the Arts and Humanities and the absence of studies on internships in World Languages.

One of the obstacles to internship participation that has received the most attention in the literature on internships relates to financial resources. Students' financial status and need to work a paid job often reduce their ability to participate in an internship. Although unpaid internships have positive outcomes on students (Hurst et al., 2023), compensation has been found to increase students' level of satisfaction with their internships (McHugh, 2017), and unpaid interns have reported feeling exploited (Siebert & Wilson, 2013). Research also shows that compensation has a positive effect on the number of job offers that former interns receive as well as their starting salaries (NACE, 2013; Rigsby et al., 2013). Scholars and national organizations have criticized the increasing number of unpaid internships because, in their view, uncompensated internships can perpetuate inequity since minoritized students are less likely to be in paid internships (NACE, 2023b). Participants in O'Connor et al.'s (2021) study reported that their internship was used as a

work placement rather than a learning opportunity. These findings indicate that universities need to ensure that internships are student-oriented in nature and that they align with students' interests, career goals, and learning needs.

The duration of internships has also been found to be problematic. Specifically, college internships last for 18.3 weeks on average (Hora et al., 2021), which may not provide enough time for interns to develop skills and become acquainted with the field and the internship site. Indeed, the structure of internships often reduces learning opportunities. O'Connor et al. (2021) found that the small number of work hours and the long commute time were among the structural barriers that reduced learning opportunities during internship experiences. These findings have valuable implications for institutions of higher learning, academic programs, and internship supervisors who can address structural issues such as internship duration and modality when designing internship opportunities.

Various Stakeholders with Different Needs

Internships involve various stakeholders, such as students, employers, and faculty members, who may have different perceptions of the value and expectations of an internship. The most recent *Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey* by the Higher Education Research Institute (2020) found that 82% of freshmen reported wanting to go to college to get a better job and 76% to be prepared for a specific career. Yet, a study conducted for the AAC&U found that only 44% of employers strongly agreed that recent college graduates were prepared to succeed in entry-level positions and 39% somewhat agreed (Finley, 2023). The study also provided data on the discrepancy between the skills that employers need and students' self-reported level of preparedness for those skills. The highest discrepancies pertained to oral communication (81% of employers reported the skills as very important but only 49% of students felt prepared for the skill), adaptability and flexibility (81% and 51% respectively), critical thinking (79% and 49%), problem-solving (74% and 50%), written communication (77% and 54%), and creative and innovative thinking (76% and 53%). Employers ranked critical thinking, oral communication, ability and flexibility, and problem-solving as the four skills they would like colleges to emphasize. Overall, research shows that employers need college students to possess more soft skills (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018).

Few studies have investigated the perceptions and expectations of each internship stakeholder concurrently (Sauder et al., 2019). In a survey study conducted with 132 students, 148 employers, and 41 faculty, Sauder et al. (2019) found 33 significant differences between the perceptions held by students, employers, and faculty members. Specifically, 11 differences in perception of the value of internships were found, 10 of which were reported between students and the other two stakeholders. Students ranked the value of internships higher than the other two stakeholders on all survey items, meaning that they had higher expectations from their internship experience. Interestingly, the only item that they ranked lower than the other two stakeholders was the expectation that the internship would be a collaborative effort between all three stakeholders. Differences were identified between students and employers on all but one item, indicating a divide between employer and student expectations regarding skill development, acquisition and

application of knowledge, and post-graduation job opportunities. The intensity of the internship was the only significant difference found between employers and faculty, with employers preferring full-time internships while faculty expressed a preference for part-time internships.

Sauder et al. (2019) also identified differences in the perceptions of responsibilities of internship sites. As with perceptions of the value of internships, students had higher expectations than the other two stakeholders. They had higher expectations than employers in terms of supervision, exposure to multiple aspects of the organization, pay, reimbursement of expenses, and development of full-time positions after completion of the internship—which were the same expectations that faculty ranked higher than employers—and higher expectations than faculty regarding the need to have a detailed internship description, work on an individualized project, and receive references and referrals for jobs after the internship. The only expectation that employers ranked higher than faculty was the expectation to provide a reference or referral after the internship. Faculty expressed a stronger desire to have a dedicated on-site internship supervisor while employers expressed a preference for faculty mentors to conduct site visits. Vélez and Giner (2015) found that interns report strong needs for supervision and mentoring, but Yiu and Law (2012) found that faculty members have limited time to mentor interns. Overall, research shows that internship stakeholders have significantly different needs and expectations, which is an important implication for academic programs offering internship opportunities to their students.

Addressing Challenges

The existing literature on internships provides limited suggestions to counter some of the barriers to internship participation and address some of the most common internship challenges. O'Connor et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate students' level of satisfaction with their internship experience. Their participants were asked to provide suggestions on strategies to increase intern's preparedness for internships. The researchers found that participants' suggestions focused on four strategies: gaining more knowledge of the field before pursuing an internship, having more practical training within the first three years of their degree, fully understanding the nature and expectations of the internship before accepting the position, and ensuring that all stakeholders—employer, intern, and faculty member—agree on expectations of the intern's role. These findings indicate that internship stakeholders can increase students' internship readiness by preparing students for an internship in the early stages of their college studies and providing them with clear guidelines and expectations.

In sum, empirical research on internships is limited by the near absence of data on internship experiences in the Arts and Humanities, specifically in World Languages, and its lack of focus on minoritized students. Given that the study of world languages involves a unique set of competencies and standards, we can assume that internships for world language students differ from internships in other fields, primarily due to the use of a language different from the interns' native language.

According to the NACE (2023a), internships are an extension of classroom learning, so investigating students' internship experiences in world language programs without analyzing the current state of minoritized students in world language courses might not provide a complete and accurate account of internship experiences in world language programs. For this reason, the next section provides a brief summary of the literature on enrollment concerns for minoritized students in world language programs followed by empirical research on their experiences in internships in general, noting the lack of internships in the Arts and Humanities.

Minoritized Students in World Languages

Research shows that minoritized students remain underrepresented in U.S. world language courses (Anya, 2011; Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Moore, 2005; Zárate-Sández, 2021). Language classes, especially at the advanced level, are predominantly comprised of White students, with African American students among the least likely groups to continue through year three or beyond at the high school level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Glynn and Wassell (2018), summarize the three primary reasons found in the literature to explain the disproportion of minority students in advanced world language study to be exacerbated by (1) the devaluation of students' languages and cultures in schools (e.g., Valenzuela, 2010); (2) the elitist nature of language study (Reagan & Osborn, 2002); and (3) the one-sided nature of the curriculum (Kleinsasser, 1993). Historically, many students' home cultures and languages have been devalued in schools (Paris & Alim, 2017). El Haj (2006) reports comments from an African American student in an ethnographic study who stated, "Black people as a whole have to learn more about themselves before they begin to learn about other cultures" (p. 157). Despite this important finding, limited research has been conducted on the experiences of minoritized students in world language courses (Anya, 2020). Reagan and Osborn (2002) argue that many language programs tend to be designed to weed out academically weak students. Furthermore, teachers, counselors, and administrators need to believe that all students should be encouraged to study foreign languages. Lastly, world language teachers need to strive to overcome a colonial curriculum present in traditional world language textbooks and integrate topics that address the language diaspora and social justice issues into all levels of language study (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014).

Students from Historically Marginalized Racial and Ethnic Communities in Internships

Research demonstrates that internships are valuable for students, especially for college students with low income, first-generation college students, and minoritized students because internships can increase students' social mobility (Hora et al., 2023). Despite well-documented positive outcomes, research shows that a significant number of students want to participate in internships but do not and only 30% of students participate in internships (NCES, 2022). Even more concerning is the fact that racial disparities in internship participation have been reported (Hora et al.,

2017, Hora et al., 2020), which poses the question of whether internships are truly accessible to all students equally and what factors prevent minoritized students from participating in internships. The scant on internships with a focus on students' racial and ethnic backgrounds provides some valuable insights into the internship experience of minoritized students, specifically concerning internship accessibility, outcomes, and challenges.

