

Teacher Agency for the Inclusion of Dual Language Learners with Disabilities:
Stories of Chinese-English Dual Language Immersion School Teachers

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Abstract

While dual language immersion (DLI) programs have emerged as one approach to promote culturally and linguistically sustaining education, teachers are not prepared to instruct students who live in the intersection of ability and linguistic differences. Dual language learners (DLLs) with disabilities often do not have access to culturally and linguistically rich classrooms. The present study takes a Chinese-English DLI charter school in a Midwestern city as a microcosm to investigate Chinese-English DLI program teachers' perceptions and practices of agency for inclusive education, as well as personal and contextual factors that influence their agentic inclusive practices. Findings, drawn from extended field observations, semi-structured interviews, and policy documents, reveal that teacher participants had a low sense of agency, especially when negotiating with administrators about top-down policies. Driven by their previous teaching and schooling experience, they implemented varied agentic inclusive practices in their individual classrooms. However, when working with DLLs with disabilities, their collective decisions and actions were inclined towards exclusionary practices. Two personal factors contributed to their low sense of agency for inclusion and even enabled their collective agency for exclusionary practices, including (1) a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, and (2) mixed attitudes towards inclusion and a deficit view of disability. Three contextual factors confined, discouraged, and negated teachers' agentic efforts towards inclusive education, including (1) resources and time strained school condition, (2) a school culture of elite bilingualism, and (3) accountability-explicit policies that erase and remove DLLs with disabilities from bilingual space. I ultimately argue that DLI program teachers need support and training to reposition self as an agent of change, develop transformative reflexivity to unlearn internalized structural norms, cultivate a collective vision of inclusive DLI education, and work

collaboratively and strategically to challenge and dismantle the white, middle-class, nondisabled, and English-speaking value centered DLI policies.

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Dedication

To my dear grandfather and mother who taught me

To be a storyteller

With soul and sense

Listen and share

When pains and joys of equal amount

Tremble my heart

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Chapter I: Introduction

There has long been a dilemma in the education system. On the one hand, various education reforms are constantly proposed in response to the rapid change of technology, society, and economy. On the other hand, schools operate in an institutional system that retains and reproduces norms about race, disability, gender, and other socially constructed identities (Fullan, 1993). Education equity in the era of COVID-19 is at historically high risk. Students who have long been marginalized, such as students in poverty, students of color, and students with disabilities, face enhanced inequality in care, safety, and schooling opportunities. Regardless of the schooling models (e.g., online, hybrid, in-person), there are children falling into the cracks. Teachers are asked to address students' diverse academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs while ensuring the wellbeing and safety of their students, colleagues, and their own families. However, teachers have been receiving little training dedicated to preparing them to navigate, challenge, and transform the systemic injustice of K-12 education (Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 1993; Priestley et al., 2012) in the U.S., let alone during such an uncertain time.

Promoting inclusive education has been widely recognized as one of the essential efforts toward educational equity (Kozleski, 2020). Discussions on inclusive education, particularly inclusive education in the U. S., have focused on the structural tensions between general and special education (Siuty, 2019). A solid body of empirical research documents that an inclusive learning environment benefits all learners, including students with disabilities (Westling, 2019). Learning in general education settings with systematically designed instruction and accommodations, students with disabilities often show improvements in academics, behavior, social and communication competence, vocational planning skills, self-determination, and self-confidence (Agran et al., 2020; Westling, 2019). Meanwhile, many critical scholars have

criticized a narrow understanding of inclusive education as placements by delivering special education services in general classrooms, and pointed out that special education itself is fundamentally ableist (Connor, 2019). Therefore, they propose critical inclusive education that draws on Disability Studies in Education (DSE) to question various systemic oppressions embedded in the general classrooms (Siuty, 2019). Critical inclusion interrogates the school as a normative center that sorts and relegates students of historically marginalized identities to physically and socially exclusionary space (Siuty, 2019).

Unfortunately, teachers embracing critical inclusion are working against a high, solid wall that protects some rather than all. For example, many inclusive educators report encountering resistance to inclusion in their school contexts where segregation and exclusion are the norm (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). Inclusion-oriented novice teachers are often advised to remain silent and wait until they obtain tenure (Picower, 2015). Teachers of color committing to social justice often feel isolated and undervalued within color-blind school contexts (Kohli, 2018). Special education teachers who expect to do co-teaching in general education classrooms find themselves spaced along with their students in the continuum of locations decided by the type and/or extent of disability their students are diagnosed as (Ferguson, 1995). In this era of COVID-19, administrators and special educators face a variety of challenges in providing individualized education services to students with disabilities via distance learning, particularly in delivering related services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy (U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2020).

Therefore, when the reality established where teachers who engage with and commit to educational equity and inclusion face multilayered, systematic pushbacks, it is critical for these teachers to develop and exercise agency for disrupting the system of ableism, racism, and other

oppressions that perpetuate and justify exclusion. As the pandemic becomes the new normal, it is ever imperative for novice teachers entering the profession to go beyond the rhetorical social justice-oriented intentions and become aware of their own capacity for agency as educators. As Holland et al. (2001) argue, “human agency may be frail, especially among those with little power, but it happens daily and mundanely, and it deserves our attention” (p. 5).

An increasing literature body demonstrates that the concept of teacher agency can serve as an important lens through which to understand teachers’ everyday practices. It acknowledges teachers’ individual and collective engagement in professional practices as well as the vital role of the context in shaping such work (Priestley et al., 2012). However, the notion of teacher agency remains understudied, particularly in the intersection of special education and dual language education contexts.

The purpose of the study is to use narrative ethnography to explore (1) How do Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) programs teachers perceive and exert agency to negotiate inclusive education for dual language learners with disabilities? (2) What are the personal factors regarding identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers’ agency for inclusive education? (3) What are the contextual factors of the school and district that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers’ agency for inclusive education?

I use dual language immersion (DLI) to refer to programs that promote full bilingualism and biliteracy in English and a partner language. DLI is an encompassing term including both one-way and two-way immersion programs where language is used as a medium of instruction rather than a subject. Dual language learners (DLLs) are individuals who are learning two or more languages at the same time or learning a second language while continuing to develop their

first language. The term Chinese can refer to multiple languages, dialects, cultures, and ethnic groups. In this study, the term Chinese language education refers to learning and teaching of Mandarin Chinese and other Chinese languages such as Cantonese.

Arguments in the Study of Teacher Agency

The importance of teacher agency is clear, but how to conceptualize teacher agency for inclusive education is challenging. In Chapter II, I will fully explore the literature that contributes to various theoretical understandings of teacher agency for inclusive education. Here I will start with four arguments on which scholars have not reached consensus yet. First, teacher agency is not a fixed internal property that can be transported across contexts (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). In other words, it is not something that people possess, nor things given, but something that people exercise within and in response to the context. For example, Wang et al. (2017) theorize teacher agency as teachers' capacity in seeking material and human resources. With a large teacher sample, they used a scaled survey as the sole data collection tool, in which only six indicators regarding resource seeking were used to construct teacher agency. I argue that studies on teacher agency should use multiple data collection tools, rather than using a single measure like a scaled survey and taking it as universally applicable to teachers who are teaching in different social, cultural, and even local contexts.

Second, the notion of agency should be distinguished from autonomy, regardless how subtle the difference can be (Priestley et al., 2012). If agency equates to autonomy, teachers' decisions and actions to crisscross the boundaries between general and special education and use the structure to their own advantage can be neglected (Gourd, 2019). For example, Naraian (2013) pointed out that the theoretical knowledge of inclusive education that evolved in the global north failed to account for schooling conditions unique in the global south. She explored

how oppositional agency served a transnational theory of inclusive education in India. She found that educators in India engaged in tacit oppositional practices such as privileging placement over quality of learning to ensure admission of students with disabilities into mainstream schools. In this case, teachers could use their agency to strategically take advantage of a top-down school policy that granted them little autonomy in teaching.

Third, teacher agency is not action that brings about positive outcomes only (Gourd, 2019; Priestley et al., 2012). Teachers can exercise their agency, via either deliberate action or non-action, for social reproduction (Priestley et al., 2012). Similarly, Gourd (2019) argues that “teacher agency is the enactment of power as a teacher, and thus agency is neither ‘positive’ nor ‘negative’” (p. 14). For any study on agency, it is important to indicate the intention for the exertion of power (Pantić & Florian, 2015). For example, Bray and Russell (2016) studied the interactions of parents, students, and school staff in individualized education program (IEP) meetings and found that teachers followed a meeting protocol guided by federal special education regulations to guarantee their power to speak and shape the meeting agenda. In this case, teachers used their agency to reproduce the typical, passive roles of parents and students in IEP meetings, rather than disrupt that structure.

Finally, teacher agency is not a “special” property owned by gifted teachers or teachers playing special roles, such as department chairs or building leaders (Gourd, 2019; Priestley et al., 2016). Novice teachers or teachers in less powerful positions can exercise agency and make identifiable changes, while many leaders, conversely, fail to act for the interest of students. As Boscardin (2017) discussed, special education leaders work within specific ecological conditions that may constrain their efforts toward improving student outcomes. Therefore, this study is interested in understanding and supporting any individual teacher’s agency, not just teachers who

lead or are perceived as having particular capacity for enacting their agency in practice.

Context of the Study

The context of this study is the intersection of special education and dual language education within the broad context of inclusive education in the United States. When students, be they emergent bilinguals learning English or native English speakers learning another language, need both special education and language learning support, a certain degree of exclusion is allowed or even encouraged because students with disabilities are considered not able to learn two different languages as well as their typically developing peers (Ferri & Ashby, 2017). High-stakes, standards-based reforms do contribute to the increased access to grade level instruction and curriculum for students with disabilities. However, the reforms also render new forms of exclusion, such as (a) separate classes for “prioritized curriculum” (Ferri & Ashby, 2017, p. 7) such as functional skills curriculum, (b) school choices available to and benefit privileged families mainly (McShane, 2014), (c) spatialized instruction through push-in and pull-out services (Naraian, 2016), and (d) underrepresentation of DLLs in the category of learning disabilities in the early elementary grades but overrepresentation in the middle and secondary grades (Samson & Lesaux, 2009). For DLLs with disabilities, both disability and language learning needs are positioned as barriers to inclusion and related services (Migliarini & Stinson, 2021), because standardized tests of oral language, literacy, and performance in academic content areas are the major assessment tools to monitor student success (Howard et al., 2003).

In addition, this study took place during the enduring the COVID-19 pandemic when teachers, students, and families encountered intensified uncertainties and unprecedented challenges. Surveys for parents, teachers, and administrators have shown that during distance learning, many students with disabilities have not received the additional instructional time they

need to make progress (U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2020). A report from the Council of the Great City Schools identified five major areas where emergent bilingual families were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19. These areas included health, financial stability, access to public assistance and resources, learning (access to devices and instruction), mental health, and social-emotional wellbeing (Uro et al., 2020). These challenges left nearly 5 million emergent bilingual students out of the virtual learning process (Mitchell, 2020). Connor (2014) argued, “realism is recognizing the current world we live in; idealism is what we imagine and strive toward; and activism is a means between them” (Reciprocity section, para. 4). It is time to delve into the new COVID-19 reality that is not and cannot be saved by one single hero but every individual’s acts of change to reconfigure multiple alternative futures.

This study investigated a Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) program – a lesser-studied bilingual context – adopted in a midwestern school district. The district offers Spanish-English DLI programs in three different public schools, one Chinese-English DLI charter school, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction across all school sites. Spanish-English two-way DLI programs enroll about equal number of English native speakers and Spanish native speakers. While the Chinese-English DLI charter school is a one-way immersion program where most of the student population are from white, English-monolingual families. Both Spanish-English and Chinese-English DLI programs adopt 50/50 language allocation model where students spend half of their school days in the English classroom, and the other half in the partner language (e.g., Mandarin, Spanish) classroom.

