Current Directions in Post-Secondary Language Program Administration: Fundamental Considerations, Implications, and Applications

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Introduction

Current Directions in Post-Secondary Language Program Administration

Who are language program administrators (LPAs)?

Language program directors (LPDs) but also …

… course/level coordinators, undergraduate and graduate program directors, curriculum designers, language teacher educators, supervisors, department heads/chairs, and more!

- ➢ responsible for language teaching and learning in formal (university) programs

What role does research play in LPA work?

- At the intersection of theory and practice
- LPAs well positioned to contribute to fields informing their work, while supporting teachers and learners in local contexts
- Increasing need to justify language education in the U.S. --> LPA research can help explain what L2 learners are learning and how language education works

Polls: Roles & Responsibilities of LPAs and More

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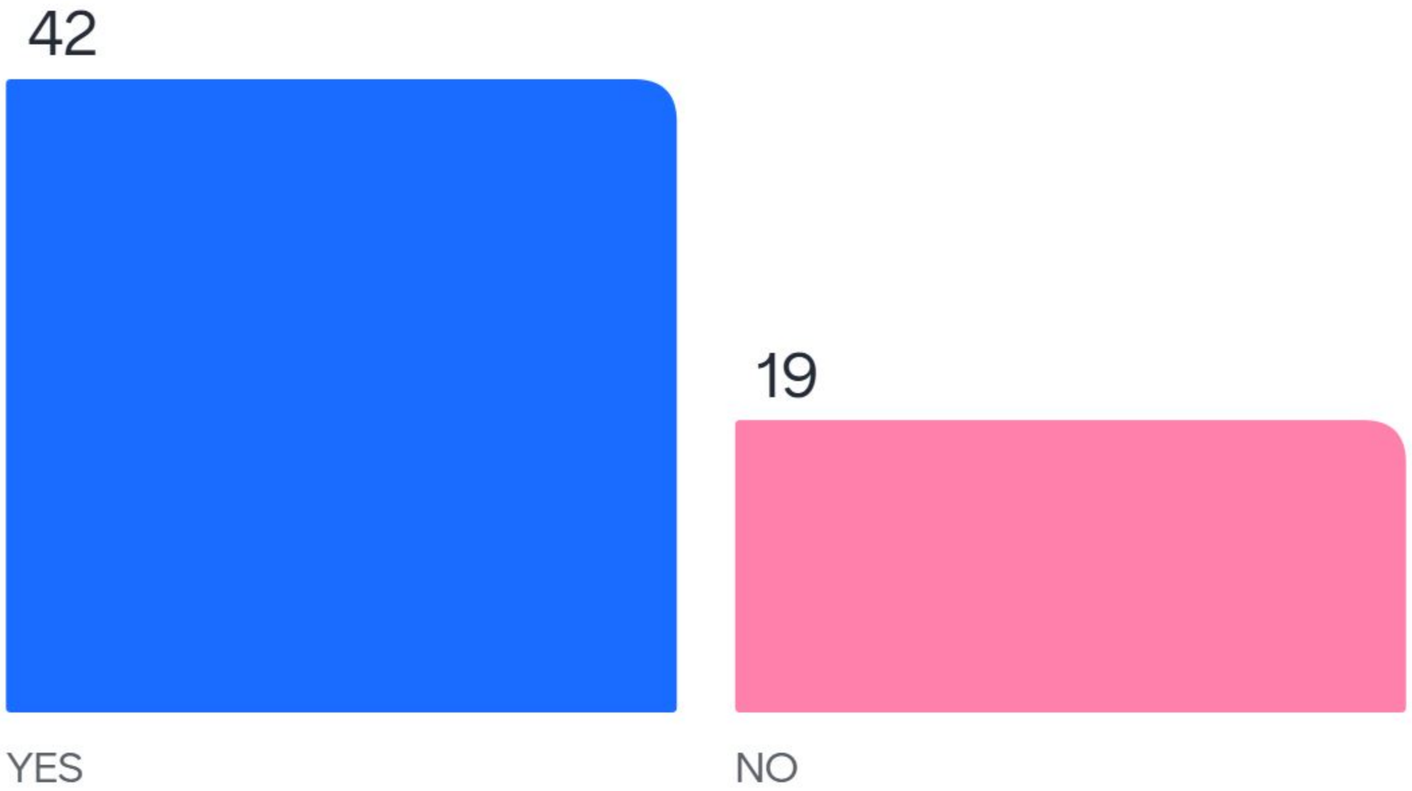
Are you a Language Program Administrator?



