

Review: Wassell, Beth and Cassandra Glynn, editors.
*Transforming World Language Teaching and Teacher Education for
Equity and Justice: Pushing Boundaries in US Contexts.*

Carlo Cinaglia

Michigan State University

Wassell, Beth and Cassandra Glynn, editors. *Transforming World Language Teaching and Teacher Education for Equity and Justice: Pushing Boundaries in US Contexts.* Multilingual Matters, 2022. Pp. 203. ISBN 978-1-78892-650-8.

T*ransforming World Language Teaching and Teacher Education for Equity and Justice: Pushing Boundaries in US Contexts* is a call to action that aims to disrupt, de-center, and expand. In this edited volume, Beth Wassell and Cassandra Glynn bring together a diverse group of scholars engaged in unique initiatives focused on critical language education and teacher preparation that seek to promote equity, inclusion, and social justice. With an explicit goal to disrupt traditional practices and systems and to de-center and expand perspectives and sources of knowledge, Wassell and Glynn challenge language teachers and teacher educators to work toward radically rethinking the purposes and possibilities for world language study, the role of the language teacher, and the content and structure of curriculum for both language education and language teacher preparation. In their introductory chapter, the editors frame this volume as a response to specific issues and challenges in the field of language education, “calling out” the complicity of current language education practices in issues of injustice and oppression while “calling in” colleagues to critically interrogate and “dismantl[e] how we think about and what we do in language teaching” (2). Examples of such issues and challenges in language teaching include the lack of critical consciousness as a pedagogical goal in many world language programs and an oversimplified focus on culture that ignores issues of equity, power, and social justice. For language teacher preparation, a key challenge is a heavy focus on technical methodological skills at the expense of a critical focus on dominant ideologies inherent in current practices. As a result, novice and experienced teachers alike express feeling a tension between developing language skills and promoting criticality. Wassell and Glynn situate this volume in response to these challenges, calling on our field to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions about the content, structure and purpose in our language teaching and teacher education curricula.

The book is divided into two sections. Part one, *Disrupting Teaching Stance and Practice in the Classroom*, focuses on ways in which world language education can move beyond focusing solely on language acquisition to develop students’ critical consciousness of the world. This section features five chapters that illustrate

how language classes can and should promote a critical examination of topics relevant to the world in which students live, affirm students' diverse identities and experiences, and center marginalized voices as sources of knowledge. Exploring teachers' responses to tensions faced in different situations, chapter two (Baggett) illustrates how the development of critical consciousness can exist on a continuum—an important framing that positions any teacher, novice or veteran, as capable of developing critical pedagogies despite feeling underprepared to do so. Chapter three (Conlon Perugini & Wagner) focuses on a similar developmental process for students, framing the cultivation of intercultural citizenship as an act of decentering perspectives. This chapter rethinks the role of the language teacher in terms of goals, materials, and teaching practices, and it provides a reflection guide for teachers to begin to critically examine their own practice. Chapter four (Clifford) showcases a community-based language curriculum that reimagines the language class as an interdisciplinary collaboration aimed at developing students' critical consciousness, disrupting traditional classroom norms while decentering and expanding sources of knowledge to include community member voices as experts. Chapter five (Hines-Gaither, Perez, & Torres Melendez) examines the negative effects of lack of representation for minoritized students' language learning experiences, focusing on counternarratives of Afro Latina students to inform a pedagogy of radical inclusion and interrogate dominant ideologies about language, race, and education. Taking a similar narrative approach, chapter six (Enns-Kananen & Quiñones-Oramas) reveals how issues of equity and inclusion can also have negative effects for teachers, presenting counternarratives of a teacher's experiences to promote a pedagogy of alterity and resistance.

Part two, *Resisting and Reworking Traditional World Language Teacher Preparation*, features four chapters that reimagine the content, structure, and process of world language teacher education with an eye toward developing teachers' critical pedagogies. The chapters in this section help teachers interrogate their identities and ideologies about language, teaching, and learning, as well as develop asset-based pedagogies that promote social justice, equity, and inclusion. Chapter seven (Osborn) begins by laying theoretical groundwork for enacting critical pedagogy in world language education, making the case for supporting developing language teachers to recognize and explicitly interrogate ideological manifestations of colonialism, capitalism, and globalization in traditional language teaching materials and practices. Following this, chapters eight–ten feature case studies of teacher preparation programs in different stages of developing and incorporating a decolonial, social justice approach. Chapter eight (al-Bataineh, Yoghoutjian, & Chakmakjian) examines theoretical and practical challenges faced in introducing a social justice-focused pedagogy in a teacher preparation program for Western Armenian, an endangered heritage language, suggesting that implementing such change requires a multi-faceted effort among different