Internship Accessibility and Racial Disparities in Internship Participation

Scholars have argued that the changes in student demographics require universities to investigate issues of access and equity in internship programs (Finley & McNair, 2013), yet little research has been conducted (Wolfgram et al., 2021). Moreover, many studies on internships have focused on the general student population at institutions of higher learning without consideration of important demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and first-generation status (e.g., Crawford et al., 2014; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021; Sauder et al., 2019; Stofer et al., 2021).

The few studies that have considered race and ethnicity in internships have revealed that internship participation varies significantly based on students' racial and ethnic backgrounds and that minoritized students remain underrepresented in internship programs (Gosh et al., 2023; Hora et al., 2021; Hora et al., 2022; Wofgram et al., 2021). According to the *National Survey of College Internships*, 24% of White students reported having participated in an internship, but only 13% of Black students reported having completed an internship (Hora et al., 2021). Although 11% of all undergraduate degrees are held by Black students (NCES, 2018), the NACE (2020) found in a survey administered to 22,371 students that only 6% of students who had participated in an internship were Black and 71% were White, confirming the fact that Black students participate in internships at significantly lower rates than their White counterparts. The NACE survey also indicated that Latinx students are more likely to never participate in an internship.

Obstacles to Internship Participation

Little is known about the barriers that prevent minoritized students from participating in internships, but we know that their lower internship participation rates cannot be attributed to a lack of motivation to pursue an internship. Indeed, Hora et al. (2020) conducted a mixed-methods survey and focus group study to investigate internship access, design, and outcomes. They compared data from three U.S. colleges—one predominately White institution (PWI), a technical college, and an HBCU—and found that internship participation varied significantly based on demographics, academic, life circumstances, and employment status. They discovered that race was a factor determining access to internships. Specifically, they found that 64% of their 797 participants had wanted to pursue an internship but did not. These findings align with Wolfgram et al. (2021) who conducted a mixed-methods study conducted in an HBCU located in the state of Georgia. They found that 46% (n = 151) of their survey respondents did not participate in an internship,

91% (n = 137) of whom had wanted to participate in an internship but could not. Likewise, Gosh et al. (2023) found that Black students had the highest gap between internship intent and internship participation in five out of 10 fields of study while. In the fields of Arts and Humanities, the gap was measured as 34% for Black students against 22% for White students, which indicates that Black students in the fields of Arts and Humanities are less likely to participate in internships than their White peers.

When analyzing the factors that prevent internship participation from Black students at an HBCU, Wolfgram et al. (2021) found that the most cited obstacles were a heavy course load (689%), a lack of internship opportunities (58%), the need to work a paid job (50%), a lack of transportation (42%), insufficient internship pay (39%), and lack of childcare (20%). Interview data in their study revealed additional obstacles such as a competitive application process and a lack of time due to work and academic responsibilities. In a survey study conducted with 1,250 Latinx participants attending an HSI, Hora et al. (2022) found that obstacles to internship participation intersected with each other. Specifically, the most cited combinations of obstacles included heavy course loads and current work (46%), heavy course loads and lack of internship opportunities (39%), insufficient pay and heavy course loads (29%), and heavy course loads, current work, and lack of opportunities (28%). In one of the only comparative studies conducted on the barriers to internship participation across racial and ethnic groups, Hora et al. (2021) found the most significant differences between minoritized students and White students were the need to work a paid job (29% for Black students, 29% for Latinx students, and only 20% for White students) and unsure how to find an internship (36% for Black students, 40% for Latinx students and only 28% for White students). These findings indicate that working a paid job and the lack of knowledge or confidence on how to find an internship seem to be more problematic for minoritized students.

Internship participation also varies significantly based on students' employment status. Hora et al. (2020) found that students who worked fewer hours outside of school were more likely to participate in internships. Similarly, in a study conducted in an HBCU in Georgia, Worlfgram et al. (2021) found that 61% of students with no employment participated in an internship while only 45% of students with full-time employment and 47% of students with part-time employment participated in an internship. These findings are concerning given the increased number of students who must work outside of school due to inflation and the rising cost of tuition (Sylvia, 2020).

Empirical research shows that there is a significant relationship between GPA and internship participation and that students with lower GPAs need additional support in obtaining internships (Hora et al., 2020; Wolfgram et al., 2021). As we have already discussed, minoritized students tend to receive lower grades than their White counterparts, including in world language programs (Zárate-Sández, 2021), which can reduce their chances of receiving internship offers.

Lower internship participation can also be attributed to issues with confidence and low self-esteem. Phillips and Saxon (2018) found that Black students at a PWI expressed a lack of confidence and feelings of not being competitive enough when

considering applying for internships. Moreover, Lake (2023) found that Black students at a PWI felt discouraged from participating in internships when there were no other Black people represented. Her dissertation on the HIP experiences of Black students at a PWI demonstrates that the ability to interact with Black mentors and fellow Black interns can reduce the apprehension associated with internship participation.

Challenges Associated with Internship Participation

More attention has been drawn to the challenges that minoritized students experience while participating in an internship. First and foremost, the NACE (2020) found that White students are more likely to be in paid internships and Black and multi-racial students are more likely to be in unpaid internships. This trend was confirmed by Ali et al. (2022) who conducted a study on 6,802 recent graduates across 200 colleges and universities in the United States, 73% of whom were White. They found that White students were more likely to be in paid internships than minoritized students and reported higher learning and satisfaction with their internships.

Thompson et al. (2021) found that Black students experienced various challenges when navigating the different stages of the internship application process, with participants reporting a lack of internship opportunities for certain majors, geographic restrictions, and the perceived competitiveness of the internships. Thompson et al. (2021) found that Black felt overwhelmed when not being offered internships and expressed feelings of embarrassment, disappointment, rejection, failure, and not meeting expectations. Thomson et al. (2021) also found that some Black students received mixed reactions from their families, especially when being the first person in their families to go to college. Some participants reported that their families did not understand how challenging the internship process was and why they were working without pay.

Although studies have investigated the discrimination that minoritized students face in hiring practices, little is known about the discrimination that they may face during their internships. Scholars have found that internships are mostly designed by White faculty for White students and that they are not culturally relevant to students from other racial and ethnic groups (Finley & McNair, 2013). Yet, research shows that minoritized students need to participate in internships more than their White counterparts (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kinzie et al., 2021; Kuh, 2008). Kennedy et al. (2015) argued that experiential learning should nurture students' ability to engage in critical reflection on hegemony and social justice and enable students to innovate and critically assess current practices. However, the literature on internship challenges is still dominated by studies that do not emphasize the race and ethnicity of interns, so more research investigating the challenges that minoritized students face is needed.

Suggestions to Support Successful Internships for Minoritized Students

Studies investigating the positive outcomes of internships for minoritized students remain scarce. These studies have revealed that minoritized students report similar positive outcomes when compared to White students, specifically in terms of

skill-building. In a mixed-method study conducted in an HBCU located in Georgia, Wolfgram et al. (2021) found that internships contributed to Black students' learning and skill development. Thompson et al. (2021) reached similar results and found that participating in an internship enabled Black students to apply their knowledge and build various skills, including mastering software and equipment. Internships have also been found to help minoritized students explore fields and careers of interest, network, and build their resumes (Thompson et al., 2021).