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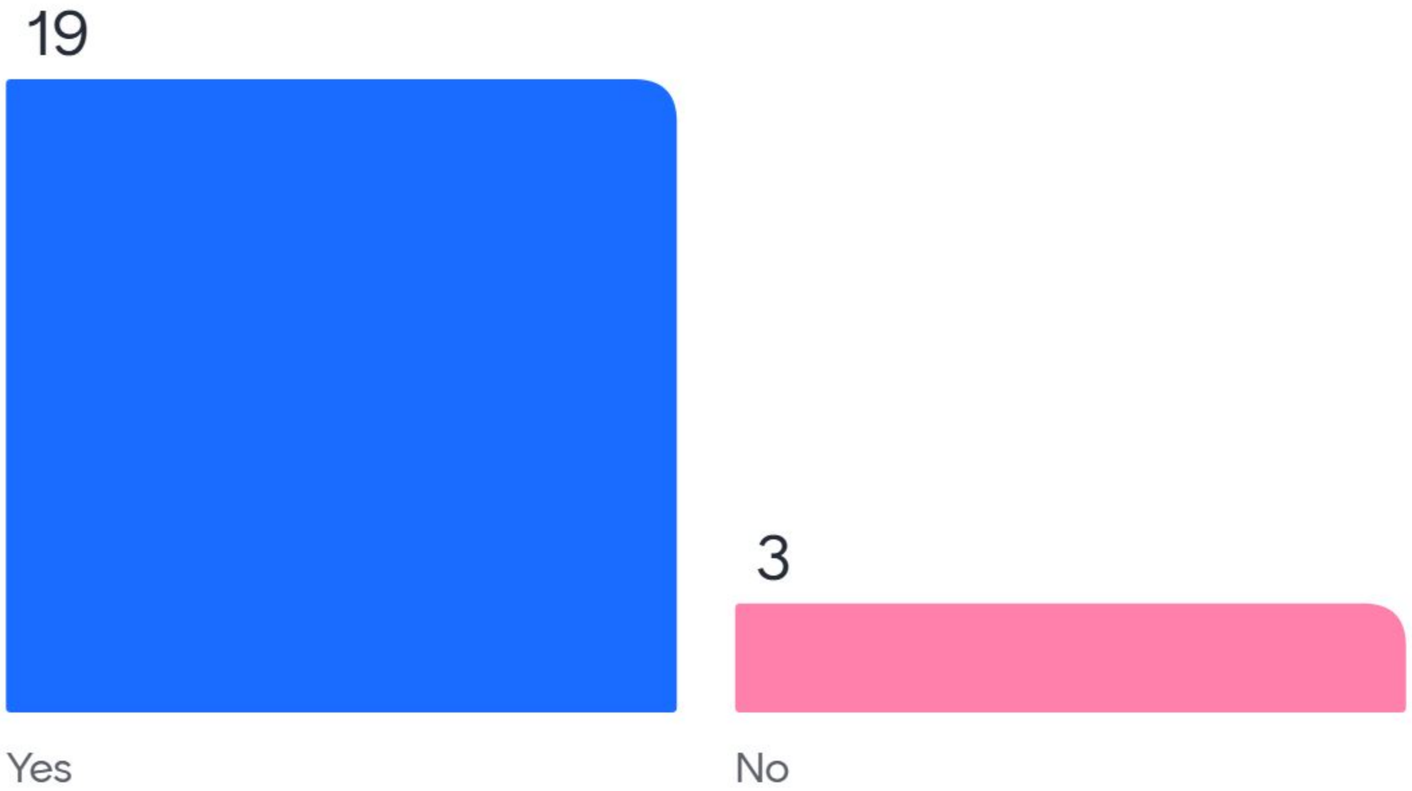
If you answered "no", are you interested in becoming one?



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Primary responsibilities of LPA work?