stakeholders. Chapter nine (Curran) introduces a recently redesigned teacher education program that centers social justice and community engagement, framing content knowledge in the context of community members' lived experiences. This chapter highlights multiple unique components of the curriculum, including community-based experiences and course assignments, and it discusses impacts and challenges experienced among different stakeholders involved. Focusing specifically on the methods course in teacher preparation programs, chapter ten (Wooten, Randolph, & Johnson) shares individual examples of teacher education practices the authors adopt in their own classrooms, including modeling social justice teaching for teacher candidates and promoting critical reflection to support and recognize continued teacher learning. Importantly, this chapter revisits the notion introduced in chapter two of teacher learning as a developmental process, a framing that invites and encourages all teachers to begin developing a critical approach to language education. Overall, the chapters in each section of this book exemplify both the need and the possibility for language teachers and teacher educators to center the critical in their work.

In order to effect change at the classroom level, language teachers need to be supported in making changes to their existing pedagogical practices. The two-part scope of this volume effectively provides this support, focusing on both disrupting teacher stance and reshaping teacher education practices. However, in order to effect sustainable change, teachers and teacher educators must both be supported by the larger institutions in which they function. One limitation observed in this volume concerns the extent to which each chapter addresses change at the institutional and policy level. For example, although chapter four showcases a highly effective social justice-focused language education program that reimagines the language class as a community-based, interdisciplinary collaboration with the potential to expose students to multiple fields of study and practice, this well-resourced program resides within an institution equipped to prioritize its curricular goals. What about existing language programs with fewer resources? Rethinking teacher stance and teacher education practices is vital to developing critical language education pedagogies focused on equity and justice, but program innovation and policymaking requires more than just teacher effort.

Despite this limitation, a number of chapters in this volume do offer implications for policymaking at the institutional level. Chapter two calls for administrators to involve teachers in curriculum development and support their agency in enacting pedagogical change focused on social justice. Chapter six calls on administrators to build structures that recognize the work of teachers of color and on colleagues of teachers of color to adopt a social justice curriculum and interrogate their own pedagogies. Finally, chapter nine observes that a key aspect to enacting a community-based, social justice-focused language teacher education program—the role of Partnership Leaders—is often enacted by minoritized individuals who perform additional labor and who are not always supported by

their institutions. The authors of this chapter call on administrators to support teacher educators doing this important work to make equity-focused language teacher education possible. Admittedly, the focus of Wassell and Glynn's volume is not language education policy at the administrative level, and the collection of chapters here do effectively address the volume's stated goals of reimagining possibilities for world language teaching and teacher education. However, the institutional contexts in which teachers and teacher educators function cannot be ignored, thus suggesting a next step for our field to advocate for more inclusive, justice-focused, and equitable world language education.

Wassell and Glynn's volume will be an invaluable resource for teachers and teacher educators in disrupting, decentering, and expanding their pedagogies to include a critical focus on social justice, equity, and inclusion. Language educators might also consider introducing some of the tenets outlined in this volume with their students, who themselves may be considering language education as a future profession, to help them see that language study is about so much more than just language. In addition, this volume may be a helpful resource for administrators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to understand students' and teachers' experiences with existing language education and teacher preparation programs. Most importantly, however, this volume will serve as an encouraging first step for language teachers and teacher educators on the fence about introducing a critical focus in their pedagogy. As several of the authors have noted, taking the first steps in incorporating social justice can be difficult for many teachers, who may feel intimidated or unsupported in doing so. The chapters in this volume provide helpful resources without overwhelming or discouraging teachers and introduce key theoretical frameworks—such as critical race theory, intersectionality, and critical pedagogies focused on social justice—in digestible ways. As a whole, the volume problematizes existing practices without condemning individual practitioners; instead, it invites and encourages teachers and teacher educators to reflect on and critically interrogate their current practices. Teacher learning is a developmental process, and most processes of transformation do not happen overnight. Wassell and Glynn's volume will support teachers at any stage in their careers to begin taking steps toward equity and justice.