A recurring theme in studies conducted with minoritized students is that pursuing an internship boosts their confidence (Storlie et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2021). Specifically, Storlie et al. (2016) found that internships can help students challenge self-deficit views. Participating in internships also enables minoritized students to access and build a support system made of peers and mentors with whom they can relate. Participants in Thompson et al.'s (2021) study reported that meeting fellow interns and networking with professionals, especially when they were from the same racial and ethnic groups, helped them feel more confident.

Limited research has investigated strategies to make internships more accessible to students from historically racial and ethnic communities. Greenman et al. (2022) found that universities usually respond in three ways to address issues of access and equity in HIPs: modified HIPs, curricular restructuring, and increased resources. Modified HIPs involve designing HIPs of various duration, cost, and modality. Curricular restructuring has been accomplished by requiring students to participate in HIPs and faculty to offer HIPs (Hansen & Schmidt, 2017), exposing students to HIPs during the early stages of their academic studies (Finley & McNair, 2013), and increasing HIP offerings across institution types such as community colleges (Laursen et al., 2012). To increase resources for students, faculty, and staff, universities have offered workshops as well as time release and promotion opportunities for faculty and staff who develop HIPs (Finley & McNair, 2013).

Research also shows that flexible internships are beneficial to students, especially minoritized students (Renschler et al., 2023). Indeed, minoritized students are more likely to work paid jobs, face financial hardship, and support their families financially (Storlie et al., 2016). Moreover, they are more likely to benefit from internships if they interact with professionals to whom they can relate (Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023; Murillo et al., 2017; Phillips & Saxton, 2018). Kinzie et al. (2021) found that minoritized students who participated in internships appreciated the opportunity to help others and make a difference in their community while gaining control, agency, and autonomy in their work. These findings align with a study conducted by Thompson et al. (2021) who found that Black students' backgrounds and life experiences informed their internship experiences. Their motivation to pursue an internship included the desire to make a positive difference in their communities and support their community members. These testimonies show that reciprocity can be an important need for minoritized students. Therefore, offering internship opportunities in which students interact with and learn from local communities is an important consideration when designing internship opportunities serving the needs of minoritized students.

Williams et al. (2020) provided five steps organizations can take to support Black interns. In the first step, enhance supervisor support, they recommend that

internship supervisors communicate support to interns directly and regularly, acknowledge and validate distress related to police brutality and civil unrest, educate interns on support available to them, help interns voice their concerns, and recognize that Black internship supervisors may also face distress. In the second step, maintaining engagement, they posit that internship organizations should nurture trust by recognizing that racial traumas are often delayed and manifest themselves as experience grows, that racism affects Black students daily, and that many Black students have built resilience and mechanisms to cope with racism, which means that they may not ask for help when needed. Organizations should also share the actions they are taking to support change and promote empathy, affirmation, and reciprocal values. In the third step, offer flexibility, Williams and colleagues suggest that Black interns be provided with flexible work schedules and work deadlines so they can attend to family and community obligations. In the fourth step, avoid making assumptions about Black student interns and avoid workplace discrimination. Williams et al. argue that organizations should eliminate racial microaggressions, avoid singling Black interns out, understand that not all Black interns are the same, commit to fighting racism, and avoid recruiting Black interns to portray the organization as diverse. In the final step, encouraging self-care and resilience, Williams and colleagues recommend that organizations educate themselves on racial issues so they can better support and empower Black interns.

Conclusion

The U.S. education system has been ranked as one of the most unequal in the industrialized world (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Recent racial issues in the United States, such as the death of George Floyd and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, have brought more attention to the inequities that still exist in U.S. society, including in higher education (Wesley et al., 2021). Consequently, more research has been conducted on equity and access in higher education and revealed that minoritized students still face unique challenges when attending universities and benefiting from world language studies and internships.

Internships have become key aspects of higher education because they offer multiple benefits for students (Baert et al., 2021; Di Meglio et al., 2022; Margaryan et al., 2022; Nunley et al., 2016; Oswald-Egg & Renold, 2021; Silva et al., 2016). However, little is known about the internship experiences of minoritized students (Hora et al., 2020), especially in world language programs. To address these research gaps, more research on the internship experiences of students in world language programs is greatly needed. Although previous studies offer valuable implications for internship stakeholders, specifically in terms of internship outcomes, they do not provide enough qualitative data on the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and do not give any insights into the internship experiences of minority students in world language programs. Accordingly, this position paper is intended to build a case to address the enrollment gap between minoritized and White students in advanced world language study and to increase opportunities for all students to pursue internships in world language programs, particularly for minoritized students. Ultimately, the goal of this position

paper is to put forth a call for the need for research on the experiences of minoritized students in internships in world language programs. This type of research would not only help internship stakeholders design more accessible and equitable internship opportunities for minoritized students but also help world language educators to be more inclusive in meeting the unique learning needs and career goals of their students.

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5

Why World Language Teachers Stay: Teacher Retention in West Virginia, Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

The present study investigates World Language (WL) teacher retention and the challenges and opportunities of teaching a WL in a rural state. Data came from ethnographic interviews conducted with 10 participants, current Spanish teachers teaching throughout West Virginia. Through thematic analysis, eight themes emerged: Lack of Exposure to Cultural Diversity, Lack of Qualified Teachers, Toll on Mental Health, Pressure to Defend the Value of WLs, Remaining in West Virginia, Passing on the Love of Language and Cultural Learning, Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, and Strong Professional Support Systems.

Keywords: World Language Teaching, Spanish, Challenges, Opportunities, Teacher Retention

Background

West Virginia is well known for its natural beauty and rugged geography, which make it a popular nature tourism destination nationally and internationally. However, it struggles both economically and educationally, most recently receiving a ranking of 48 in both categories from U.S. News & World Report (2024).

Historically, many Appalachian communities have been wary of public education, as they viewed the Church as the primary moral educator, teaching children how to read for the purpose of reading the Bible (Shaw, 2004). It was not until the early years of the 20th century that West Virginians began to send their children to public schools, institutions which were often criticized for their inferior quality. The geography of the state had a detrimental impact as well, both in terms of available educators and adequate attendance. For those children who were able to attend school, "educational attainment beyond the eighth grade was considered exceptional, rather than the norm, until about WWII" (p. 308).

Today, West Virginia faces ongoing challenges, including critically low standardized test scores and a widespread failure to meet benchmarks (West Virginia Department of Education, 2024), limited access to educational resources,

a lack of cultural diversity, and inadequate advocacy for arts and cultural education. At present, there is no state World Language (WL) graduation requirement (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.), such that WLs are generally viewed as extracurriculars, underfunded and under supported at both the local and state levels. In this context, the job of World Language (WL) teachers is not only critically important but also immensely challenging, encompassing not only providing high quality education with limited resources but also intensive advocacy work within the school and community.

To address these problems, it is important to understand the issue firsthand from the perspective of practicing WL educators throughout the state. The present investigation, thus, seeks to learn from these practitioners, exploring both the challenges and potential opportunities associated with teaching a WL in West Virginia and considering what these mean for WL teacher retention. That is, in teachers' discussion of their job, what particular factors make them want to continue teaching and remain in the profession and what factors are obstacles that need to be addressed in order to better support WL teacher retention. The present investigation contributes valuable data on a very little-studied context, the state of West Virginia, while adding to the global body of research on WL teacher retention, which is also currently quite limited.

Literature Review

Within the US, the WL teacher shortage is well-documented historically and remains an ongoing crisis (Boe & Gilford, 1992; Murphy, DeArmand, & Guin, 2003; Swanson, 2008, 2022). According to a study conducted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017), WL was the content area with the greatest teacher hiring shortage: "forty-four states and Washington, D.C., report[ed] that they cannot find enough qualified teachers to meet current needs." In West Virginia, where Spanish is the most common and often only WL taught in schools, there is currently a Spanish teacher shortage in nearly one third of all counties in the state (U.S. Department of Education, 2024). Further exacerbating the problem is a critical lack of teacher preparation programs in the state. At present, just two universities in West Virginia offer a bachelor's degree in Spanish Education. Thus, numerous Spanish positions are currently either unfilled or filled by uncertified teachers.