198 responses

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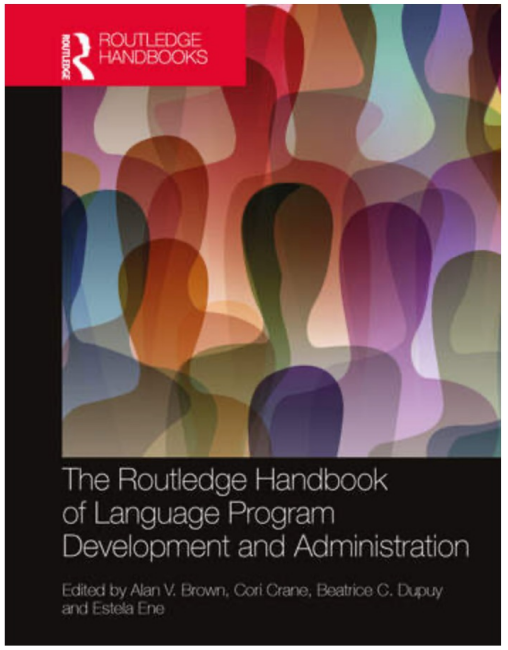
The Routledge Handbook of
Language Program Development and Administration

Alan V. Brown, Cori Crane, Beatrice C. Dupuy & Estela Ene (forthcoming, 2025)

I. Insights and Implications from Language Acquisition Research in Language Programs
II. Assessment and Evaluation in Language Programs
III. Teacher Education and Professional Learning in Language Programs
IV. Curricula and Materials in Language Programs
V. Contexts of Language Programs
VI. Technology in Language Programs
VII. Leadership and Administration in Language Programs



Part I: Insights and Implications from Language Acquisition Research in Language Programs

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2. Instructed SLA: Implications for Language Program Design and Administration (Ronald P. Leow)
3. Individual Learner Differences: From Fixed to Dynamic (Beatriz Lado)
4. Planning for and Enacting Differentiated Instruction in the Postsecondary Language Curriculum (Mandy R. Menke & Paul A. Malovrh)
1. Heritage Language Acquisition (Melissa Bowles & Julio Torres)
2. Interculturality in Language Programs (Carl Blyth)
3. Critical Translingual Awareness in World Language Programs (Tracy Quan)

Part II: Assessment and Evaluation in Language Programs

8. Using Language Assessment Data for Language Program Administration (J. Dylan Burton & Paula Winke)
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Part IV: Curricula and Materials in Language Programs

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23. Needs Analysis for Language Program Development and Administration (Ana Bocanegra-Valle)
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27. Working with Commercial Language Learning Materials (Amy Rossomondo)
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Part V: Contexts of Language Programs

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31. Service Learning and Community Engagement in the L2 Curriculum (Deborah Reisinger & Joan Clifford)
32. Heritage Language Program Design and Administration (Sara M. Beaudrie)
33. So that our Languages Live on: Indigenous Language Medium-Immersion Programs in Post-Secondary Education (Kananinohea Māka'imoku, Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla, Keiki Kawai'ae'a, & Jimmy (Tinakpåhnge) Såntos Teria)
34. Pathways to Literacy Programs for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (Amanda Shufflebarger & Joshua B. L. Tolbert)
35. Intensive English Program Administration: Universal Issues in Different Contexts (Jackie Gianico)
36. Less Commonly Taught World Language Programs (Wenhao Diao, Nozomi Tanaka & Elisa Räsänen)
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39. Spanish Language Program Development and Administration (Javier Muñoz-Basols & Alan V. Brown)
40. Professionalizing Language Curricula to Meet Workplace Needs: Insights from a French Higher Education Language Program (Muriel Grosbois & Naouel Zoghlami)