I entered the Chinese-English DLI charter school presuming it to be a two-way immersion school because the district website widely advertised its two-way immersion programs, and the school website did not mention its one-way nature. Two-way immersion is

different from one-way immersion in terms of student population. Two-way immersion programs serve about equal numbers of English-dominant speakers and heritage language speakers. While one-way immersion programs enroll either English-dominant speakers or heritage language speakers mainly. Therefore, the original title of the study for Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB) review was “Everyday agency for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: Stories of two-way immersion program teachers” (see Appendix A). In addition, there were a fairly percentage of Asian-looking students who, I learned later, spoke English only at home. At the beginning, I was worried about the uniqueness of the school context and the special time of pandemic. As I worked with teachers and students for an extended period, conducted classroom and school observations, interviewed and chatted with teachers and school staff, read and analyzed key policy texts, I noticed that the school reproduced and maintained same old educational inequities and exclusions as many other American public schools did.

Contributions of the Study

Highlighting every individual teacher’s powerful role in promoting societal inclusion and equity for all learners, this ethnographic narrative study achieves three contributions to earlier research. First, in literature, an increasing number of studies have been approaching this new discourse of teacher agency from various theoretical perspectives and in diverse educational contexts (Toom et al., 2015). However, there is limited research examining how teachers perceive and practice their teacher agency for inclusion and social justice (Pantić, 2017; Pantić & Florian, 2015). Teacher agency research on the intersecting context of special education and dual language education is even scant. Therefore, the first contribution of this study is situating teacher agency in the scholarship advancing inclusive education for dual language learners with disabilities. Preparing teachers to meet the complex needs of students of intersecting identities is

critical in positioning future educators as quality leaders (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

Second, this study highlights the new shifting realities of teaching, wherein teaching is not simply a technical process or expert-defined evidence-based practices. Through their daily, ordinary, and provisional acts of agency, teachers can take ownership over the structure and use it to their advantage. Through substantive descriptions of individual teacher's situated inclusive practices, this study identifies bottom-up ones that are rarely acknowledged by policymakers and implementation researchers alike, and challenges the broad, ahistorical prescriptions for practice that are detached from the local contexts (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). In addition, for teachers, especially inclusion- and social justice-oriented teachers who experience insecurity and social exclusion themselves, recognizing their individual and collective power in responding to structural challenges can contribute to a more thorough understanding of everyday consequences of educational inequality.

The last contribution relates to implications of macro-level policy of special education and dual language education. Studies on teacher agency in language education context have presented teachers as localized language policy makers based on their language ideologies (Henderson, 2017). By investigating multiple mechanisms that influence teachers' action and interaction, this study read teachers' everyday work as manifestations of the larger system, a system where race, class, and disability, collectively and interactively, function as a tool to exclude those who are deviant from the white, non-disabled, middle-class, and monolingual values (Cioè-Peña, 2021a). This study problematizes the logics of dual language education that perpetuates racial hierarchies, ableism, and monolingualism and asks for policy change.

Chapter II: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

In the following section, I start with a brief overview of the context of inclusive education and bilingual special education where, in this study, discussions on teacher agency situate. Then I review two major bodies of literature relevant to my study. The first set of literature deals with research on dual language (DL) education and its intersection with special education in the United States. It also includes a history, socio-political and economic discourses, and some ideological debates of Chinese-English dual language education in the United States. The second set of literature deals specifically with studies on empirical understandings of teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities and dual language learners. Drawing on the empirical studies, I then present an operational definition and a conceptual framework of teacher agency for inclusion to inform research questions and study design.

Inclusive Education

There is a growing consensus on embracing inclusive education worldwide, but there is a lack of knowledge on how to accomplish deep and sustained commitments to inclusiveness with equity as its core (Kozleski et al., 2009). By definition, inclusive education aims to enhance access, participation, and outcomes for all diverse student populations who have been traditionally excluded from formal education (Kozleski et al., 2014). In practice, inclusive education is contested, prioritizing certain justice paradigms over others and addressing diverse forms of tensions emerging between efforts and realities (Waitoller, 2020). Slee (2010) observed that the notion of inclusive education has become dull and vague as it is widely and implicitly referred to in the discourse of any effort toward equity.

To avoid the conceptual ambiguity in the definition of inclusive education, I adopt Waitoller and colleagues' (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013) definition,

and use a critical, intersectional lens to inquire structural, regulatory, and cultural practices that perpetuate raced and ableist norms and outcomes (Kozleski et al., 2020). According to Waitoller and colleagues' definition, inclusive education is

a continuous struggle toward (a) the redistribution of quality opportunities to learn and participate in educational programs, (b) the recognition and value of differences as reflected in content, pedagogy, and assessment tools, and (c) the opportunities for marginalized groups to represent themselves in decision-making processes that advance and define claims of exclusion and the respective solutions that affect their children's educational futures. (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013, p. 36)

Furthermore, as Artiles et al. (2016) argue, neglecting the intersectional nature of disability can create inequities for other marginalized groups. The “dual nature of disability as an object of protection and a conduit for exclusion and disadvantage” (p. 778) requires the inclusive education movement to take an intersectional and cultural-historical standpoint to foreground equity in the international inclusive education agenda (Artiles et al., 2016).

Inclusive Bilingual Special Education

Studies on dual language learners (DLLs) with disabilities in the United States are underrepresented in the literature (Kangas, 2018). Scholars who work to bring public attention to this population have examined the identifications, referrals, and assessments of DLLs for special education services (Kangas, 2018). For instance, the seminal book – *English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction* – edited by Artiles and Ortiz (2002) collected a series of studies on issues and challenges related to the general and special education services for DLLs with disabilities. Emergent evidence laid out in the book suggests that “students living at the intersection of language and ability differences often fall

through the cracks given the contradictory nature of current federal and state policy landscapes” (Tefera et al., 2017, p. 206). Tefera et al. (2017) adopted the notion of judicial deference to demonstrate how competing and conflicting policies with vague definitions and weak guidelines contribute to the ongoing segregation and disproportional representation of DLLs in special education. Kangas (2018) conducted a qualitative comparative case study to explore local educators’ interpretation and appropriation of special education and language education policies and laws. They found that administrators and teachers gave differential weight to federal language and special education policies and laws by downplaying language acquisition needs to ensure the compliance of special education laws. As Cioè-Peña (2017) noted, special education and language education are under separate protections of national policies like Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) and the more recent policies, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RttT).

Furthermore, there is an absence of discussion on preparing teachers to work with students who are eligible for both special education and language support services (Gonzalez et al., 2021). In other words, these group of students are more likely to be taught by underprepared teachers. Gonzalez et al. (2021) focused on special educators’ perceived readiness and practices to work with DLLs. Analyzing the results from the statewide surveys with 103 Arizona and California special educators, the authors found out that less than half of teachers felt prepared to work with DLLs, especially in discerning between disabilities and English development to design appropriate instructional services. Gonzalez et al. (2021) pointed out that “the current practice of teacher preparation in disciplinary silos results in preparation for imaginary youth that fit neatly into single categorical dimensions. Inattention to this complexity will result in persistent equity issues and low academic outcomes for DLLwD” (p. 158). Similarly, Wang and

Woolf (2015) argued that the existing special education teacher professional standards and bilingual teacher professional standards do not inform in-service educators' work with DLLs with disabilities. Special educators' insufficient training in second language acquisition and culturally sustaining pedagogies shapes their instructional practices addressing disabilities related needs only (Lopes-Murphy, 2020).

In addition, culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families are often undervalued and denied the opportunities to define exclusion and its corresponding solutions (Waitoller, 2020). For instance, Fortune (2011) highlighted that some language immersion programs, under the high pressure of standardized tests, have unofficially screened students for a certain level of English language proficiency prior to admission, or discouraged parents of students with disabilities from enrolling their child in immersion programs. Evidence has shown that many two-way immersion (TWI) charter schools in the United States enroll fewer students with disabilities – on a weighted average of 4.5% of the TWI student population – than their corresponding state public schools do (Zehrbach, 2011). These language immersion schools and programs are often offered as enrichment or gifted and talented opportunities for white, non-disabled, middle-class children who speak English as their first language (Cioè-Peña, 2021a). Decisions regarding language instruction for DLLs with disabilities are often made entirely by school representatives with little to no input from the child or the family (Cioè-Peña, 2021a). An underlying belief that students with disabilities are likely to struggle in language immersion programs seems to be commonplace among school professionals, even though many studies (e.g., Feltmate & Bird, 2008; Reetzke et al., 2015; Simon-Cerejido & Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2013) have documented that students with disabilities can learn bilingually at no additional cost (Martínez-Álvarez, 2019).

Ensuring DLLs with disabilities have access to, participate in, and learn inclusively at dual language programs is essential to the fulfillment of inclusive education as a fundamental civic right for all and to advance intersectionality approaches in inclusive education literature. The next section provides details on the evolution of dual language immersion (DLI) programs to better understand their relevance to inclusive education in the United States.

Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Programs

Definition and Characteristics of DLI Programs

Having been in existence in the United States since the 1960s, DLI programs have gained great popularity. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (2015), thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia reported offering DLI programs during the 2012-13 school year, with Spanish as the most reported partner language, followed by Chinese, Native American languages, and French. There are 4,866 registered DLI schools and immersion programs across the nation (DualLanguageSchools.org, 2021). DLI programs initially seek to strike a balance between two languages (usually English and one partner language) and develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural awareness among all dual language learners (Howard et al., 2003; Morales & Maravilla, 2019). Different from the traditional bilingual education model, DLI aims to challenge English monolingualism and promote the view of minoritized languages as linguistic resources rather than linguistic deficits (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

DLI programs are referred to in various names, such as two-way immersion, dual immersion, bilingual immersion, or enriched education. In general, it is an umbrella term referring to “any program that provides literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages and that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement,

and sociocultural competence (Howard et al., 2018, p. 3). There are two main types of DLI programs depending on student characteristics: one-way immersion and two-way immersion (Gómez et al., 2005; Howard et al., 2018).

One way immersion programs enroll more students speaking the same home language but may differ in their language proficiency. One way immersion programs serving mainly English monolingual students at the time of enrollment are usually called as foreign or world language immersion. One way immersion programs in which most students speak the same minoritized language (e.g., Spanish) at the time of enrollment and learn to be bilingual in both their home language and English are usually known as developmental bilingual programs (Howard et al., 2018).

Two-way immersion (TWI) programs, a rapidly populating program model in recent years, serve an approximately equal numbers of English monolingual students and students who are monolingual in a language other than English at the time of enrollment (Howard et al., 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). The definition and goals of TWI programs are clearly stated in the literature:

First, the programs must include fairly equal numbers of two groups of students: language minority students, who in the United States are native speakers of a language other than English, such as Spanish, Korean, Chinese, etc.; and language majority students, who in the United States are native English speakers. Second, the programs are integrated, meaning that the language minority students and language majority students are grouped together for core academic instruction (i.e., content courses and literacy courses) for all or almost of the day. Finally, TWI programs provide core academic instruction to both groups of students in both languages. (Howard et al., 2003, p. 9)

Although DLI programs, both one-way and two-way models, share the common goal that all students becoming proficient in using two language for communication and learning, they can take different forms (Gómez et al., 2005) in terms of school type (i.e., public, charter, private, magnet school), program level (i.e., pre-k, elementary, middle, high), program model (i.e., strand within a school, whole school), language allocation (i.e., 90/10, 80/20, 70/30, 60/40, 50/50), and initial literacy instruction approach (i.e., partner language first, both language simultaneously, native language first). Language allocation and language instructional strategies are the most controversial topics because researchers cannot reach a consensus on the degree of secondary language exposure for proper dual language development (Christian & Howard, 2002; Gomez et al., 2005). The 90/10 model and the 50/50 model are the two most common allocations of instructional time in each language. In the 90/10 model, the partner language (e.g., Spanish) is used 90% of the instructional time in early grades, with a gradual increase in English instructional time up to 50% of the time. In the 50/50 model, the partner language and English are used equally throughout the program (Gomez et al., 2005).