At the national level, Swanson (2010, 2012) cited five major factors contributing to the WL teacher shortage: retirement, attrition, student enrollments, legislation, and perceptions of the profession. In addition, a trend toward increased enrollment in alternative licensure programs at the expense of traditional teacher training programs is well underway throughout the US (AASCU, 2017; Granados, 2017; Kissau, 2020). Such programs typically offer a lower cost, shorter time frame of completion, and lower minimum standards. Together, these factors have resulted in a widespread lack of well-prepared WL teachers in the classroom nationwide and more acutely so in West Virginia.

Given these conditions, developing targeted efforts toward WL teacher retention is critical. Previous research (McConnell & Swanson, 2024) found that higher levels of professional growth, self-efficacy, and autonomy were most essential in helping

avoid teacher burnout and/or a desire to quit. McConnell (2023) identified teacher empowerment and job satisfaction or fulfillment as the most significant supportive factors.

In Burke and Ceo-DiFrancesco's (2022) investigation of the retention of teacher candidates in WL Education programs, professional relationships and collaboration amongst WL professionals in diverse roles to "preserve, promote, and perpetuate WL education for global citizenship" (p. 334) was cited as the most important factor. Kissau, Davin and Wang (2019) reported that WL teacher candidates were most motivated by positive perceptions of their own teaching ability and preparedness as well as their potential to positively contribute to society and children's futures. Similarly, in their study of heritage-speaker teachers, Novella and Bustamante (2023) reported that fostering confidence in teachers' own Spanish language skills and providing high quality training in pedagogy and sociolinguistics to help teachers feel competent and well-prepared were essential factors.

According to Swanson (2008, 2012), teachers are more likely to remain in the profession when they can use their own unique talents and skills in the classroom. Those who enjoy working with and serving people (social personality style), perceive themselves as expressive and creative (artistic personality style), and those who are naturally inclined toward leadership (enterprising personality style) are the best suited for WL teaching and tend to have a stronger sense of self-efficacy. Taken holistically, this research reveals three primary factors supportive of WL teacher retention: professional support, self-efficacy and confidence in one's teaching abilities, and using one's own talents and skills to make an impact.

Conversely, it is also essential to consider factors detrimental to WL teacher retention. In their study of rural public high school WL teachers in Georgia, Acheson, Taylor and Luna (2016) identified five such factors: "perceived lack of community and institutional support for FL [Foreign Language] teachers, an excessive burden for motivation felt by these teachers, the use of teacher emotion labor to motivate their students, emotional burnout of the teachers, and perceived lack of teacher efficacy" (p. 522). With respect to the last two, the investigators reported that they seemed to be mutually influencing and lead to a downward spiral resulting in job burnout and possible teacher attrition.

The present investigation seeks to explore these issues within the context of West Virginia, in order to discover which particular challenges and opportunities are associated with teaching a WL in the state from the perspective of practicing teachers. Likewise, it endeavors to offer new insights and contribute additional data to existing research to help broaden our collective understanding of the factors associated with WL teacher retention and to help identify corresponding WL teacher retention strategies that seem most effective. The findings of this study, thus, make a valuable contribution to both the relatively limited existing body of research on the topic overall, and to the even more limited research available in the context of West Virginia.

Methodology

The Participants

The 10 participants in this study are WL teachers in West Virginia, who currently teach Spanish across multiple grade levels. Their geographic distribution is varied, with participants teaching in five different counties located throughout the state, two in the northern part of West Virginia, two in the southwest, and one in the mid-eastern region.

All participants are women. With respect to origin, two participants were born in a foreign country, four were born out of state, and four were born in West Virginia. Two are native Spanish speakers and eight are native English speakers. Participants have varying degrees of experience teaching a WL, ranging from early-career to mid-career and veteran teachers. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to protect the anonymity of the participants (see Appendix A for participant information summary).

Research Questions

This qualitative investigation utilizes thematic analysis of ethnographic interviews to explore the following research questions:

1. What do WL teachers in West Virginia perceive to be the greatest challenges associated with their job?

2. From the teachers' perspective, are there any positive aspects or opportunities associated with teaching a WL in West Virginia?

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were identified and recruited based on existing researcher contacts and networking. Once recruited, each participant selected how they would like to meet for the interview: online via videoconferencing, in person, or via written communication. Two participants selected a nearby location, six participants chose online meetings via Zoom, and two opted for written communication through email. The interviews were guided by a set of predetermined questions (see Appendix B) and then flowed naturally to other associated topics, according to the direction each interviewee took. The average interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher conducting the interview. The interview process was guided by the principles of ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). In order to develop rapport, the researchers used existing contacts and networking and allowed the participants to select the interview mode and setting. The interview questions were largely open-ended in nature and used as a starting point to inspire a naturally flowing conversation that was largely directed by participants, following the principle that "both questions and answers must be discovered from informants" (p. 84). In addition, throughout the interview, the researcher engaged in active listening and paraphrasing of interviewees' responses, to further clarify and define their responses and correct any misunderstandings.

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis,

following Braun & Clarke's (2006) method: "familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report" (p. 87). The first review of interview transcripts involved coding data systematically and identifying potential themes. Themes were then checked to make sure they accurately represented the coded data extracts. Subsequently, a thematic map was generated and themes were more clearly defined and specified, then refined, and/or regrouped, as necessary, with multiple readings. The eight themes that emerged included: Lack of Exposure to Cultural Diversity, Lack of Qualified Teachers, Toll on Mental Health, Pressure to Defend the Value of WLs, Remaining in West Virginia, Passing on the Love of Language and Cultural Learning, Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, and Strong Professional Support Systems. The first four themes were collectively identified as 'challenges' and the latter four themes as 'opportunities.' Themes and interpretations were further validated by member checking through follow-up emails.

Findings

All 10 participants perceived their jobs as challenging and, at the same time, offering positive aspects or opportunities. Although presented here as distinct themes, challenges and opportunities sometimes overlapped and certain aspects of the job may present both a challenge and an opportunity simultaneously. In fact, the practice of interpreting their jobs in this nuanced way, from multiple perspectives, was shared by all participants.

Challenges of Teaching a WL in West Virginia

Lack of Exposure to Cultural Diversity

West Virginia is landlocked, as it is surrounded by five other states, all of which are easily accessible through multiple parts of the state itself. West Virginia is widely rural, traditional in values, and prides itself on its history of coal mining and hard work. For many West Virginian students, this is their family's home, has been for generations, and perhaps will be for generations to come. In especially rural areas of the state with limited access to 21st century necessities like internet or even local shopping districts, some students never have the opportunity to leave. When discussing this issue in her interview, Naomi shared, "For some of my kids, their first time out of the county, let alone their state, was a field trip to [the amusement park] Kennywood." This trip is just under two hours away from where her students attend school every day, in Southern Pennsylvania.

All participants taught a WL in some capacity during COVID-19 and shared how important virtual field trips had become in their cultural instruction during that time period. Some of the cultural experiences currently offered by the participants to their students ranged from extra credit dinners at a local Mexican restaurant to international excursions led by tour groups. For instance, at the time of the interviews, Kelsey was preparing for a group trip to Costa Rica with some of her students. Overall, participants viewed this type of travel abroad as the ideal experience they could offer their students, yet further explained that they simply

do not have access to this type of opportunity. Without adequate support from the school district and with students who are faced with significant economic barriers, many of the teachers have set more reasonable travel goals for their students, focused on an elementary understanding of culture and diversity. Even in a school district like Kelsey's where students have access to traveling abroad, she expressed her struggles with educating her students about the importance of learning other cultures when they do not see the application in their daily lives. Macy commented, "the first thing that [my students] really needed to know was diversity," which speaks volumes to the bigger picture problem: a lack of exposure to and knowledge of other cultures and languages.