Part VI: Technology in Language Programs

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49. Emotional Labor in Program Leadership (Courtney Adams, Jacob Babb, Murray Costello, & Kate Navikas)
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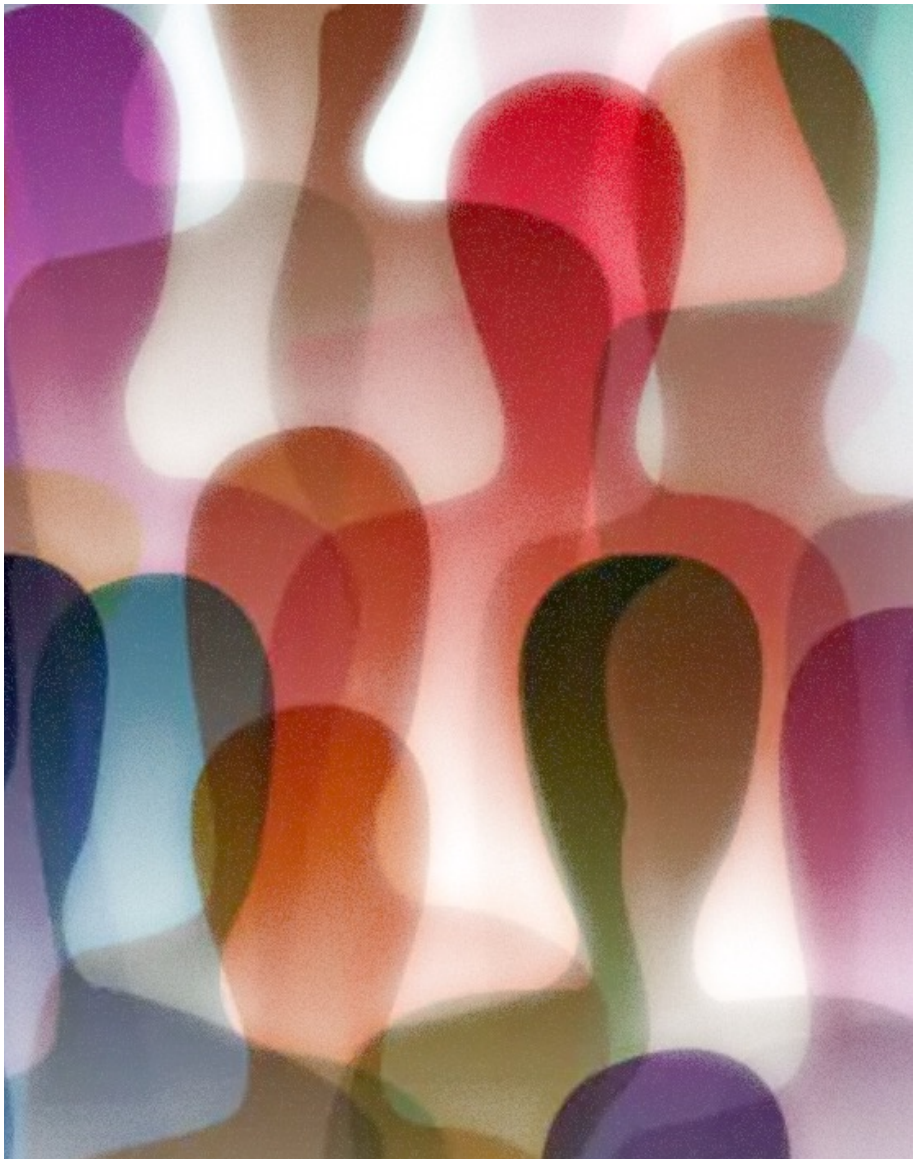
52. Agile Language Program Administration: Navigating Crisis and Change (Cori Crane & Chantelle Warner)



Overview

Current Directions in Post-Secondary Language Program Administration

1. Insights and Implications from Language Acquisition Research in Language Programs (Brown)
2. Assessment and Evaluation in Language Programs (Brown)
3. Contexts of Language Programs (Ene)
4. Curricula and Materials in Language Programs (Dupuy)
5. Technology in Language Programs (Dupuy)
6. Teacher Education and Professional Learning in Language Programs (Crane)
7. Leadership and Administration in Language Programs (Crane)
8. Concluding Remarks

Bedrock of LP Direction: Second Language Acquisition

Framing Question: Can we explain why (SLA theory) we do what we do (pedagogy, curriculum, materials, hiring, professional development)?

- Four consensus-based principles of SLA & implications (Zyzik & Marqués-Pascual):
  - (1) Input should be comprehensible and relevant
    - Modify input as needed, insure Ss are invested in interpreting input
  - (2) Language learning develops out of meaningful communication
    - Design tasks that promote interaction and negotiation of relevant meaning

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Bedrock of LP Direction: Second Language Acquisition

- Four consensus-based principles of SLA & implications (Zyzik & Marqués-Pascual):
  - (3) Instruction should be both form and meaning-based
    - Draw attention to form during meaning-based tasks
  - (4) Language learning is not linear
    - Interlanguage development does not presuppose predictable progress with accuracy
- Future research: How do widely accepted principles of SLA theory align with learners subjectively perceived needs and instructors understanding and practice? How do we manage misalignment?

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Foundation of LP Direction: Instructed SLA

Framing Question: How does the classroom context and individual learner profile affect SLA?