The term dual language immersion in this paper aligns with Howard et al.'s (2018) definition as an encompassing term including both one-way and two-way immersion programs. As Flores and Beardsmore (2015) point out, the real student demographics are more complicated than simple groupings of English native speakers and other language native speakers. Therefore, distinguishing one-way from two-way programs based on student's linguistic backgrounds can be oversimplified.

Benefits and Challenges of DLI Programs

As a type of multilingual education, DLI programs show great promise in improving language and literacy outcomes of dual language learners (Morales & Maravilla, 2019). Howard

et al., (2003) reviewed research on two-way immersion (TWI), exploring topics of program profile, program design and implementation, instructional strategies, academic outcomes, social impacts, and attitudes and experiences of students, parents, and teachers involved. They concluded that (a) successful TWI programs require collective commitments characterized with long term plans for implementation, supportive administration, parental involvement, high quality staff, a positive school environment, and a balanced student ratio; (b) both English speakers and other language speakers demonstrate favorable outcomes in standardized achievement tests and progress in bilingualism and biliteracy; and (c) students, parents, and school staff generally report positive experience with TWI programs. In addition, many studies on DLI programs support cognitive benefits of bilingualism (Bialystok & Craik, 2010), improved competency and confidence in cross-cultural interactions (Fortune et al., 2011), and good rate of high school graduation and college admission (Santibañez & Zárte, 2014).

However, in this monolingual and culturally hegemonistic English society of the United States, forces exist to diminish the beneficial outcomes of DLI programs (Howard et al., 2003). For instance, the mandatory standardized achievement testing in English language fails to appropriately assess some DLLs (Escamilla, 2006) because of the cultural and linguistic mismatches between students and the testing tools (Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007). In addition, curriculum and teaching materials in partner languages, especially in languages other than Spanish and for upper grades, are lacking (Howard et al., 2003). Teachers providing support services, such as special education, Title I, and reading intervention, are not required to be bilingual (de Jong & Howard, 2009). As a result, students who need these services do not have equal learning opportunities in both languages, with English privileged inside and outside classrooms. Moreover, because of their language proficiency tests results, students classified as

English language learners can be referred to special education with a learning disability diagnosis and are more likely to learn in segregated and under-resourced settings (Harry, 2006).

Despite the emergent research demonstrating the value of translanguaging pedagogies that emphasize hybrid and holistic linguistic and cultural practices (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Hamman, 2018; Hornberger & Link, 2012), language separation is widely used to ensure predetermined amount (e.g., 50% or 90%) of instructional time for the partner language. One certain language is used in specific classrooms or teachers for specific school days, weeks, or subjects (Howard & Sugarman, 2006). In other words, equal allocation of language instruction is achieved via new forms of segregation. Sánchez et al. (2018) critiqued the strict language separation approach as focusing on teaching two individual languages, rather than educating students bilingually. Grosjean (2019) named it as teaching bilingualism as two monolinguals in one. In addition, this language separation implies a deficit view of multilingual learners and rejects their dynamic and agentive use of multiple languages in co-existing, fluid, and complex ways (Flores & Schissel, 2014; García, 2009).

In addition, not all languages are in equal status in the broader sociopolitical context (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). As Torres-Guzmán and Feli (2005) commented, “the tradition of public schooling in languages other than English has historically and politically been connected to immigration and the integration of immigrants into a predominant English-speaking environment” (p. 514). Without confronting the socioeconomic status of speakers of these languages in society or accounting for the current political initiatives such as English-only and anti-bilingual education legislation, DLI programs will fail to serve all DLLs (Gómez et al., 2005; de Jong & Howard, 2009; Torres-Guzmán & Feli, 2005). As a result, a fundamental question should be posed: Whose interests do DLI programs ultimately serve and at what cost?

Interest Convergence and Neoliberalism in DLI Programs

Many critical race theorists propose using the lens of interest convergence to understand the design and implementation of DLI programs (Morales & Maravilla, 2019). Bell (1980) highlighted that “the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of white” (p. 523). Following this line, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) conducted a literature review to critically examine issues of inequality in the two-way immersion (TWI) programs. They discovered mounting studies demonstrating that “the interest convergence inherent in TWI may result in advancing the goals of the dominant group, while benefits for minoritized students may be rendered only as a by-product of such efforts” (p. 409). They argued that despite the claimed purposes of building bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural awareness, TWI programs often anchor in globalization and neoliberal discourses, in which “global migrants or transnational bilinguals, who are moving across borders to the United States, are viewed as needing a new language (English) in order to survive, whereas middle-class English-dominant youth are positioned to become ‘cosmopolitan’ as they prepare to join global businesses” (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017, p. 417). Therefore, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) proposed a fourth goal for TWI programs: “to develop ‘critical consciousness’ through using critical pedagogies and humanizing research” (p. 404). However, in their discussion of critical consciousness of race, class, and social status, one critical social identity is missing: disability.

The covert neoliberal ideology behind the proliferation of DLI programs was pointed out by Guadalupe Valdés as early as 1997, and further explored by scholars like Cervantes-Soon (2014) and Flores (2016) who took up a critical lens toward DLI programs. One critique is about the promotion of neoliberal multiculturalism, that is, prompting English hegemony while at the same time commodifying multilingualism to serve the interest of transnational corporations and

economic elites only (Flores, 2016). Therefore, DLI programs have been criticized for their global market and future employment orientated focuses (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017), and for their goals of achieving global competitiveness and cumulating multilingual human capital within the white middle and upper-class groups (Flores, 2016). Just as Muro (2016) pointed out, “white bilingualism is interpreted as an achievement to be acknowledged, and Latino bilingualism one to be anticipated” (p. 11). Neoliberalism also manifests in DLI programs’ sole reliance on “a punitive and largely monolingual accountability system” (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017, p. 409). Many states passed state seals and certificates of biliteracy for formal assessment and recognition of students’ bilingualism or multilingualism and literacy skills (Seal of Biliteracy, 2020). Seal of Biliteracy assessments are decontextualized and based on students’ familiarity with the tasks and topics taught for the assessment (Schwedhelm & King, 2020). “Seals (and certificates) were consistently framed as meritocratic, individual achievements with financial value, and at the district level, as a sign of progressive values, administrative competence, and a mean to signal institutional virtue” (p. 24), as Schwedhelm and King (2020) commented.

Chinese-English DLI Programs

Since the first Chinese immersion school – San Francisco’s Chinese American International School – was established in 1981, Chinese dual language programs have been growing rapidly from just 11 in 2000 to over 300 across 34 states in 2019 according to an informal count by Weise (2019). Literature has recorded a good amount of information about history, policy, pedagogy, and practice of language immersion and its importance regarding French immersion in Canadian contexts and Spanish two-way immersion in the United States. However, literature on Chinese immersion remains scant. In the following section, I present a

brief history and related sociopolitical discourses of Chinese language education in the United States and summarize some studies on Chinese language teaching and learning in DLI programs.

History and Sociopolitical Discourses of Chinese Language Education. According to Wang (2008), “different languages are placed in different hierarchical orders of need and importance based on their real or perceived economic, political, and socio-historical– cultural relationships with the USA and the world” (p. 169). Chinese language teaching and learning is not an exemption. The development of Chinese language schools parallels the immigration patterns of Chinese settlers. The earliest Chinese language schools were established in the nineteenth century in Chinatowns as private or church-run community schools, when Chinese children were not allowed to attend public schools under a series of discriminatory laws, for example the Nationality Act of 1870, the Page Law of 1875, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and the Immigration Act of 1924 (Wang, 2008). As the Immigration Act was signed in 1965 and the Bilingual Education Act was signed into law in 1968, the second wave of Chinese immigrants made up of well-educated intellectuals and highly skilled workers drove the establishment of Chinese heritage language schools, and the expansion of after-school programs or weekend schools. Two private foundations, the Carnegie Foundation and the Dodge Foundation, made the most significant contributions to expanding Chinese language learning into elementary and secondary school in the early 1960s through the early 2000s (Wang & Ruan, 2016). The famous landmark case of *Lau versus Nichols* (1974) occurred during that time. A group of Chinese American parents fought for equal educational opportunities for their non-English-speaking Chinese children.

Entering the twenty-first century, Chinese language education took a rapid expansion as the U.S. government promoted Mandarin Chinese as one of the critical foreign languages for

national security and to maintain its global political and economic power (Sun & Shouse, 2016). For instance, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) was launched in 2006, starting with the Chinese K-6 Pipeline Project, to promote critical language learning among American youth through summer and academic year immersion scholarship programs (Wang, 2008; Wang & Ruan, 2016). A detailed summary of major U.S. government initiatives for Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) study can be found in Sun and Shouse (2016). Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations such as the College Board and the Asia Society, and the Chinese government have carried out a series of policies and initiatives in promoting Chinese language in the United States (Li & Wang, 2016; Wang, 2008). For instance, the Advanced Placement Course (AP) in Chinese Language and Culture was created by the College Board and introduced to U.S. high schools and colleges in 2006 (Wang & Ruan, 2016). The Confucius Institute Headquarters, informally known as Hanban, have worked with the College Board and other educational institutions to provide curricular and instructional support as well as financial resources for Mandarin Chinese learning in K-12 education and higher education (Li & Wang, 2016; Wang & Ruan, 2016). Discussions on the controversy surrounding the impacts of the Confucius Institute in both academe and political sphere are beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note that there are more than 500 Confucius institutes around the world and 96 in the United States as of 2018. The Confucius Institute generally provides start-up and annual funds, teaching materials, Confucius Institute teachers and their salaries, professional development for Chinese language instructors, Chinese language proficiency test sponsorship, and/or language and cultural exchange camps (U. S. Governmental Accountability Office, 2019).

Chinese Dual Language Immersion Programs. The first Chinese DLI program was found in 1981 but the second program did not come until 1991. The boom of Chinese DLI

programs began in 2006 when the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) was implemented. According to Weise (2013; 2019), U.S. K-12 schools that were home to Chinese DLI programs came in different shapes and sizes and scattered across 33 states and the District of Columbia in 2019. California is home to the majority Chinese DLI programs, followed by Utah, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, and North Carolina. Public schools house the majority of Chinese DLI programs, following with private and charter schools. Most Chinese DLI programs are strands within a larger school versus a whole school model. In addition, most of them are one-way because few communities have enough Chinese-speaking population to make up about half the students required by two-way programs.

However, like many other languages, Mandarin Chinese in particular is often valued and advertised for its economic and social capital for certain groups of people due to the increasing economic power of China in the global market (Sung & Tsai, 2019). For instance, the Utah Chinese DLI program, coordinated statewide by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE, Weise, 2013), was initially created to “address the need for language skills in business, government, and education” (Asia Society, n.d.). Freire et al. (2017) drew on critical race theory to examine Utah state language policies and DLI-related promotional content on USOE websites. They found that Utah DLI programs centered the economic interests of the white, English-dominant majority and groups without an ethnic connection to the target language. Barakos and Selleck (2019) use the term of “elite multilingualism” to describe “a phenomenon that imbues social and/or material capital, prestige, excellence, privilege, and access to linguistic resources in certain groups of speakers” (p. 365). Therefore, in the United States, different from the popularity of DLI programs, heritage language education, including Chinese heritage language

education, has been left to immigrant families and community language schools that offer language and cultural instruction for a few hours per week on weekends (Li & Wen, 2015).