For participants located in small, tight-knit communities, this lack of cultural exposure is typical and shapes public mindsets. For Amelia, there is a lack of appreciation for other cultures in her district where "coal is king" to the exclusion of all other cultures and her students embody that mentality. This has led to targeted pushback in the classroom where "We speak American here" became the mantra. Amelia described her community as xenophobic and cited this outsider/insider mindset as a major obstacle to WL learning in her classroom. Amelia's students, along with Cheyenne's, even with their districts located at opposite ends of the state, understood the Spanish language as exclusively Mexican, and the terms were often used interchangeably: anyone who spoke Spanish was Mexican, and the Spanish language was sometimes referred to as speaking Mexican. Macy addressed the same issue when she shared, "If all I've accomplished today is that the students aren't calling all Spanish speakers Mexican, I've made significant progress." Instead of seeing Spanish as having many dialectal variations and being spoken in diverse countries throughout the world, the students associated it with only one Hispanic group, Mexicans. Accordingly, the participants expressed that an important part of their job started with correcting this erroneous idea and getting students to think more broadly about Spanish as a world language.

The participants also cited the importance of sharing their personal travel history with their students. All 10 participants have traveled within the state, with eight having left the country on at least one occasion. The West Virginia natives who traveled outside of the country specifically noted the significance of travel in their youth and how it has affected their current outlook on culture and professional formation. Cheyenne, a member of the military, constantly referred to her service days when explaining to her students that language unlocks completely different experiences overseas. She shared, "Every place that I have ever lived in, I have spoken Spanish." Naomi has traveled to both Nicaragua and Mexico at different times in her language acquisition journey and shares with her students how rewarding it is to see yourself progress in vocabulary and confidence. Daphne lived in Mexico for 10 years as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher and frequently calls on those experiences to demonstrate to her class that traveling is not as out of reach as one might think. All participants enjoy sharing anecdotes with their students and hope to pass on their excitement and love for cultures and languages, which they emphasize go hand in hand.

Lack of Qualified Teachers

The dire need for WL teachers in West Virginia has produced a situation of inadequate training, in which teachers come to the classroom inexperienced, lacking in qualifications, and with insufficient language proficiency. Many current educators who are well-trained and qualified are now tasked with dealing with the repercussions of the underprepared WL teachers and the WL teacher shortage in general. For example, Naomi's second year of teaching was alongside a long-term substitute teacher who held the position for two years because there were no qualified candidates to fill the vacancy. This substitute was a retired French teacher who came out of retirement to help the school. The students were instead largely taught via worksheets, likely with discrete grammar points and non-open-ended questions that did not allow the students to develop their language fluency. There was no cultural instruction and the students seemingly lost interest in language learning.

A similar situation happened in the case of Macy's son, in which his high school Spanish teacher, a former Language Arts teacher, was assigned to cover the position even though she only held a degree in English and had virtually no background in Spanish. This teacher, likewise, used worksheets to teach and could not provide helpful criticism or cultural insight. Macy commented, "[These teachers'] limited knowledge is going to really affect the learning possibilities of their students." This circumstance also places an unnecessary burden on the educators receiving the unprepared students taught by underprepared teachers. Several participants expressed frustration with this circumstance and said they were forced to dramatically modify their lesson plans to remediate the lack of prior learning. In addition, they said that it is extremely detrimental to the progress of the other students in the class who have previously received Spanish instruction from qualified teachers.

In some cases, like that of Kelsey's coworker, the teacher may have some level of content preparation, while having never officially met certification requirements, yet be allowed to continue teaching in their position. Although this particular coworker was unable to pass the Spanish PRAXIS content exam for eight years, she was still allowed to continue teaching because the position could not be filled by a certified Spanish teacher. This practice of filling the classroom with "warm bodies" is part of the larger systemic crisis of WLs in West Virginia.

For those who are interested in becoming WL teachers, ironically, the higher education system is stacked against them. Within the entire state, there are only two institutions that offer undergraduate degrees in Spanish Education: Fairmont State University and Shepherd University. Furthermore, Spanish B.A. programs (non-education track) throughout the state are facing closures or dramatic reductions, even most recently at the state's flagship Research One university, West Virginia University. These circumstances often result in potential WL teachers leaving the state to pursue their education and Spanish language career elsewhere. For those who do decide to earn their Spanish Education degree in state, other obstacles remain, like small program sizes, limited professors, and pressure to major in fields other than WLs, which often result in these students never actually completing their Spanish degree.

Amelia, a West Virginia native who attended college out of state, emphasized

the need for West Virginia to make the pathway to becoming a Spanish teacher much more accessible. Naomi, likewise, commented on the issue, but from a different perspective, stating that holding a Spanish Education degree in West Virginia is so rare and the demand so high, that it results in an almost guaranteed job opportunity: "[A degree in] Spanish Education...that's an instant job! You can walk into any classroom across the state right now and be hired." In fact, the participants lamented the fact that it is commonplace for vacancies to remain unfilled for years at a time, shedding light on the gravity of the state of the WL crisis in West Virginia.

Toll on Mental Health

Mental health also emerged as an important theme in this study, with all participants reporting difficulties managing their work/life balance. Amelia and Daphne, for instance, spoke about feeling overwhelmed as a two-person department responsible for educating a large number of students. Although they are still infinitely passionate about their jobs, they oftentimes put themselves in the position of constantly bringing their work home and grapple with feelings of burnout and overwhelm.

In addition to their heavy workload, many participants live with constant apprehension about the possibility of layoffs. Three participants spoke at length about their departments competing with other arts programs like music, art, and creative writing for limited resources in the face of schoolwide budget cuts and layoffs. In her first teaching position in West Virginia, Amelia was approached by her administration with the news of her layoff. In order to save money, the school district decided to implement a completely online Spanish program administered through West Virginia Virtual School. This would require the labor of only one teacher with no WL training to "monitor" students who were learning asynchronously. Ironically, having lost her job at the school, Amelia applied to work for the West Virginia Virtual School and ended up teaching the exact same students. This case illustrates the high level of adaptability required by the job of teaching a WL in West Virginia, creating a climate of constant uncertainty and instability.

In her district, Naomi was teaching in an innovative program model in the middle school. This program allowed WL instruction to happen at a much younger age and was reportedly a great success. However, despite these positive results, the program was terminated and Naomi was forced to change districts to find a new job. Kelsey, likewise, lost her job due to a program cut. Even after relocating to a nearby county, her work situation remained difficult. In her new school, Kelsey was in a department of two, with class sizes ranging from 20 to 24 students per class and her colleague was an underprepared WL teacher. In her second year, the class sizes increased to 34 to 36 students per class, and she simply could not keep up with the workload. In addition, she was expected to teach a range of Spanish classes across multiple grade levels with only one planning period. Unlike other subjects, especially at the secondary level, WLs in West Virginia are typically taught by departments or units of one to two teachers who cover all levels from beginning to advanced and often teach six distinct course preparations.

Some WL teachers, like Bethany, are faced with an even more demanding workload, as they must accommodate English as a Second Language (ESL) students,

or more appropriately called multilingual learners. Bethany found herself creating two separate lesson plans, so that she could challenge her Spanish speaking ESL students in the Spanish classroom, rather than having them follow the general curriculum. She shared, "It's heartbreaking, because I know why [the guidance counselors] put [those students] here. They know that I can speak Spanish here and help those kids, but what am I supposed to do when I have 20 ESL kids a day and an entire student body to teach?" This excessive workload can, thus, take a heavy toll on the WL teachers' mental health, leaving them exhausted.