- Psycholinguistic constructs implicated in design and deployment of classroom tasks (Leow):
  - explicit v. implicit learning
  - working memory
  - attention
  - awareness
  - depth of processing
  - prior knowledge
  - ¨Based on the ISLA literature, the deeper the level of processing and the more cognitive effort expended the higher the level of awareness, and the more likely the learner engages in hypothesis testing, rule formulation, metacognition, and reactivation of previous knowledge.¨(Leow, forthcoming)

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Foundation of LP Direction: Instructed SLA

- Impact of learners´ profiles on Instructed SLA
  - HLLs unique linguistic, social, and pedagogical needs (Bowles & Torres)
  - Fixed cognitive AND dynamic socio-affective differences must be recognized (Lado)
  - Equitable learning achieved through a dialogic process between Ss and instructors (Menke & Malovrh)
  - Co-construction of interculturality with emphasis on process (Blyth)
  - Heighten Ss awareness of socio-political realities and power dynamics in translingual contexts and encounters (Quan)
- <u>Future research</u>: How do cognitive, social, affective, identity, and educational factors interact with classroom language learning in local context?

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The Bottom Line: Assessment & Evaluation

Framing Question: Is our program working and how do we know?

- The effective use of program data for administration and evaluation requires a systematic, utilization-focused approach with stakeholder support (Burton & Winke; Montee & Di Silvio).
- Placements and standardized tests must balance program goals, resources, and students' needs while recognizing washback effect. (Cox & Wilcox, Cox, Brown & Malone).

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The Bottom Line: Assessment & Evaluation

- Administrators and practitioners must acquire a working knowledge of language assessment principles to function effectively in their respective roles (Jones & Hartill).
- Authentic assessments must be appropriately identified and incorporated into modern L2 programs to insure relevance (Koh & Fu).
- Traditional forms of grading may be inconsistent and maintain a fraught relationship with concrete learning and ability (McGregor & Coleman).
- Future research: How can technology, specifically AI, be used to judiciously and meaningful assess L2 programs and student learning?

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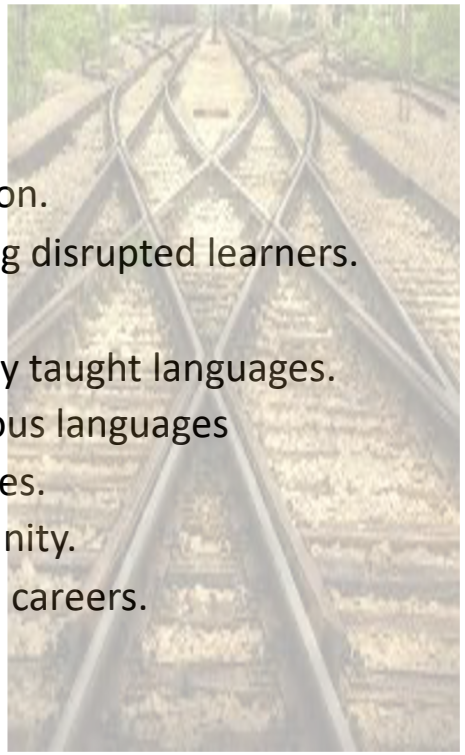
Contexts of Language Programs

Framing Question: How are some language programs distinct, and what is universal across various types of language programs?



- **EAP Programs**
- **Intensive English Programs**
- **EMI Programs** - English for teaching instruction.
- **Literacy for Interrupted Education** Supporting disrupted learners.
- **Heritage Language Programs**
- **Spanish LPDA LCTLs** - Teaching less commonly taught languages.
- **Indigenous Immersion** - Revitalizing Indigenous languages
- **Study Abroad** - Immersive cultural experiences.
- **Service Learning** – Engaging with the community.
- **Workplace-Oriented** - Aligning curricula with careers.

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Chapter 35: IEP Administration (Jackie Gianico)

Chapter 36: LCTL Programs (Wenhao Diao et al.)

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Chapter 40: Language Curricula for Workplace Needs (Muriel Grosbois & Naouel Zoghlami)

English LPs (EAP, IEP,EMI, LESSLA)

Ecological view:

- “productive trading, or ‘give-and-take,’ relationship with its environment” (Pennington & Hoekje, 2010, p. 214)
- "To be innovative means to be flexible" (Gianico)
- What, other than English, do we offer?

Challenges:

- The "accidental administrator"
- Teacher and student preparedness
- "historic paucity of literature" (Shufflebarger & Tolbert)
- Technology

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Heritage, Spanish, LCTLS, and Indigenous Language Programs

- Quality markers (Beaudrie, Muñoz-Basols & Brown, Diao et al, Mākaʻimoku et al.)
- Language varieties
- Positive learner attitudes.