Studies on Chinese Dual Language Immersion Programs. Chinese DLI programs have only received some scholarly attention in very recent years. One small group of studies focus on Chinese language teaching and learning strategies within DLI classrooms. For instance, Sung (2021) studied the oral reading strategies use of first-grade students who are native English speakers learning Mandarin Chinese in a Utah Chinese-English DLI program. They discovered that students mainly used text editing strategies (e.g., substituting, inserting, and omitting words) for reading comprehension. Efficient readers tended to use a variety of strategies before asking for help or blindly guessing word meanings and pronunciations. Tian (2020) worked with a Mandarin classroom teacher to co-design and implement translanguaging pedagogy in a third grade Chinese-English DLI classroom where most of the students were native English speakers. Tian (2020) demonstrated the positive impacts of contextualized implementation of translanguaging pedagogy on students' content knowledge learning, cross-linguistic understanding, and bi/multilingual identity constructions. Similarly, Zheng (2020) conducted a year-long multi-site ethnographic study about the local appropriation of dual language policies and translanguaging pedagogies in two types of Chinese-English DLI programs: one-way and two-way. Zheng (2020) identified the wide enforcement of language separation policy in DLI programs and the permeation of neoliberal and English-monolingual ideology in both sites. In summary, DLI programs do not grant minoritized learners' equal access to multilingual and multicultural learning.

Another small group of studies focus on students' and parents' experiences and perceptions of DL education. For instance, Lindholm-Leary (2016) examined students'

perceptions of bilingualism and its impact on their cognitive functions and social relationships. Through comparing questionnaire results from 788 students in Spanish-English DLI programs and Chinese-English DLI programs, Lindholm-Leary (2016) discovered that DLI program students reported positive self-evaluation on language proficiency in both languages by fifth through eighth grades. Spanish-English DLI program students rated themselves higher than Chinese-English DLI program students. In addition, students who had higher perceived bilingual proficiency reported more positive affective, social, and cognitive advantages and attitudes. Similarly recruiting a large scale of participants, Lao (2004) surveyed 86 parents of students in a Chinese-English DLI preschool in San Francisco. Parent participants, both English-speaking and Chinese-speaking parents, reported strong support of Chinese-English DLI education and practical benefits (e.g., good career opportunities, positive self-image, good communication with target language speakers) as the top reasons for choosing a Chinese-English DLI program. However, despite of their values of being bilingual, Chinese language was not actively carried out or reinforced at home.

To sum up, the small number of studies on Chinese-English DLI programs yield both similar and unique findings regarding language teaching and learning, program challenges and benefits, and language education policies within the broad DLI literature. Only a few studies discussed educational inequity concerning race and ethnicity in Chinese-English DLI programs (see Zheng, 2020; Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Disability related inequity and other forms of systemic oppression have not been explored yet. The relatively small amount of literature on Chinese-English DLI contexts should not be a reason for the lack of attention on the language learning and school experience of students with disabilities and other discriminated identities. Given the evidenced learning opportunities for all learners in high-quality DLI programs, the

increased number of DLI programs across the United States (Martínez-Álvarez, 2019), and the increasing number of DLLs classified as having a disability (Gonzalez et al., 2021), it is critical to combat above-mentioned challenges and advance an inclusive agenda against hegemonic education and social practices that contribute to furthering inequalities within DLI programs. Teachers play a significant, agentive role in re-mediating existing education environments outside their classroom, and directly shaping learning conditions for students inside their classrooms (Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 1993; Priestley et al., 2012). It is critical to enacting change, especially hope and alternative realities (Colegrove & Zúñiga, 2018). Inquiry on teachers' professional agency can open possibilities for a balanced, mutual benefit of education services for students living in the intersection of ability and language differences. The next section touches on the relevance of teacher agency in understanding teachers' equity work as well as empirical studies to develop a conceptual framework to study teacher agency in the context of inclusive education for students with ability and/or language differences.

Review of Literature on Teacher Agency

Teacher agency is suggested to be a key component of teacher professionalism that allows teachers to practice a higher level of professional decision-making, initiate and maintain positive school development, and directly facilitate student learning (Priestley et al., 2016; Toom et al., 2015). A growing number of education scholars have called on the public to acknowledge teaching as a highly valued and valuable profession and to see teachers' power in creating equitable contexts for students who have long been systematically marginalized due to disability and/or other sociocultural identity markers (Alter, 2013). Because of this, the concept of teacher agency has become a focus of international research in teaching and teacher education (Priestley et al., 2012; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Previous research on teacher agency has focused on (a)

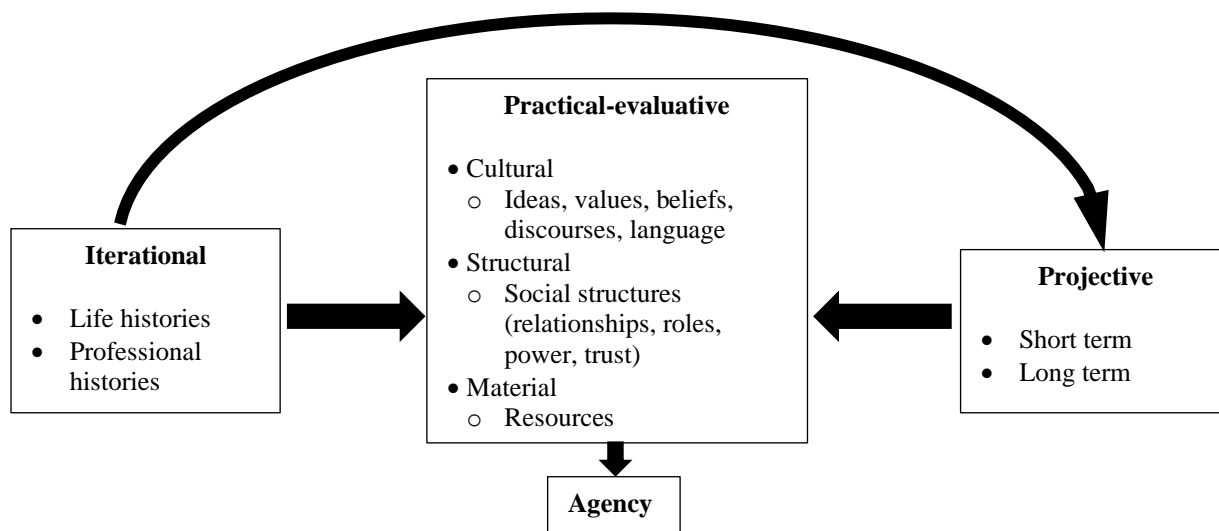
personal attributes that seem conducive or coercive to teacher agency (Biesta et al., 2015; van der Heijden et al., 2015); (b) contextual factors that shape agency (Connolly et al., 2018); (c) agency in carrying out curriculum reform (Priestley et al., 2012); (d) agency in the practice of education policy (Robinson, 2012); (e) agency in the implementation of a large-scale national educational reform (Pyhältö et al., 2014); (f) agency in the challenge to racial hegemony in schools (Allen, 2015); (g) the impact of teacher agency on professional learning, retention, and participation in school reforms (Anderson, 2010; Heikonen et al., 2017; Pyhältö et al., 2015); and (h) the role of agency in negotiating and reshaping professional identity (Buchanan, 2015).

Conceptual understandings of teacher agency have been developed by drawing on broader theories of human and professional agency (Priestley et al., 2012). Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration had a wide impact in various disciplines, such as social science and education. Giddens (1984) emphasizes the actor's intentionality, capacity in exercising agentic action, and the consequences produced. Criticizing that Giddens's theory of agency conflates the social and the individual, whereby the structure is only embodied in the individual action, Archer (2010) argues for the analytical separation of the structure and the individual, by which both have their own properties and manifestations. In a seminal work: *What is Agency?* Emirbayer and Mische (1998) built on Giddens's theory of structuration and added the temporal dimension to the understanding of agency. They reconceptualized human agency as "a temporally embedded process of social engagement" (p. 963), a dynamic interplay among the "iterational" element (experience from the past), the "projective" element (an orientation toward alternative possibilities in the future), and the "practical-evaluative" element (an engagement of the past and the future at the moment). Moreover, they argue that the structural contexts themselves are temporal and relational along the flow of time.

In the field of education, a growing number of scholars proposed sociocultural approaches (Lasky, 2005; Eteläpelto et al., 2013). For instance, Priestley et al. (2016) suggest conceptualizing agency as an emergent phenomenon, a sociocultural approach emphasizing the mutually constitutive and interdependent relationship between individual agency and the social context. They draw from Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) chordal triad of agency framework and propose an ecological theoretical framework to understand the notion of teacher agency (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

An Ecological Approach to Teacher Agency



Note. From “Teacher Agency: An Ecological Approach,” by M. Priestley, G. Biesta, and S. Robinson, 2016, *Bloomsbury*, p. 30.

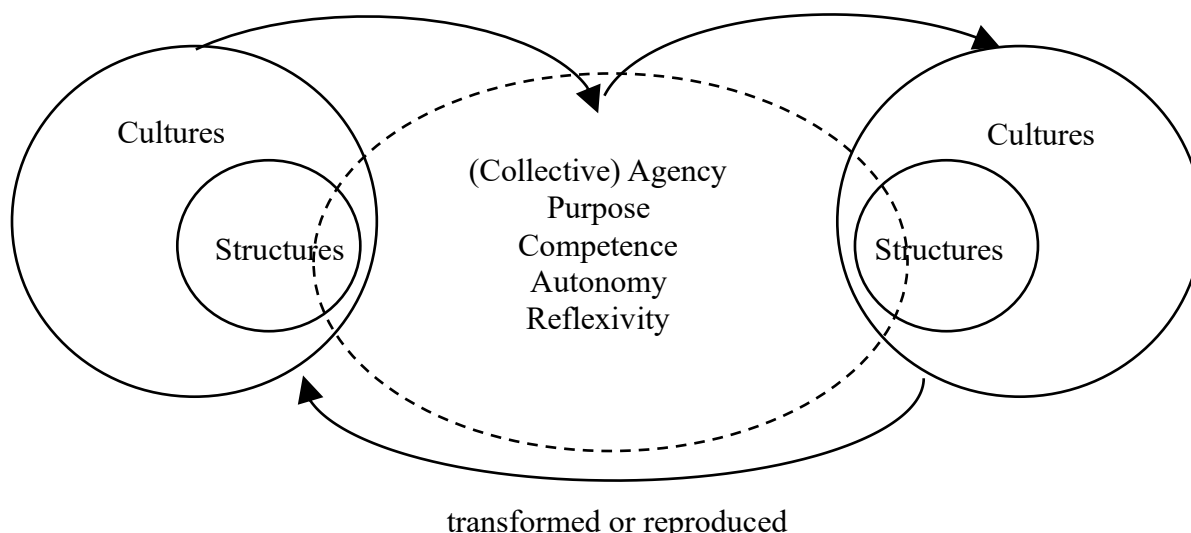
Education scholars adopting sociocultural approaches have engaged in different ways to study the structure–agency relationship. Vähäsantanen (2015) points out that some sociocultural scholars overemphasize the shaping effect of social-cultural contexts and tools, reducing individuals to social processes. Others overly highlight the power of individual, reducing society

to the individual's subjugation. In this way, agency is solely a result of personal attributes and can be transported across contexts. To recognize actors' subjectivity, without denying the effect of contextual factors, Eteläpelto et al. (2013) propose a "subject-centered socio-cultural and life-long learning" (p. 60) approach to agency. This approach brings the focus to subjects' construction of their identity and negotiation of their agency at work, whose practice is resourced or constrained by certain social-cultural and material circumstances (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Besides the structure-agency debate, Gourd (2019) points out two other tensions: (a) teacher agency as something special and only accessible to extraordinary teachers; and (b) teacher agency as a positive phenomenon leading to successful individual and educational changes. She argues that teaching itself embodies agency, that every individual teacher exerts agency within their everyday school spaces. Therefore, agency is neither "negative" nor "positive."