Pressure to Defend the Value of WLs

When discussing classroom management and the challenge of motivating students, all participants stressed the foundational lesson that must be taught within the first week: convincing students of the importance of learning a WL. A common question asked by students on the first day was "Why do I have to learn Spanish?" Similarly, the participants shared statements like "We speak American here" and "I've got Google Translate," are all too common amongst their students. Multiple teachers emphasized the importance of "getting buy-in" from their students at the beginning of the school year and said they have learned that their actual language teaching can only be successful if students are invested from the beginning.

For many participants, the inclusion of culture in their selling points is usually what intrigues the students enough to invest in learning the language. These educators report dedicating a great deal of time and energy to developing highly interactive cultural lessons that keep the students motivated and eager to learn the next topic; they feel an intense pressure to create a highly marketable class each day to "sell" the value of WL learning to students.

In fact, some participants felt obligated to sell the value of WLs as comparable to that of other areas like STEM, to students and colleagues alike. Because WLs are encouraged so strongly by high school counselors, specifically for students who express a desire to attend college, many participants raised the issue of students feeling like they are obligated to take them. Daphne refers to this problem as "the only saving grace" for WL teachers: the administration places a value on maintaining WLs because it is a college entrance requirement. However, many schools in the state have begun prioritizing other types of coursework, including Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses in other subject areas and fine arts courses, adding unnecessary competition for WLs and increasing the pressure of selling WLs to students.

One of the main ways in which teachers address the importance of WLs in their students' future is by emphasizing the value of WLs in the workforce. Amelia discussed how she likes to remind her students that Spanish can be used in many fields, maybe even especially so in some popular fields in which students plan to work. For example, Naomi's father works for Mon Power, a local electric utility company, and he wishes that he would have taken more Spanish classes in high school because the company's tree-trimming crews oftentimes speak mainly Spanish and very little English. For students who may be interested in other professional fields, she adds, "If you're a doctor, your patient isn't seeing you because they're having a good day. Wouldn't it be nice if you could say, 'Hello, how are you?' in their native language?"

Similarly, Macy likes to ask her students what they want to be when they grow up, and if their answers include any interactions with people, she stresses the importance of speaking another language to create stronger interpersonal relationships.

Daphne, who has worked as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher in Mexico, pointed out the dramatic difference in motivation between her Mexican students, who saw the immediate value and importance of their second language, and her West Virginian students: "[The Mexican students] know what learning English can do for them. That's their way out, that's their way to a whole new life, if they want it to be... it's not the same for our kids [in the US]." Instead, Daphne has experienced discouraged students who would prefer to use class time to complete homework for other classes, rather than participating and communicating with their classmates. Similarly, Cheyenne, having lived in many countries throughout the world during her time with the military, lamented the lack of value for bilingualism in American society at large and saw addressing this issue as one of her primary responsibilities as a WL educator. She commented, "Monolingualism is a disease, but it can be cured."

Opportunities Associated with Teaching a WL in West Virginia

Remaining in West Virginia

All participants interviewed in this study hope to remain teaching and retire in West Virginia. Some have decided to remain in state circumstantially; children and marriages are among the most popular reasons. However, others could live and teach elsewhere, including in other states which pay significantly more and offer a potentially higher quality of life. Yet, they have chosen to remain in West Virginia because of their love for the state, their desire to be vessels of intercultural and interlinguistic exchange, and their conviction that this is a place where they can make a strong positive impact.

All participants expressed their love for the natural beauty of West Virginia and the sense of community it provides. At the same time, they see a need to connect this sometimes-isolated state with other World cultures and languages. These participants recognize that there is work to be done not only in their schools but far beyond the walls of the classroom. Nadia, who was born and raised in Costa Rica, says that it brings her great joy to educate West Virginians about her native language and culture. "I want them [the public] to know that we bring the world to West Virginia." This intercultural exchange is rich and beneficial to rural states like West Virginia, who can share their native Appalachian culture in return. Nadia says that this provides the foundation for her teaching: "I embrace their culture first, then I share mine." To the extent that students can view their classroom learning as a mutual cultural exchange, they will be more willing to share and find connections between cultures.

Samara and Amelia share similar sentiments and experiences. Samara, who was born in Venezuela and has worked in many different states, currently resides in the rural town in West Virginia where she met her husband. When asked if she would teach anywhere else in the country she responded, "My students are here in West Virginia, so I will be here in West Virginia." Amelia, who currently works as a teacher

in the same high school from which she graduated, affirms: "I intentionally want to be here. I have made the conscious choice to be here." Their steadfast commitment to dedicating their careers long term to teaching a WL in West Virginia is evident. Although participants often acknowledged the fact that their job could be easier in a more urban setting with more diversity, they all have intentionally chosen and invested in West Virginia and their students.

Passing on the Love of Language and Cultural Learning

All participants shared their own personal stories of a passion for language teaching that developed in their youth and the ways in which they were inspired by their own teachers. For example, Naomi's original focus in her undergraduate studies was American Sign Language interpretation. Because of her flexible schedule, she decided to take a Spanish class and was so inspired by her professor that she decided to complete an entire bachelor's degree in Spanish. Amelia also discovered her love for education at an early age. She initially thought she would like to be a math teacher, but after her first Spanish class in high school, her plans changed completely. She felt immediately more inspired by Spanish, joking, "Why build imaginary bridges in math class when I can build a real bridge to some place amazing and eat delicious food."

Participants expressed a strong desire to share this passion for languages and pass it on to their students. They hoped to serve as language learner role models for their students. Since none of the participants grew up bilingual, they appreciate the difficulty of learning a second language and feel that they provide inspiration for their students that acquiring a second language is possible with hard work. Amelia likes to remind her students that she is from the town in which she teaches, so she can directly relate to their cultural journey and linguistic experience: "I went from being the free lunch kid to the kid who traveled the world, and language is how I got there." She tells her students that she is living proof that this language acquisition journey is very possible and uses this personal connection to empower students to envision themselves as future Spanish/English bilinguals. Samara discussed her own difficulties coming to the United States of struggling to adapt to the culture, understanding different accents and dialects, and fully acquiring the language. These personal experiences inspire Samara's pedagogical approach of teaching her Spanish classes 95% in the target language. She explains that she implements this approach because she understands the value of being completely immersed in the language and the feeling of empowerment that comes with being able to succeed in that context. She asserts, "[Students] hear English all the time! My classroom might be the only place they hear Spanish. When I invite you to my classroom, I expect you to speak in Spanish."

These teachers further inspire their students by recognizing their hard work and dedication and connecting them with experiences outside the classroom. Cheyenne reminds her students that "if you are tired after [World] Language class, you are using your brain." She acknowledges the sustained effort language learning takes and encourages her students to see it as a worthwhile investment. Samara provides her students with numerous extracurricular opportunities, for instance the Hispanic Honor Society, which hosts cultural festivals and events for Spanish students at

neighboring schools. She has also recently been offering her students the chance to take the Seal of Biliteracy test, a nationally recognized exam. Of the 20 students that took the test last academic year, 18 passed.

Innovative Pedagogical Approaches

Despite the numerous challenges posed by their current teaching situation, participants chose to respond with a positive perspective. All expressed that they viewed their challenging teaching circumstances as an opportunity to innovate and inspire their students and design highly engaging and motivating lessons and activities. The teachers in this study were very eager to share their examples of creativity and flexibility in fulfilling state standards and meeting the unique needs of their students.

Naomi, for instance, designed her innovative program, beginning in the 6th grade, to incorporate her students' immediate interests. She commented "these kids just desperately wanted to know stuff, and that was a fun problem to have." Naomi responded to this circumstance by designing lessons based on student questions and topics of interest that they brought to the classroom. This, in turn, further fueled student curiosity, with many of her students avidly working outside of the classroom, reading ahead to come prepared with new questions each class.