Challenges in LCTL and indigenous programs:

- Lack of materials and research
- Linguistic distance
- Microteaching and community engagement
- Survival!

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Study Abroad, SL, & Workplace-Oriented Programs

- The effectiveness of high-impact practices
- The importance of connecting to authentic contexts
- The importance of community

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Context of Language Programs

Future Research:

Agency	Advocacy	Collaboration
Research	Technology	Ethical alternatives

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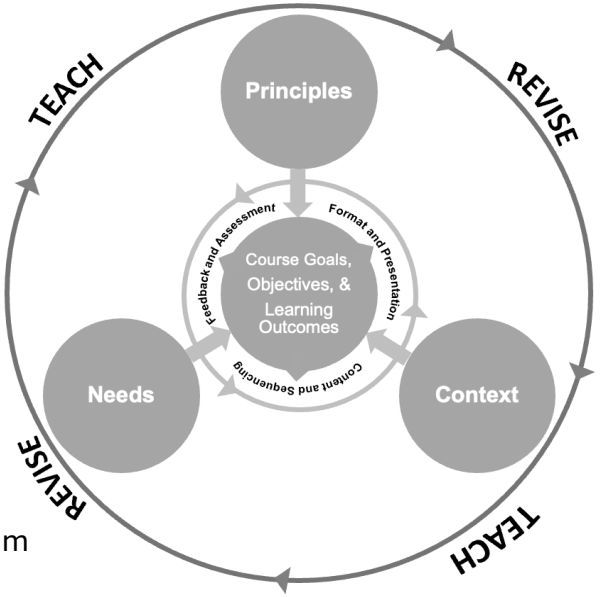
Curriculum and Course Design

Framing question: When designing a curriculum or a course, what do we need to establish first?

- Integrating **standards** in curriculum design can provide the **basis on which courses can build on each other** and provide **a framework for assessing student progress** and **program effectiveness.** (Malone & Zamora)
- **Needs analysis** is a **pre-condition to curriculum and course design.** (Bocanegra-Valle)
- A designed program of study, **the curriculum** is **the face of your program**, **the guide for instructors**, and **the pathway for learners**. (Maxim)

Central features of a comprehensive curriculum include:

1. educational goals and student learning outcomes;
2. content;
3. sequencing and teaching of that content



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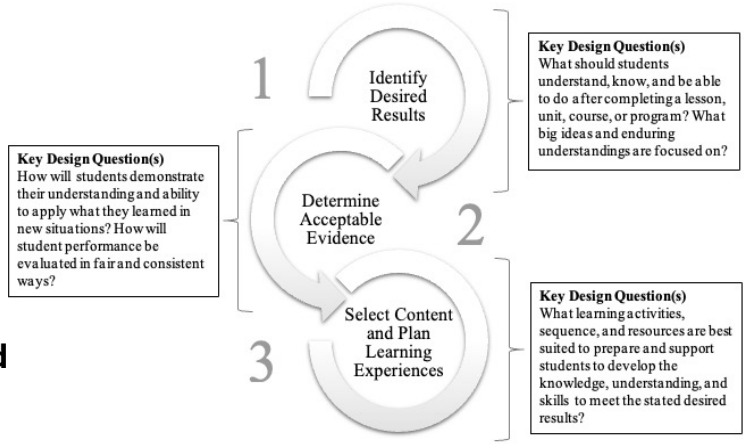
Curriculum and Course Design:

Framing questions: What do we do next?

- **Courses** are **building blocks** to enact the **curriculum** (Dupuy)
- **UbD**, as a **staged planning** framework central to curriculum and course design
- **UbD**, an **alternative to "forward design"**, it is an **inquiry-oriented model**
- **UbD**, as a guide for assessments and **real-world scenarios of performance tasks**
- **UbD**, as a path to content selection, tools, and learning experience creation



Stages of Understanding by Design (Adapted from Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 18) in Chapter 25

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Curriculum and Course Design

Framing questions: What do we need to consider when choosing instructional materials?