To sum up, the discourse of teacher agency has been approached from various conceptual perspectives and in diverse disciplines (Toom et al., 2015), however, the concept of teacher agency is still considered under-theorized and variously construed (Priestley et al., 2012). Without an explicit definition, the notion of teacher agency has been used implicitly as an interchangeable term to teacher resilience or teacher autonomy (Priestley et al., 2016). In addition, as Pantić (2015) points out, empirical analyses of teacher agency require conceptual clarity and appropriate units of analysis. Pantić proposes four aspects – sense of purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity – as the units of analysis (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

A Model for Study of Teacher Agency for Social Justice



Note. From “A Model For Study Of Teacher Agency For Social Justice,” by N. Pantić, 2015, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 21(6), p. 764.

The following literature review aims to (1) summarize what have been found about teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or language learning needs, and (2) provide a conceptual framework for this study to theorize and empirically examine teacher agency for critical inclusive education.

Literature Search and Selection

To identify empirical articles for the review, I conducted multiple rounds of searching in four education databases including Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, ERIC, and PsycINFO. I used multiple permutations of three levels of search terms. Level 1 search terms were “teacher agency” OR “professional agency” OR “human agency.” Level 2 search terms were “inclus*” OR “special education” OR “disa*.” Level 3 search terms were “bilingual” OR “language immersion” OR “two-way immersion” OR “dual language.” To better understand teacher agency as an “analytical category in its own right – with distinctive

theoretical dimensions and temporally variable social manifestations” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963), this review intentionally excluded articles that related to similar ideas (e.g., teacher autonomy, teacher advocacy, teacher resilience), articles that fail to provide any explicit conceptual framework of teacher agency, for instance, articles use the word agency once or a few times as a peripheral reference. Meta-studies, reviews, secondary analysis, or position papers were excluded.

Although the review is not intended to be an exhaustive review of all existing studies addressing teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or language learning needs, selected articles were systematically examined to understand how teacher agency for inclusion is theorized and studied. To identify various approaches to theorizing and examining teacher agency for inclusion, I examined selected articles based on their conceptual approaches (e.g., social science, sociocultural). I also identified agentic manifestations or units of analysis that were considered appropriate for investigating. Under the guidance of Priestley et al.’s (2016) ecological framework (see Figure 1) and Pantić’s (2015) model for study of teacher agency for social justice (see Figure 1), I looked at how the contextual conditions (e.g., school discourses, power relations, material resources) and personal attributes (e.g., professional identity, autonomy, reflexivity) were analyzed and discussed (e.g., qualitative research design, quantitative research design) in each study.

Review Results

In this section, I first summarize the selected studies related to teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or linguistic support needs. Then I discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions of these studies to inform the research design of the current study. Table 1 presents a summary of theoretical approaches, methods, and research

focuses of each empirical article. Although limited in number, studies on teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or linguistic support needs yield promising empirical evidence and conceptual understandings.

Teacher Agency for the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

Most empirical studies that explicitly focus on teacher agency for the inclusion of students with disabilities take a sociocultural approach and demonstrate that agentic actions for inclusion vary in both kind and extent, from context to context. This scholarship generally understands agency as relational and situational. Therefore, each study chooses different personal and contextual dimensions (e.g., professional identity, classroom practices, reflexivity) as units of analysis.

Agency as Relational. Pantić (2015, 2017a, 2017b) proposes a conceptual model that defines units of analysis and corresponding variables to study teacher agency for social justice. In the model, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflectivity are the four key aspects of agency. Through a case study at a primary school in Scotland with 14 teachers, Pantić (2017a) found that agentic inclusive teachers gave priority to students' wellbeing and learning needs. In these teachers' perspective, building relationships with students was the most powerful way of exercising teacher agency. They perceived agency as a key component of their professional role, and collaboration with families, school colleagues and other professionals as a critical condition for agency. However, these teachers' understanding of inclusion for students with disabilities were constrained within the predominant structural environments. Thus, their ways of facilitating students' access to equal opportunities for learning is helping students adapt to the existing institutional setting, rather than challenge the institutional structure.

Table 1

Study Characteristics

Author and year	Theorization of agency	Understanding of inclusion addressing dis/ability or dual language learning	Methodology	Method	Participants	Units of analysis	
						Personal factors	Contextual factors
Babino & Stewart (2018)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Mixed method	Focus group	33 dual language teachers completed survey; 13 dual language teachers completed focus group	Language policy implementation and classroom teaching skills	Instructional tensions caused by English hegemony, high stakes testing, and strict language separation policies
	Agency as actions based on contextual experiences, as individual and collective efforts to bring changes			Survey		Professional identity and role	Leadership support
Colegrove & Zúñiga (2018)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Qualitative ethnography	Interview	One first grade English language teacher	Self-reflection and critical consciousness	Collaborative work culture
	Agency as the capacity teachers have to make choices, act, and enact change as they advocate for their professional and moral beliefs and responsibilities			Observation		Language policy implementation and classroom teaching skills	Instructional tensions caused by English hegemony, high stakes testing, and strict language separation policies
				Video analysis		Professional identity and role	Early teaching and learning experience
Kayi-Aydar (2019)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Qualitative Narrative case study	Interview	A Hispanic language teacher	Perceptions of students' ability	The dominant racial, ethnic, and linguistic discourses in institutional settings
	Agency as a phenomenon tightly related to identity negotiation, and mediated by one's past, present, and future			Document analysis		Ethnic, racial, and linguistic identity	Past experiences as bilingual learners
							Teacher education program training

Author and year	Theorization of agency	Understanding of inclusion addressing dis/ability or dual language learning	Methodology		Participants	Units of analysis	
			Method	Method		Personal factors	Contextual factors
Lyons et al. (2016)	Social science tradition Agency as capacity, as individual and collective capacity to intentionally produce an inclusive learning community with shared knowledge, skills, and synergy among members	Inclusion as providing all children with the opportunity and support to benefit from the educational program alongside their peers within general education classrooms in neighborhoods schools. An inclusive setting is a supportive, caring, and responsive community where all students are included, regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, or abilities	Qualitative	Focus group Interview	68 participants, including teachers, parents, students, school personnel, from four inclusive schools	Relationship with colleagues, families, and students Attitude toward inclusion Knowledge and pedagogy skills Self-reflection	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion Leadership support Collaborative work culture
Mu et al. (2015)	Social science tradition Agency as capacity to actively plan, initiate, execute, and perform volitional actions and behaviors to facilitate their inclusive pedagogy	Do not specify	Mixed method	Focus group Interview Survey	15 special education teachers in Beijing for interview; 1,761 Regular Classrooms Teachers for survey	Support and resource seeking skills	Not examined
Naraian (2013)	Sociocultural approach Agency as an oppositional engagement within their everyday schooling contexts to negotiate the benefit of inclusive education, to work against practice that perpetuates norms of ability, and to bring transformation	A transnational theory of inclusive education that determination of priorities in under resourced settings may not align neatly with the project of multisector, whole-scale transformation of schools	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document analysis Over three months	Non-governmental educators who managed to place students with disabilities in inclusive schools	Relationship with colleagues and families Attitude toward inclusion Identity and responsibility	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion Material resources Past learning and professional experiences

Author and year	Theorization of agency	Understanding of inclusion addressing dis/ability or dual language learning	Methodology	Method	Participants	Units of analysis	
						Personal factors	Contextual factors
Naraian (2014)	Sociocultural approach	Inclusion as a stance toward disability and difference rather than as a space to educate students with labeled disabilities alongside their typical peers, to acknowledge the meanings of student responses are always signal unspoken utterances and hidden forms of being	Qualitative	Interviews	19 General educators, special educators, dual-certified teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals, and a parent coordinator	Relationship with colleagues, families, and students	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion
	Agency as situated acts that adopt the struggles characterizing individuals' local contexts of practice, as a starting point for analyses of individual decision making	Ethnography informed multiple case study	Participant observations Document analysis Over five years		Identity and responsibility Knowledge and pedagogical skills Self-reflection	Collaborative work culture	
Naraian & Schlessinger (2018)	Sociocultural approach	Inclusion as a movement toward creating spaces for learning that acknowledge the diversity of human experience and support communitarian ideals can work against broader cultural narratives of individualism, ableism, racism, sexism, etc.	Qualitative	Focus group Interview Over a school year	Seven novice special educators who graduated from a critical disability studies-informed teacher education program	Relationship with colleagues and students Attitude toward inclusion Identity and responsibility Self-reflection	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion Collaborative work culture
	Agency as an accomplishment that is necessarily contingent upon the material and discursive conditions that characterize the context in which it occurs						
Pantić et al. (2022)	Sociocultural approach	Inclusion as teaching with an inclusive pedagogy that considers individual differences in terms of interactions between many different variables rather than fixed states within individuals, thus viewing all students with potential for learning	Mixed method	Online log about for Teacher Reflection on their Agency for Change (TRAC)	54 teachers from two Swedish schools	Attitude toward inclusion Sense of purpose Relationship with colleagues and leaders	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion Leadership support Collaborative work culture
	Agency as teachers' critical responses to problematic situations to make a difference, informed by their sense of purpose and beliefs						

Author and year	Theorization of agency	Understanding of inclusion addressing dis/ability or dual language learning	Methodology	Method	Participants	Units of analysis	
						Personal factors	Contextual factors
Pantić, (2017a)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Mixed method with participatory design	Survey	14 teachers from an inclusive primary school	Attitude toward inclusion	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion
	Agency as teachers' context-embedded practice and enactment of their beliefs and values of inclusive education and social justice			Interview Observation		Knowledge and pedagogy skills	
Themane & Thobejane (2019)	Sociocultural approach	Inclusion as full-service school catering for students of varied learning needs; inclusion beyond physical or learning disabilities to gender, race, disability, health (HIV and AIDS), language, and social-economic status	Qualitative case study	Interview Observation	Eight teachers who were identified as champions of inclusive education in their schools by their principals	Self-reflection Relationship with colleagues	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion
	Agency as something achieved through linkages with different stakeholders including community partnerships			Document analysis Over two months		Attitude toward inclusion Identity and responsibility	Material and physical resources Collaborative work culture
Varghese & Snyder (2018)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Qualitative ethnography	Interview Observation	Four dual language candidates	Professional identity and role	Restrictive language ideologies schoolwide and nationwide
	Agency as sociocultural mediated capacity to act			Over one year		Linguistic and cultural identities Relationship with mentors, students, and families	Past experiences as bilingual learners Teacher education program training
Venegas-Weber (2018)	Sociocultural approach	Do not specify	Qualitative life history	Interview	Three Chicana/Latina bilingual teachers	Professional identity	Instructional tensions caused by English hegemony, high stakes testing, and strict language separation policies
	Agency as situated acts of love and hope for students with a dynamic, holistic, and robust understanding of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bi/culturalism					Linguistic and cultural identities Self-reflection	Leadership support

Author and year	Theorization of agency	Understanding of inclusion addressing dis/ability or dual language learning	Methodology	Method	Participants	Units of analysis	
						Personal factors	Contextual factors
Wang et al. (2017)	Social science tradition Agency as teachers' capacity or power to make everyday choices about situation-appropriate and context-specific inclusive pedagogies, intentionally take actions, and strategically initiate changes	Do not specify	Quantitative	Scaled survey on professional competence	2,549 Chinese inclusive education teachers	Relationship with colleagues Support and resource seeking skills	School culture and policy informed by localized understanding of inclusion Material resource
Wong et al. (2020)	Sociocultural approach Agency as evolving thinking and action to interpret and respond to the contexts	Do not specify	Qualitative Case study	Document analysis Interview Observation Survey Over three years	One novice bilingual Latina teacher	Language policy implementation and classroom teaching Self-reflexive inquiry into language and culture Beliefs about students' language learning abilities Support and resource seeking skills	Tensions between school- and district-based curricula, instructional practices, and assessment Past experiences as bilingual learners

Different from the participants in Pantić's (2017a) study, teachers in Lyons et al.' (2016) study practiced their agentic actions through a transformative whole-school process to build an increasingly supportive, caring, and responsive community. Lyons et al. (2016) drew attention to schoolwide collaboration or collective agency, in other words, what teachers do together to successfully move toward greater inclusivity. In their study at four inclusive elementary schools in Canada, all teacher participants reported that having a clear vision of and a shared commitment to inclusion was critical. They highly valued a collaborative team approach that involved authentic parent engagement and strong principal leadership.