Other participants shared their teaching philosophies and innovative pedagogies. Kelsey's teaching philosophy "you can't make the kids care, but you can make it fun," and her integration of interdisciplinary collaboration are central to her teaching practice. She incorporates field trips into each of her cultural units, for instance dinner at a local Mexican restaurant, as a way for students to have a real-world connection and experience of what they are learning in the classroom. Similarly, Cheyenne has expanded upon this idea by setting up an interactive cultural lesson in which her students take cooking classes at a local Mexican restaurant, learning to cook traditional dishes, while reviewing Spanish commands and kitchen vocabulary. Nadia motivates her students by teaching them to play chess in Spanish, incorporating vocabulary necessary to play the game, numbers and letters, etc. Cheyenne uses science experiments to review commands and learn science vocabulary in Spanish.

Strong Professional Support Systems

For these WL educators, strong support systems are essential to their ability to persevere in the face of difficulties. For example, when asked what was necessary for WLs to be cultivated in West Virginia schools, Amelia offered three Ts for success: "Time, trust, and tons of support!" All participants expressed that the reason they value support so highly is because of their own personal experiences surviving with little to no support in the past. They noted a need for support on different levels—professional, intellectual, and interpersonal, and shared the ways in which they reached out for and connected with these types of support. The participants in this study were already professionally connected on many levels, for example, several had attended or had at least heard of the cultural concerts hosted by Samara. The majority of participants were also involved with the WVFLTA (West Virginia

Foreign Language Teachers Association), a state-created organization geared towards supporting a unified coalition of educators who promote the study of WLs within the state. In fact, four of the participants currently serve on the executive committee. On an interpersonal and intellectual level, Daphne and Amelia work together at the same high school, sharing their successes and struggles, while pursuing professional development opportunities together. As a department of two, their dependence on each other exceeds typical workplace expectations. They encourage each other to grow professionally, for instance through their current plan to work towards their National Board certification together, reminding each other to take downtime and breaks.

Another source of interpersonal support for these participants has come from their school community. Naomi shared her story of the overwhelming support she received from colleagues when she found out her son had been diagnosed with cancer. During that time, the principal of her school personally came to her house to mow the lawn and fellow teachers donated PTO days, so that she could still receive her salary and pay the bills. Naomi commented: "Some administrations describe their schools as families, but I know that isn't true. But my school… they really are family."

Bethany and June found support and community in returning to higher education, although they were initially nervous because they were nontraditional students. Both began their careers as substitute teachers who frequently found themselves covering Spanish classes. And, although both had taken the language in high school, they knew their minimal background was insufficient for the students they were supervising. Separately, unbeknownst to each other, they would both find themselves at Fairmont State University at different times in their lives to earn their degrees. June shared, "It can feel lonely sometimes [at my school] because I'm the only World Language teacher… That's why I enjoy taking my class so much with Dr. Guglani and my classmates because I don't feel alone." It is especially important for educators like Bethany and June to find support in their developing careers because of the unique challenges posed by their nontraditional transition into the field.

Discussion

Participants' perspectives and comments related to these themes provide valuable data on the current state of WL education in West Virginia. They offer insight into the specific factors that are supportive of and detrimental to teacher retention, revealing some factors unique to West Virginia, while confirming the findings of other previous investigations on the topic, thus making an important contribution to the existing body of research.

Participants' discussion of the lack of qualified teachers shows the profound impact that the teacher shortage has had in West Virginia. It highlights, in particular, the extreme measures that schools in economically disadvantaged states such as West Virginia take in order to maintain basic staffing and "coverage" of WL education. Sutcher, Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2016) point out that while such "short-term solutions may temporarily curb the fear of empty classrooms…they can often exacerbate the problem over the long haul," critically undercutting the academic achievement of the most disadvantaged students who are being educated

in high-poverty settings. Participants' comments on the lack of qualified teachers also shed light on multiple types of repercussions that might not be immediately obvious. Not only does the lack of qualified teachers negatively impact the students and their education, but also fellow teachers and colleagues who must take on the added burden of teaching to an impossibly wide range of proficiency levels within a single classroom and provide instruction ranging from remediation to enrichment. This added burden, no doubt, negatively contributes to the overall toll on these WL teachers' mental health.

When reflecting on the toll on their mental health, participants cited heavy workload and lack of job security resulting from the relative lesser importance with which their subject area was treated by administrators as their primary stressors. Both aspects have, likewise, been noted in research on WL teaching in other rural contexts. For instance, Swanson and Huff (2010) cite "feelings of excessive work" as a factor in teacher attrition, with teachers reporting feeling overwhelmed by their heavy workload, which similarly required them to teach multiple preparations and subject areas and/or mixed classes of native Spanish-speakers and non-native Spanish language learners. WLs being treated as subject areas of lesser importance also emerges as an important theme, in particular as a result of the prioritization of core subject areas over all other subject areas by administrators and school districts (Acheson, Taylor & Luna, 2016; Swanson & Huff, 2010).

The participants' discussion of their students' lack of exposure to cultural diversity echoes previous research, in particular the connection between geographic isolation and negative attitudes toward other languages and cultures (Acheson, 2004), as well as the ideology of valuing English above and/or to the exclusion all other languages (Acheson, Taylor & Luna, 2016). These findings are not particularly surprising, given the unfavorable sociopolitical climate in West Virginia and the US at large. In recent years, West Virginia, has proposed anti-immigrant legislation related to sanctuary cities and e-verification of employees and in 2005 made English the official language of the state. At the national level, English-only groups, such as English First, ProEnglish, and US English, have pushed similar legislation to make English the official language of the United States, while outlawing the use of languages other than English in government business. Such measures are founded on ideologies that view ethnic languages as problems or threats, often motivated by "ethnic paranoia," for example, the belief that "Spanish is taking over in the U.S.A." (Crawford, 2004, p. 62).

Teaching in this particular context, characterized by a lack of cultural diversity and pervasive negative attitudes toward other cultures and languages, participants clearly perceive their role as defenders of WLs and their comments convey the extent to which they felt compelled to "sell" the WL and to convince students it is valuable. Accordingly, these teachers felt a strong burden to generate and maintain a high level of motivation and enthusiasm in showing students the value of Spanish in their future career paths and using culture to get them excited and engaged. Acheson, Taylor and Luna (2016) observed this same phenomenon in the teachers in their study: "These teachers perform deep acting in response to their acceptance of the burden to motivate their students, generating positive emotions and energy with the intent that their enthusiasm will spill over and infuse their students" (p. 530).

Yet, faced with this myriad of challenges, the teachers in this study do not seem to ignore them, but instead to acknowledge them, seek to understand the associated implications and face them head on. This undoubtedly accounts for the high degree of success they have achieved and their strong intention to continue teaching a WL in West Virginia. In response to the challenge of motivating their students, participants drew from their own talents and skills to impact student learning. They highlighted their abilities to provide intercultural and interlinguistic exchange, connecting the geographically isolated state of West Virginia with other world cultures and languages, and to serve as language learner role models for their students, as all grew up monolingual themselves and had to work to learn their second language. In addition, participants enjoyed integrating a wide variety of extracurricular activities in their teaching that aligned with their own talents and interests, including cultural festivals, dances and concerts and interdisciplinary lessons/field trips carried out completely in Spanish, such as cooking lessons at a local Mexican restaurant, chess matches, and science experiments. These data bear out Swanson's (2008, 2012) finding that teachers who can use their own particular talents, skills, and personality styles in the classroom are more likely to remain in the profession.