- **Commercial Instructional Materials or Not?** (Rossomondo)
  - Pluses
    - Support – LPAs, TAs, Instructors, and Students
    - "Unified" thematic focus
    - Digital-based delivery and easy integration with LMS
  - Minuses
    - Authenticity - Coverage focus
    - Inclusivity - Nature of content
    - Accessibility – Cost, Disability
  - Awareness and action: alignment, integration of digital technology, content, publisher
  - Implementation and customization
- Emerging categories of instructional materials: **Instructional materials are any tools or resources used to support, enhance, and guide the process of language learning** (Diaz)
    - Multimedia resources
    - Digital platforms
    - Realia
    - Learner-generated content
- **OER** as key sites for language program directors and instructors to address pervasive systemic challenges to do with accessibility, inclusivity and authenticity.

Chapter 26: The **Evolving Landscape of Language Instructional Materials**: Challenges and Opportunities (Adriana Diaz)

Chapter 27: Working with **Commercial Language Learning Materials** (Amy Rossomondo)

Curriculum and Course Design

Future research:

- Need to expand the range of data collection tools used.
- Need for more long-term studies on:
  - The application of the standards and the benefits they offer.
  - Language development across the curriculum
  - The factors that facilitate or inhibit consensus on curricular issues.
  - The contribution made by the combined use of current frameworks on students' learning and their impact on retention and recruitment at this critical time when language programs are either merging or closing.
  - The impact of involving instructors in course design/redesign work on their professional learning and buy-in of increasingly complex models to support curricular and course updates.

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Curriculum and Course Design

Framing Question: What do we need to consider when choosing technologies and digital tools?

- **Technology, Yes … but for What?**
  - Let the **student learning outcomes** and the **pedagogical principles drive technology use, not technology** (Goertler & Gleason)
  - Expanding learning opportunities while remaining cautious:
    - **Virtual Exchange:** Inquiry-oriented and community-oriented but challenges of technological barriers, language abilities, and cultural misunderstandings (Fuchs, Liaw, & Priego)
    - **Machine Translation:** Language education goals that include more than the accumulation of skills open the possibility of MT use as an additional means to further explorations of meaning making processes. (Vinall & Hellmich)
    - **Immersive technologies:** Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality has the potential to support language learning. (Mills & Caspar)

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Chapter 45: Immersive Technologies in Language Program Administration: Considerations, Applications, and Implications (Nicole Mills and Stephan Caspar)

Curriculum and Course Design

Framing Question: What do we need to consider when choosing technologies and digital tools?

- **Technology, Yes … but be Aware of Issues?** (Goertler & Gleason; Thoms)
  - Cost – Scalability - Support
  - Access
  - Ethics
  - Sustainability

Future Research:

- Need to develop and assess pedagogical resources and models for the integration of technologies, including MT, in language programs.
- Need to examine MT in under-explored contexts such as study abroad and pre-service language instruction.

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Teacher Education & Professional Learning in Language Programs

Framing Question: How do we help teachers develop in their teaching while supporting them where they are?

- Teacher supervision and mentoring **underexplored yet crucial work for LPAs**, esp. as good teaching drives successful SLOs
- **Paradigm shifts** impacting how we train and mentor language teachers in university language programs, e.g.,
  - **Multilingualism** vs. NS ideal and linguistic purity (Calafato; Fox & Staley)
  - **Emancipatory** and **justice-oriented pedagogies** (Fox & Staley)
  - Focus on **meaning-making** & **multiliteracies** (Goetze & Schueller; Kearney; Paesani)

Chapter 15: Defining Effective Language Teaching: Making it Meaningful (Erin Kearney)

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Chapter 18: Certification and Credentialing Programs for Preparing Language Teachers in a Multilingual World (Rebecca Kanak Fox & Kendra N. Staley)

Chapter 19: The **Native versus Non-Native Speaker Teacher Debate** and the Multilingual Turn (Raees Calafato)

Chapter 20: Classroom **Observation and Feedback** (Laura Baecher & Sumru Akçan)

Chapter 21: Practitioner Research in Post-Secondary Language Teacher Education Programs (Judith Hanks & Martin Wedell)

Teacher Education & Professional Learning in Language Programs

- **Constructivist** lens on teacher development (Baecher & Akçan; Paesani) --> helping teachers **develop conceptual understanding** (Paesani)
- Language teachers require an expanded set of skills and competencies → to become **"deeply and critically reflective educators"** (Fox & Staley) and to be able to **take agency in their own learning**
- **Guided, critical reflection** essential for all aspects of training, educating, and supporting teachers in their development

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Teacher Education & Professional Learning in Language Programs