In a newest study, Pantić et al. (2022) adopt a similar focus on teachers' relationships with other actors within and beyond schools and emphasize teacher agency for inclusive pedagogy associated school changes. Pantić et al. (2022) used an online log of Teacher Reflection on their Agency for Change (TRAC) with 54 teachers from two Swedish schools and applied inclusive pedagogy framework as well as social and epistemic network analysis to interpret data. They discovered that teachers mostly acted as agents of change when responding to students' learning and well-being and tended to mobilize a more diverse and larger social network with leaders and colleagues at the organizational level.

Agency as Situational. Naraian and Schlessinger (2018) emphasized Holland's concept of "situated notion of agency," agency mediated by local affordances and struggles. They explored novice teachers' sensemaking of inclusion as practiced within the instructional tensions between the inclusive education discourse and everyday school realities in the United States. They argued that teachers develop "local forms of agency" (p. 186) through negotiating particular school norms and expectations, engaging with professional roles assigned to them, building relationships with students, involvement in curricular decision-making, and reflecting

on their professional identities.

In another similar study, Naraian (2014) worked ethnographically with participants at five different U.S. school sites to explore how local discourses and conflicts within schools informed teachers' agentic inclusive practices. Naraian (2014) found that the struggles teacher participants encountered derived from the complicated and sometimes competing demands of special education and general education. For example, competing frameworks of learning (e.g., constructivist vs. rote), relationships with colleagues (e.g., allegiance to general education vs. special education goals), and education programming choices (e.g., a focus on standardized academic outcomes vs. inclusive practices). Again, they adopted the notion of situated agency and a disability studies-informed stance to challenge the idea of inclusion as a space to educate students with disabilities alongside their typical peers.

Agency Situated in the Global South. Themane and Thobejane (2019) argue that the theoretical knowledge of inclusion that evolved in the global north failed to account for schooling conditions unique in the global south. Therefore, they conducted a qualitative case study with South African rural teachers. In the study, despite the lack of professional development and the dearth of human and material resources, teachers demonstrated strong resilience, willingness, and collaborative skills to make their classrooms inclusive. Inclusive education in these teachers' perspective refers to full-service public schools provided for students of varied learning needs, including disability, gender, race, health, language, and social economic status. Teachers practiced their situated agency by cultivating professional competence (e.g., inclusive pedagogy and knowledge) and by collaborating with colleagues, parents, and neighboring schools.

Naraian (2013) conducted a case study at a mainstream high school in India. She

discovered that Indian inclusive teachers manifested their agency in tacit oppositional practices. For example, teachers modified curriculum to meet students' learning needs while still using the traditional way of lecturing to ensure students' competence in taking in-state testing. Regarding teaching students with significant intellectual disabilities, inclusive teachers made compromises by lowering expectations. Inclusion in these teachers' perspective was only to secure physical placement rather than guarantee general curricular accessibility, test accommodations, let alone membership.

Two studies by Wang et al. (2017) and Mu et al. (2015) focused on the special education system – Learning in Regular Classroom (LRC) – in China. It is a service mechanism targeting children with less support needs and considered “psychologically, physically, and educationally able to participate in general education” (Carrington et al., 2015, p. 560). Both studies highlighted the significantly under-resourced, under-qualified, and under-staffed condition for teaching students with disabilities. Both studies found that teacher participants exercised agency through intentional quests for collegial support and school resources. Teachers who purposively sought various resources and engaged in collaboration in and out of the school boundaries became more skillful and competent when teaching students with disabilities.

In summary, teachers enact on their agency alongside others and within their working contexts. The selected studies above choose different personal and contextual dimensions as their units of analysis. Across the selected studies, collaboration (e.g., relationship with colleagues), school resources (e.g., materials and human resources), and localized understandings of and attitudes toward inclusive education are the three-most discussed conditions affecting teachers' practices of agency.

Teacher Agency for the Inclusion of Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

A seminal literature review by Palmer and Martínez (2013) explored the power and constraints of teacher agency in creating spaces for dynamic, authentic learning for DLLs in U.S. schools. They specifically reviewed empirical studies conducted in elementary two-way immersion (TWI) programs in the United States because, in their words, “these are settings that not only inherently produce ‘contact zones’ through intentional integration but are also designed intentionally to disrupt the status quo and to offer ‘extraordinary pedagogies’ to bilingual children in U.S. schools” (p. 283). Studies in their review speak to the prevalent discourses of English dominance in TWI settings. Teachers’ awareness of students’ linguistic and cultural identity dynamic is critical in confronting power struggles and mitigating their negative impacts on student learning. In other words, if teachers come to understand that multiple and sometimes conflicting factors influence students’ investment in language learning, they can learn to see students as able learners with fluid linguistic and academic identities. Palmer and Martínez (2013) also point out that few studies have explored how to help teachers develop awareness of this power dynamic to assert their agency in disrupting dominant discourses and constructing rich, equitable learning spaces. Like much other agency research, Palmer and Martínez (2013) did not explicitly theorize or conceptualize the notion of teacher agency and conflated it as intentional social action. In addition, like many other TWI education studies, Palmer and Martínez (2013) focused on Spanish/English TWI programs only without examining other linguistic contexts.

For the current review, I selected agency studies published after Palmer and Martínez’s (2013) review. The selected studies have focused on two major areas: (1) teachers’ agentic action in language policy implementations and classroom teaching, and (2) teachers’ professional

identity negotiation and development.

Agency in Language Policy Implementation and Classroom Teaching. One exemplary study on language teaching and policy implementations was conducted by Babino and Stewart (2018). They focused on collective teacher agency and explored how 13 DL teachers perceived and enacted themselves as language policy makers in the classroom. Drawing from theoretical frameworks of emancipatory education, teacher agency, and critical consciousness, Babino and Stewart (2018) found that these DL teachers had little agency in negotiating language policies and enacting their own language practices due to the pervasive tensions caused by English hegemony, high-stakes testing, and strict language separation policy. Critical consciousness and articulation of the program tensions enabled these teachers' agency in remodeling their programs with principal support. Therefore, Babino and Stewart (2018) suggest that administrators should promote a collective leadership among the teachers and act as linchpins to remodel DLI programs meeting all students' needs.

In another example, Wong et al. (2020) followed a bilingual Latina teacher for three years throughout her teacher education program and first year teaching to understand how she leveraged resources for agentic language teaching and decision-making. Wong et al. (2020) collected survey and interview data highlighting two forms of inquiry: inquiry into self and inquiry into students as language users and learners. They discovered that this Latina teacher intentionally tapped into multiple resources – her personal experiences as an immigrant, a bilingual learner, and research from university coursework – to agentially practice responsive teaching. By using interactive journals, she conducted dialogues with students about their writing, encouraged students' translanguaging, established shared cultural experiences and trust, and countered reductive language curriculum and assessments. She also acted as liaison for

families and advocated for additive bilingualism. In Wong et al.'s (2020) study, teacher agency is defined as individual's evolving interpretations and responses to the context, which is resourced by self-reflexivity and inquiry into students' language learning, culture, and identity.

Similarly, Colegrove and Zúñiga (2018) highlight the importance of innovative language teaching practices for achieving bilingualism and biliteracy competence while meeting grade level standards for dual language learners (DLLs). They also argue, to close so-called language gaps, DLLs are vulnerable to remedial education where teachers are mandated to use scripted curriculum, restricting schedule, and testing-centered instruction. In their study, Colegrove and Zúñiga (2018) interviewed, observed, and video-recorded a first-grade English language teacher implementing project-based and student-centered instruction. They argued that "when teachers have the professional agency to embrace more dynamic teaching practices without fear of failing, they can discover spaces to enact agency, extent agentive opportunities to their students and create classrooms of hope, especially for marginalized communities in this era of standardization" (p. 188). Colegrove and Zúñiga (2018) define teacher agency as the capacity to make choices, take actions, and enact changes.

The above three studies all focus on teachers' individual or collective language practices within their classroom settings to center on students' dynamic and fluent language learning. Agency is enacted through collaborating with colleagues and administrators to resist reductive and restrictive policies regarding language curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Agency in Language Teacher Identity Negotiation and Development. Many agency studies focusing on language teacher identity have tapped into linguistic and cultural identities. For example, Kayi-Aydar (2019) collected autobiographical narratives of a Hispanic language teacher to explore her dynamic, ongoing development of agency and teacher identities. Utilizing

Priestly et al.'s (2015) ecological approach to teacher agency as the theoretical and methodological framework, Kayi-Aydar (2019) analyzed life histories of the teacher participant and concluded three themes. First, agency is exercised to negotiate multiple marginal identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status), especially linguistic identities (e.g., accent). Second, strong links exist between who the participant was as an English language learner and who she is becoming as a language teacher. Last, agency is developed through repositioning self as an agentive teacher and reclaiming power and voice to stand up against challenges. In this study, Kayi-Aydar (2019) emphasized the role of teacher agency in the identity negotiations of a language teacher where both agency and professional identities are dynamic, ever-changing, and plural. Experiences of racism and linguistic marginalization are the major factors influencing the participant's agency and identity negotiations.

Similarly, Venegas-Weber (2018) examined three Chicana/Latina bilingual teachers' professional identity development and its interaction with their teacher agency practices. Highlighting participant teachers' everyday culture and language crossing experiences, Venegas-Weber (2018) depicted divided cultural and linguistic lives where English- and Spanish-speaking beings exist separately in dual language programs. They concluded that by becoming aware of their holistic bilingual and bicultural identities, these teachers "opened up possibilities for agentive and critically conscious work that humanized their stories as individuals and valued their communities' linguistic and cultural resources" (p. 169). The notion of agency in this study is situated in Holland et al.'s concept of figured worlds where bilingual teachers carry out agentive acts of love and hope "for their students from a more dynamic, holistic, and robust understanding of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bi/culturalism" (p. 163).

In another study, Varghese and Snyder (2018) focused on the language ideologies (e.g.,

monoglossic language ideology, translanguaging ideology) development of four bilingual teacher candidates and their agency in the incorporation and transformation of language ideologies. They demonstrated the impacts on ones' teacher agency from teachers' personal history of marginalization, intersectional identities, relationships with students, and simple act of using Spanish in classrooms. Linguistic flexibility and curiosity were identified as strong resources enabling agency and identity development. Varghese and Snyder (2018) also utilized the notion of figured worlds because it helps examining structural affordances and challenges, as well as identity construction as an evolving narrative.