Furthermore, participants clearly recognize their need for support and their willingness to acknowledge it and seek it out are undeniably essential to their ability to continue in their careers. Participants emphasize the importance of strong professional support systems for WL teachers and identify different types of support that are needed—professional, intellectual, and interpersonal. They cite the specific sources of support they have connected with, including cultural opportunities, the state WL teachers' association (WVFLTA), professional development undertaken with colleagues, their school communities, and higher education. It is evident that these teachers highly value support and see it as an indispensable factor in their success and desire to remain in the profession. This is consistent with previous research, in particular the finding that higher levels of professional growth (McConnell & Swanson, 2024) and teacher empowerment (McConnell, 2023) are strongly associated with helping avoid teacher burnout and/or a desire to quit. Likewise, it is corroborated by research in WL Teacher Education Programs that emphasizes the importance of professional relationships and collaboration (Burke & Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2022) and high-quality education/training (Novella & Bustamante, 2023) in WL teacher retention.

Implications and Conclusions

The rich qualitative data provided by this investigation shed light on the full experience of WL teaching in West Virginia, encompassing the greatest challenges and opportunities and providing detailed descriptions from the perspective of practicing WL teachers. The findings are consistent with previous research, while highlighting some factors and circumstances unique to the state of West Virginia. The data, in particular, reveal the factors that are most strongly supportive of WL teacher retention in this context—teachers' ability to integrate their own unique talents and skills in the classroom and their efforts to seek out and obtain professional, intellectual, and interpersonal support. They also expose specific concerns and

obstacles that need to be addressed to better support WL teachers and improve the experience of WL education for all.

With respect to lack of exposure to cultural diversity, one potential solution may be to explore the integration of service-learning in WL courses to help improve students' attitudes toward the Spanish language and Spanish-speaking cultures. For instance, Guglani's (2016) research found that service-learning was beneficial in helping students transform their perceptions of the Latinx community and themselves as language learners and adopt more positive perspectives. A wide variety of service-learning sites and experiences could be considered, according to the language proficiency level of students and the particular Latinx population of the community, for instance ENL (English as a New Language) tutoring in local schools or volunteer work at a local community organization. Implementing service-learning in this way would help to reduce the direct burden on the teacher to convey the value of World languages and cultures by integrating support from the community to illustrate the immediate relevance and application of WL learning in a real-world setting. This source of support would, in turn, strengthen teacher retention.

Findings regarding the critical state of the WL teacher shortage in West Virginia and lack of value and institutional support for WL as a subject area point to a glaring need for change at the systemic level to education policy and implementation, in particular. The data gleaned from this investigation could be used to support advocacy and lobbying efforts directed toward revising existing legislation, especially reassessing state standards and requirements to prioritize WL coursework and reforming State Education Department policy and implementation. Above all, the latter should entail better support for existing WL teacher education programs and/or creating new ones throughout the state, as well as improving access to these programs by providing online options and alternative formats, thus creating more manageable pathways to teacher certification provided by accredited, high quality WL teacher education programs. Currently, the most important work in this area is being undertaken by the WV Advocacy for Languages TEAM, an affiliate of the West Virginia Foreign Language Teachers Association (WVFLTA) that directly dialogues with and engages officials in a variety of contexts, including state legislators and WV State Board of Education members. The findings of this study were most recently presented at the annual WVFLTA Conference, such that the Advocacy TEAM may use them in upcoming campaigns and a West Virginia Department of Education official attended the presentation, as well.

The challenges and opportunities uncovered in this study also provide a valuable resource to inform WL teacher training at both the initial and continued professional development levels. Directly integrating the exploration of these common challenges and how to navigate them into the curriculum of WL teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities, preferably in early career, is essential in adequately preparing WL teachers to succeed, avoid burnout, and remain in the classroom. Another fruitful direction for curriculum development could involve identifying teacher candidates' individual talents, skills and personality traits that are best suited for WL teaching and integrating these directly in course assignments, for instance in the writing of teaching philosophies, unit/lesson plans, classroom

management plans, etc. In addition, these data support the potential value of high-quality mentorship programs that might partner successful practicing WL teachers, like the participants in this study, with teacher interns and novice teachers to provide real-world experience in how to navigate the day-to-day challenges in the classroom. Lastly, the findings of this study clearly highlight the importance of professional support and reveal a need to connect teacher candidates early on with professional support networks, including local, state and national organizations, to best meet their professional, intellectual, and interpersonal needs.

Given the limitations in generalizability, these findings would be well complemented by additional quantitative research that includes a larger participant pool and random sampling of WL teachers working in different types of schools, communities and geographical locations throughout the state. Because the participants are all women, including different genders would be beneficial, as well. Furthermore, the data here could be supplemented with interviews conducted with students, parents and/or administrators to consider the topic from a diversity of perspectives. While additional research of this nature is essential to supporting WL teacher retention, it must be combined with real-world, practical action, most importantly expanded advocacy efforts and revision and improvement of teacher training programs, in order increase the pool of well-trained WL teachers, while at the same time integrating built-in systemic sources of professional support necessary to ensure the success of currently practicing WL teachers.

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Appendix A

Participant Information

Pseudonym	Place of Origin	Native Language	Age Range	Teaching Experience
Macy	WV	English	31-35	Mid-Career
Cheyenne	MD	English	51-55	Veteran
Nadia	Costa Rica	Spanish	46-50	Mid-Career
Amelia	FL	English	41-45	Mid-Career
Bethany	OH	English	31-35	Early-Career
Naomi	WV	English	51-55	Veteran
Kelsey	WV	English	26-30	Early-Career
Daphne	NC	English	41-45	Mid-Career
Samara	Venezuela	Spanish	51-55	Veteran
June	WV	English	26-30	Early-Career

Appendix B

List of Interview Questions

1. Where are you from originally? If you aren't from West Virginia, what brought you here? If you are, what encouraged you to stay in the state?
2. How does your own background help you connect to your students? How do you negotiate these differences in the classroom?
3. What made you interested in becoming a World Language teacher?
4. How do you connect with your students in motivating them to learn a World Language?
5. What has been the biggest challenge of being a World Language teacher in West Virginia?
6. What is your personal background with the World Language that you are teaching?
7. How did you learn the World Language that you are teaching?
8. What are the backgrounds of the students you teach (i.e. socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic, household background, etc.)? How do you navigate these different backgrounds in the classroom?
9. Do you feel like you receive adequate resources and funding to do your job properly? If not, what are you missing?
10. Do you feel like your administration values the importance of World Language education? Your community? Your colleagues?
11. Does your school allow/fund extracurricular activities like studying abroad?
12. Where do you see yourself in five years? Do you think you will find yourself in the same position?
13. What are the biggest stressors of being an educator?
14. Tell me about your teaching experience so far and what experiences you have had.
15. What question do you think would be a good question to ask that people don't typically ask of World Language teachers? What do you wish people knew about being a World Language teacher in West Virginia?

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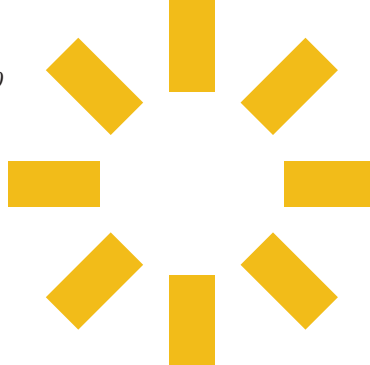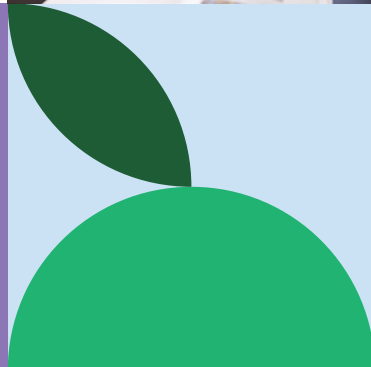
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