- Learning through **inquiry-based models**, e.g., peer observation and practitioner research (Baecher & Akçan; Fox & Staley; Goetze & Schueller; Hanks & Wedell; Paesani)
- Importance of offering **experiential and practice-based learning opportunities** for novice teachers (Fox & Staley; Goetze & Schueller; Paesani)
- Approaching **teacher education as collaborative, community based** involving multiple mentors (Baecher & Akçan; Goetze & Schueller; Hanks & Wedell)
- Recognizing that teacher education in language programs requires a **differentiated approach**
- Future research: More **longitudinal** & **collaborative studies**

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Leadership and Administration in Language Programs

Framing Questions: What does leadership look like in LPA work? And how can LPAs approach leadership tasks?

- **Research on administrative work** of LPAs is **underexplored**, due in part to its **invisibility** (see, e.g., Navickas et al. on emotion labor)
- Chapters **borrowing from** different **leadership**, **management**, and **organizational development** fields (e.g., agility, transformational leadership, strategic planning)
  - **Leading people, managing situations** (Bourns)
- LPAs are **involved in dynamic change** (sometimes **crises**) on multiple levels that impact the programs they oversee
- LPAs **need good data** to do their work (Crane & Warner; Litzenberg; Nichols)

Chapter 46: Developing a **Strategic Plan** and Connecting to Institutional Priorities (Estela Ene)

Chapter 47: Language Program Leadership: Administering Inward, Outward, and Forward (Stacey Katz Bourns)

Chapter 48: English as a Global Language, English Language Teaching, and the **Financial Practices** of Language Programs (Jason Litzenberg)

Chapter 49: Emotional Labor in Program Leadership (Kate Navickas, Kristi Murray Costello, Jacob Babb, & Courtney Adams Wooten)

Chapter 50: Language Advocacy in Higher Education (William Nichols)

Chapter 51: Inclusive Hiring Practices in ESL/EFL Language Programs (Robert Lowe, Mathew Schaefer, & Davey Young)

Chapter 52: Agile Language Program Administration: **Navigating Crisis and Change** (Cori Crane & Chantelle Warner)

Leadership and Administration in Language Programs

- Importance of **adopting particular growth mindsets** that position LPAs in **agentive, proactive roles** (rather than defensive ones), e.g.,
  - ***entrepreneurial*** mindset in language advocacy (Nichols)
  - ***sense-making*** mindset in change management (Crane & Warner)
  - ***strategic*** mindset in goal-setting (Ene)
- LP leadership work is **highly relational, interpersonal work** that defies a one-size-fits-all model (context matters)
- Administrative work **offers opportunities to examine our values** as educators (Bourns; Ene; Litzenberg; Lowe et al.; Nichols)

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Leadership and Administration in Language Programs

- Leadership and problem-solving happen most effectively **through collaboration with others**, within and beyond one's program (Bourns; Crane & Warner; Ene; Nichols)
- Embracing **inclusive approaches to leadership**, e.g., in managing budgets (Litzenberg); hiring/workplace practices (Lowe et al.)
- Focus on **professional and personal well-being** of all (Bourns; Crane & Warner; Navickas et al.)

Future research: **Qualitative and cross-institutional research** needed …

- to **identify systemic issues and factors** that make administrative work **challenging** and …
- to **understand LPAs' contexts** and **ways of approaching** leadership **tasks and challenges**

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Let’s Pause for Q&A

Opportunities in Researching the Work of Language Program Administrators

Opportunities to contribute to our understanding of learning and teaching in university language programs:

- **Questioning our** traditional teaching, learning, and administrative **practices**
- Researching the **integration of technology** into different facets of university language programs
- **Considering different factors** that impact the learning and teaching of languages in higher education --> **ecological approaches** that understand LPA work as relational (Edwards & Burns, 2024; Swanson & Levine, 2020)
- Inviting in (and validating) **more classroom-based and practitioner research** so as to **engage multiple perspectives** to understand language learning and teaching in university language programs --> to better understand (mis)alignments
- **Capturing the processes** (the ***how***, not just the *what*) that enable successful teaching, assessment, curricula, course design, materials development, professional learning, decision-making, etc. in language programs
- Importance of **LPAs facilitating**, **advocating for**, and **empowering colleagues** to engage in research on teaching and learning --> ”**team work** makes the dream work”

Thank you! Danke schön!
Merci beaucoup! Muchas gracias!

Questions and/or Comments?

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