These three studies demonstrated the interaction between agency and identity. Language teachers are represented as language policy makers (Henderson, 2017; Newcomer & Collier, 2015) leveraging their own holistic identity, language ideologies, cultural resources, and contextual experiences to advocate equity for culturally and linguistically marginalized students (Dubetz & de Jong, 2011).

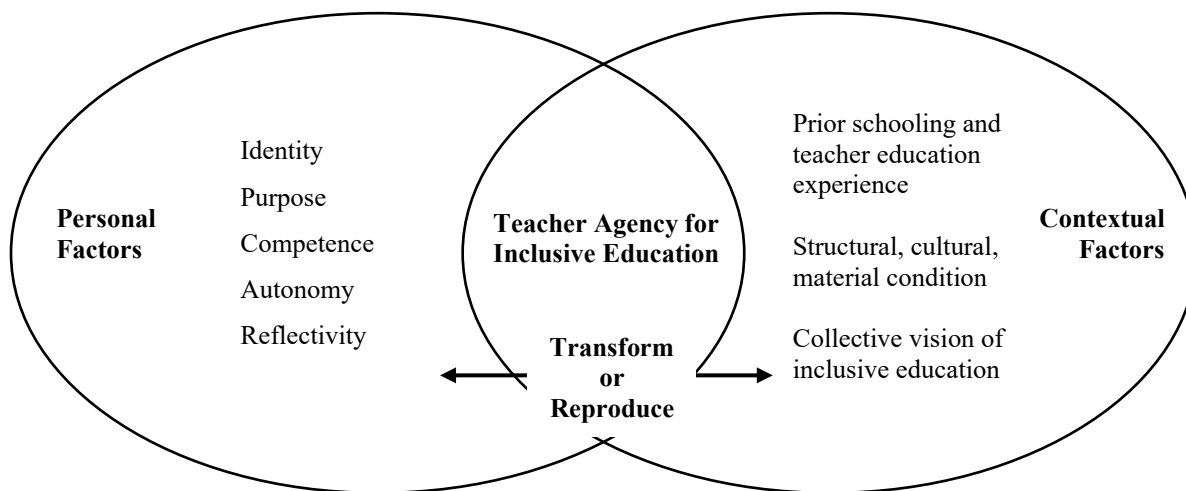
Conclusion

The two literature bodies on teacher agency, one for inclusion of students with disabilities and one for inclusion of dual language learners, have demonstrated the complex realities of U.S. education. U. S. schools are governed by the logic of homogeneity (Brown et al., 1976), either of ability or language. The literature has also proven the importance of teachers becoming aware of, developing, and enacting on their agentic capacity and ideology. In doing so teachers can operationalize language instruction and special education services to all learners and drive systemic change continuously. It is also necessary for decision-makers at higher levels to regain trust in teachers' power in finding the most appropriate materials, instructional strategies, and evaluation procedures for their students (Glas, 2016).

However, these two literature bodies seem to be parallel to each other. I've retrieved scant studies exploring human agency addressing both special education and dual language education in U.S schools. Retrieved studies either focus on students' agency instead of teachers' agency, or do not explicitly theorize or define the concept of agency. DLI education studies generally limit discussions to Spanish-English DLI programs. To contribute to the teacher agency literature that addresses both special education and dual language education, and respond to critical scholars' (e.g., Siuty, 2019; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013) call of an intersectional lens for transformation and emancipation, I anchor the current study in a Chinese-English DLI school serving students with both disability and linguistic support needs.

Conceptual Framework to Study Teacher Agency for Inclusive Education

Pantić (2015) argued that achieving the conceptual clarity and defining appropriate units of analysis are important to a rigorous empirical study on teacher agency. In this section, I draw from the theoretical and methodological frameworks in the selected empirical studies and developed a sociocultural approach (see Figure 3) to study teacher agency for inclusion for the current study. This sociocultural approach regards teacher agency as a phenomenon contingent on both the structure and personal attributes, thus, avoids blaming individual teachers for the system's failure and acknowledges individual's power to make a change. This conceptual framework builds on Priestley et al.'s ecological approach (see Figure 1) and Pantić's model for study of teacher agency for social justice (see Figure 2). It highlights the temporal, relational, and situational nature of teacher agency and the interplay between the personal and contextual dimensions.

Figure 3*A Sociocultural Approach to Teacher Agency for Inclusive Education*

As shown in Table 1, none of the studies in dual language contexts discusses what inclusive education means, neither to the participants nor to the researchers. However, discussions of equality and power dynamic regarding language and culture are pervasive across all the studies on dual language teaching. On the other hand, most studies in special education contexts do specify meanings of inclusive education based on the local context. Pantić and Florian (2015) argue that there is an important distinction between “agency” and “agency for change,” with the latter having a clear purpose to make a difference. Although limited studies do so, I also argue that “agency for inclusion” should require a clear articulation of inclusive education ideology, in both researchers’ and participants’ perspectives.

Drawing from the selected empirical studies, I suggest operationally defining teacher agency for inclusion with three tenants. These tenants are as follows:

- (1) A situational and temporal engagement in redistributing learning opportunities and cultivating different curriculum, instruction, and assessment that are inclusive of all (Pantić & Florian 2015)

(2) A relational engagement in leveraging multiple resources and involving multiple stakeholders to collectively work against practices that perpetuate norms of ability, language, and differences (Naraian, 2013)

(3) Mediated by the interplay of personal and contextual factors (Emirbayer & Mische 1998)

Personal Aspects of Teacher Agency for Inclusion

Pantić (2015) proposes four personal aspects – purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity – as the units of analysis of teacher agency. According to Pantić (2015) and Pantić et al. (2019), teachers’ engagement in agentive action is informed by their sense of purpose – beliefs about certain practices and their professional roles, for instance, teacher’s understanding of social justice and inclusive education. Competence refers to teachers’ knowledge and practice that reflect their sense of purpose, for instance, the capacity to create mutual supporting space among students to foster a sense of belonging. Autonomy is defined as collective efficacy and the extent of power that teachers can mobilize within the school structure, for instance, teachers’ collaboration with colleagues, school leaders, families, and communities for transformative practices. Reflexivity means reflection on and regulation of self-actions and social contexts, for instance, constant self-check on everyday practices and classroom culture in seeking to accommodate all learners.

The reviewed articles touch on these four aspects to various extent. For instance, regarding purpose of teaching, Sánchez-Suzuki Colegrove and Zúñiga (2018) found that teaching in the era of standardized testing, teachers tended to use teacher-centered instruction and felt obligated to strictly adhere to mandated language curriculum and language instruction. Students were given less opportunities to express themselves in the language of their choice. In terms of competence, Wong et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of supporting early-career teachers,

especially teachers of color, to leverage their own linguistic and cultural resources to enact responsive, student-centered language pedagogy. Naraian (2014) touched on reflexivity and found a teacher in the study reflecting on her constructions of family-teacher relationship where certain families were excluded from decision-making. By doing so, she could achieve greater control over her classroom. Through self-reflection, this teacher became aware of her own limitations and implicit biases, and therefore initiated change-oriented action. For another example, Lyons et al., (2016) drew attention to collective efficacy, in other words, what teachers are confident in doing together to successfully move towards greater inclusivity. In their study, all teacher participants reported that having a clear vision of and a shared commitment to inclusion were critical. They highly valued a collaborative team approach that involved authentic parent engagement and strong principal leadership. Therefore, I decided to adopt Pantić's (2015) model to guide my data collection and analysis.

While the above mentioned four units provide invaluable insights for an empirical understanding of teacher agency, there is not a clear unit dedicated to individual teachers' self-identifications as teachers, therefore, I add identity as the fifth unit of analysis to address this gap and highlight the empirical evidence summarized from the reviewed studies.

Identity refers to teachers' both professional identities (e.g., school positions and responsibilities) and personal identities (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity). Most studies, especially studies on dual language teachers' agency, have highlighted the identity-agency relationship. Agency can develop from the site of tensions and negotiations of who a teacher was and becoming. Vice versa, one teacher can invest and exercise agency to develop their professional identities (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Studies by Naraian and Schlessinger (2018), Themane and Thobejane (2019), and Pantić, N. (2017a), to name a few, have demonstrated that teachers who

see themselves as agents of change usually actively engage in promoting equal status in their collaborative teaching partnership, embracing ambiguity in the role of inclusive education activists, and acting as policy and decision makers. Language teachers also often refer to their own ethnic, racial, and linguistic identities to make authentic connections with students and family members (Varghese & Snyder, 2018). By positioning and repositioning themselves, teachers can develop awareness of their capacity to be alternative selves and make alternative realities.

Contextual Aspects of Teacher Agency for Inclusion

According to Priestley et al.'s (2016) ecological approach (see Figure 1) to teacher agency, teachers' agentic work is shaped by the interplay of past experiences, current everyday contexts, and orientations toward the future. They refer to these three dimensions as the iterational, the practical-evaluative, and the projective dimension, respectively.

The Iterational Dimension. Regarding the iterational dimension, individual teacher's past personal and professional experience has been shown to play a critical role in shaping their agency. For instance, in Naraian and Schlessinger's (2018) study, one teacher participant worried about the disproportionate placement of students of color in special education. His agentic orientation toward an intersectional understanding of disability derived from his own learning experience as a Black male student. In the same study, all the participants had different career experiences before becoming a teacher. Learning from their prior working experience, they all demonstrated a sophisticated repertoire for reconciling dissonance and challenges in their day-to-day work. Venegas-Weber (2018) discovered that through revisiting past moments of language and culture learning as Latinx and Chicanx bilinguals, teacher participants in the study developed an awareness of possible inequalities within in their classrooms, and thus worked to leverage

their linguistic and cultural resources as well as students' bilingual knowledge to create equitable classrooms for a more holistic bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate development.

Practical-Evaluative Dimension. The most discussed contextual factors across the reviewed studies include official purposes and mechanisms of inclusive education; societal understandings of ability, language, and other socially constructed differences; and distribution of intellectual, human, and material resources. These structural, cultural, and material mediating forces fall into the practical-evaluative dimension in shaping teacher agency for inclusive education. For instance, teacher participants in many studies mentioned that they had to constantly tackle tensions between top-down mandates and their day-to-day inclusive education practices. School policies and norms play a powerful role in shaping action and discourses, as well as determining whose voice is heard and recognized. In the context of dual language teaching, tensions caused by English hegemony, high stakes testing, and strict language separation policy are widely mentioned as contextual constraints. Regarding teaching students with disabilities, Naraian and Schlessinger (2018) found that teachers' agency for inclusive practices did not simply derive from decontextualized teaching skills acquired from teacher education programs but was significantly mediated by school norms and expectations, collegial relationships, interactions with students, and sensemaking of their professional experiences. Another well-recognized structural factor relates to collective efforts within and beyond schools. Babino and Stewart (2018), Lyons et al. (2016), Naraian (2014), and Pantić (2017a) all demonstrate the effects of a community of practices in collaborating with families, school colleagues, and other professionals. Teacher participants in Lyons et al.'s (2016) study commented that collective efforts shifted teaching as a solitary practice to collaborative work, which greatly enhanced their motivation and resilience.

Projective Dimension. The projective dimension is not extensively explored in the selected studies. Only Naraian and Schlessinger (2018) discussed relevant factors in an explicit way. They argued that teachers' everyday inclusive education practices are mediated by their visions of their students' future in mainstream higher education institutions, job sites, and communities. Everyday inclusive education practices are also mediated by teachers' aspirations for their own professional work around inclusive education. However, I agree with Priestley et al. (2016) that projective dimension illustrates the importance of developing teachers' imagination and ability to visualize alternative futures for themselves and their students. It also demonstrates the importance of preparing teachers to hold a strong inclusive education ideology, a social-cultural understanding of ability, and self-efficacy. Each of these factors affects teachers' visions of the future.

Method Used to Examine Teacher Agency for Inclusion

Most of the reviewed studies use qualitative designs with a small group of participants, using interview, observation, and/or document analysis for rich qualitative description. Time spent in the field ranges from two months to five years. Some qualitative studies (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Naraian, 2014; Colegrove & Zúñiga, 2018; Varghese & Snyder, 2018) are informed by ethnography or narrative analysis to explore how the broad societal discourses of inequality and macro- and meso-level policies are operating in local classrooms. A few studies (see Babino & Stewart, 2018; Pantić, 2017a; Pantić et al., 2022, Mu et al., 2015) use mixed-method designs by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, such as interview and survey data, to study context-bound agency while seeking large-scale implications for future research and practices. Pantić et al., (2022) claim to be the first one analyzing situational qualitative data reported by teachers, while also quantifying contextual data for patterns across school contexts.

Only Wang et al. (2017) used a quantitative design by administrating a scaled survey on professional competence with a large population of teacher participants. In general, the selected empirical studies demonstrate that studies on teacher agency have predominantly used a qualitative case study design. This technique of studying various aspects of agency and separately analyzing the personal and contextual factors help to capture the temporal, relational, and situational nature of agency. Interview and observation are the two most common data collection methods, and other methods such as survey, documents, and more are used to collect supplementary data for triangulation.

Summary

Teacher agency studies addressing the inclusion of students with ability or linguistic differences are increasing in number, but the area of inquiry is still relatively new. Teacher agency studies centering on dually identified students, with both disability and linguistic support needs, are limited. Teacher agency literature has shown that teachers can exert agency to make choices, influence, resist, and take stances to achieve different goals in diverse contexts. Education scholars mainly take sociocultural approaches to agency as a temporal, relational, and situational construct. Studies have demonstrated the interplay of contextual and personal factors and their impacts on teachers' construction and practice of agency. Informed by Priestley et al.'s (2016) ecological framework and Pantić's (2015) model for study of teacher agency, I developed a sociocultural approach to study teacher agency for inclusive education (see Figure 3) for the current study. This approach constitutes a conceptual framework for empirical inquiry of how teachers perceive and enact agency upon their identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity, in response to their professional contexts. In the next chapter, I will explain how I use this conceptual framework to guide my data collection and analysis to answer the three research

questions of the current study: (1) How do Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) programs teachers perceive and exert agency to negotiate inclusive education for dual language learners with disabilities? (2) What are the personal factors regarding identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education? (3) What are the contextual factors of the school and district that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education?

Chapter III: Research Design and Method

As I have demonstrated in the prior chapters, the concept of teacher agency can serve as an important lens through which to understand teachers' everyday practices. It acknowledges both individual teacher's efforts in providing inclusive education to all students and contextual factors' vital role in shaping such work (Priestley et al., 2012). Empirical studies on teacher agency have been small scale and related to particular practices in given contexts (Pantić, 2017b). I am interested in the day-to-day experiences that teachers live and share, the collegial bonds they develop over time, the strategies they use to create an inclusive community for all their students, and their own sensemaking of their agency in such work, all which will influence the ways agency is negotiated in their specific contexts of teaching. Therefore, I propose using narrative ethnography (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008) to answer the following three questions: (1) How do Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) programs teachers perceive and exert agency to negotiate inclusive education for dual language learners with disabilities? (2) What are the personal factors regarding identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education? (3) What are the contextual factors of the school and district that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education? Throughout this chapter, I draw from a sociocultural approach to teacher agency (see Figure 3) discussed in Chapter II to understand teacher agency for the inclusion of dual language learners with disabilities. Names used throughout the paper are all pseudonyms.

Methodology Rational and Purpose

This study adopted narrative ethnography as the methodology. Narrative ethnography is rooted in the agreement that stories are different from the story telling process, with the latter encompassing the content and the form of the narratives, as well as the narrative environments

where narratives are “assembled and told to someone, somewhere, at some time, with a variety of consequences for those concerned” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008, p. 247).

In Gubrium and Holstein’s (2008) terms, narrative ethnography is “a method of procedure and analysis aimed at close scrutiny of social situations, their actors, and actions in relation to narratives” (p. 250). Narrative ethnography as a method of analysis requires a critical look at the inter-relational stories from the participants to show how their attitudes, values, and ideas – developed through lived experiences – shape their identities and actions (Clandinin, 2013). In addition, narrative ethnography as a method of procedure centers on collecting and sharing stories of the participants’ everyday life in the narrative environments – the whos, whats, hows, wheres, and whens of narrative production (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). Conducting narrative ethnography does not just involve a set of tools to search for social reality, but a practice of critical interpretation that attempts to reconstruct the embedded cultural logic of discourses, institutions, routine actions, and sensemaking that goes unnoticed (Willis & Trondman, 2000). Therefore, it requires intensive and systematic observation of the field of study.

As Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue: “By subjecting their own agentic orientations to imaginative recomposition and critical judgment, actors can loosen themselves from past patterns of interaction and reframe their relationships to existing constraints” (p. 1010). Narratives about one’s daily life can function as a space for the articulation and evaluation of one’s agentic orientations and actions, through which one can become aware of and reconstruct agency (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). The purpose of this dissertation is not only to narrate teachers’ everyday agentic inclusive work but also, via narratives constructed in interviews and daily conversations, open a relational world where participants and researchers negotiate and co-

construct a relational knowing and understanding of experience (Clandinin & Caine, 2012). On the other hand, “working ethnographically with participants in their settings over time offers the best conditions for storytelling” (Riessman, 2008, p. 26). Therefore, narrative ethnography is a fit qualitative research methodology that aligns with this study’s sociocultural approach to uncover the interplay of contextual and personal factors and their impacts on teachers’ construction of agency. It also allows the use of multiple methods to explore different aspects of teacher agency as a phenomenon and as the action-in-context (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008).

Site Recruitment and Access

My research took place at School of Hope, a K-5 public charter school with a school-wide Mandarin Chinese dual language immersion (DLI) program in a Midwestern school district, from early-February to mid-June in 2021. I volunteered at the school in Spring 2020 before the pandemic shut down the school. Then in Fall 2020, I became a long-term substitute teacher when one of the Mandarin classroom teachers left on a maternity leave. During that time, I gradually built rapport with the students, parents, teachers, and administrators. I was impressed by the friendly working environment, student academic achievement, and their mission of building bilingualism, biliteracy and cross-cultural awareness. However, I was also struck by the institutional inequity I observed. For instance, English appeared to be privileged inside and outside classrooms, and students with disabilities seemed to barely receive adequate support for Mandarin language learning. These observations led me to question what inclusive education for all means in a language immersion program.

Participants

With the approval from the University of Wisconsin’s Institutional Review Board for human subject research, I started searching for participants through purposive sampling

(Creswell, 2012). To craft a holistic story from people of different positions, I sought to include at least one special education teacher, one Mandarin classroom teacher, and one English classroom teacher. I also planned to recruit other school staff, family members, and students because their accounts can help to construct the contexts in which focal teacher participants' stories are told. As Cole and Knowles (2001) argued, "the point of asking others for contextual information is not to corroborate or validate what the participants have said but to enhance understanding through the provision of information from yet another perspective" (p. 84). The school principal helped me distribute information about my study to the family community through the school newsletter. However, due to the pandemic and other unknown factors, my attempt to recruit family members and students did not garner any participants and the effort was put on hold. In the end, I recruited seven participants, including four focal teachers, two school staff and the school principal. Participant profiles can be found in Chapter IV. Here I only provide participants' demographic background (see Table 2) and explain their ways of participation.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Background

Participant pseudonym	Position	Qualification	Years at the school	Self-identified Race/Ethnicity	Language spoken
Ms. Alicia	Principal	Administrator, Elementary education	5 years	White	English monolingual
Ms. Elizabeth	K/1 English classroom teacher	Elementary and middle education	3 years	White	English monolingual
Ms. Fei	K/1 Mandarin Classroom teacher	Elementary education	7 years	Asian	Mandarin & English bilingual
Ms. Lola	2/3 Mandarin classroom teacher	Elementary education	5 years	Asian	Mandarin & English bilingual
Ms. Harriet	Special education teacher	K-12 cross-categorical special education, National board certified	6 years	White	English monolingual
Ms. Lillian	Special education assistant	Special education program aide	5 years	Asian	Mandarin & English bilingual
Ms. Yun	Confusion institute teacher	Secondary education, certified in China	2 years	Asian	Mandarin & English bilingual

Focal Teachers

Considering the long-time commitment required for my narrative ethnographic study, the number of focal teacher participants needed to be reasonably small (Creswell, 2007). I first gained verbal consent from two Mandarin classroom teachers and one English classroom teacher. I was hesitant in approaching the only special education teacher at the school because I knew her busy schedule and was worried about being rejected. Fortunately, the special education teacher expressed great interest in my study and signed the written consent form right away. All four focal teacher participants participated in a series of interviews, a questionnaire, classroom, and school observations.

School Staff and Administrator

I approached some school staff personally to introduce my study because I know they have diverse experience with students with disabilities and have worked closely with the four focal teacher participants. I purposefully chose these staff members because they could provide crucial information about the school context and the focal teachers' teaching practices. I also sent a recruitment email to all staff at the school to expand my recruitment pool. In the end, one special education assistant, one Confucius Institution teacher, and the school principal agreed to participate in the study through interviews and observations of staff meetings and school activities.

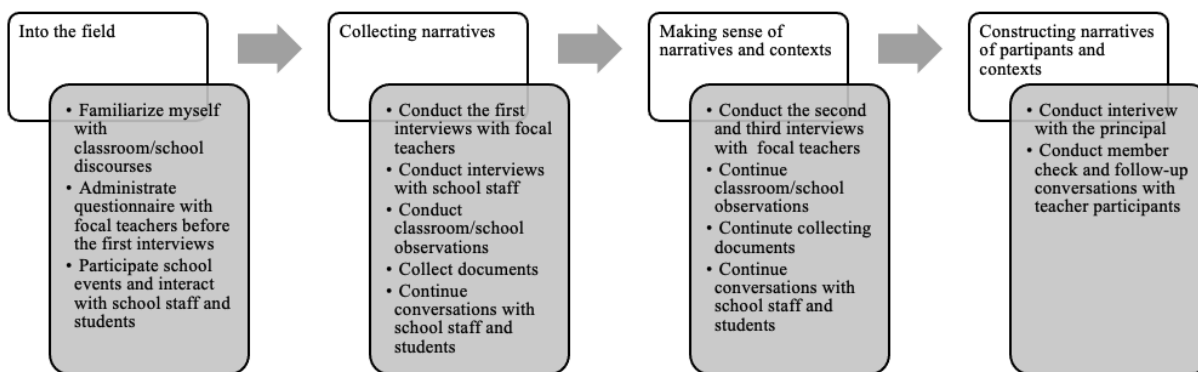
Data Collection Procedures

Guided by the sociocultural approach to teacher agency for inclusive education (see Figure 3), I used different tools (i.e., questionnaire, interview, observation, and document) to examine different personal and contextual aspects and dimensions of teacher agency. I transcribed, de-identified, and then uploaded the interview transcripts to secure folders with

questionnaire results, fieldnotes, and documents. Figure 4 is a visual timeline for data collection procedures.

Figure 4

A Visual Timeline of The Data Collection Procedure



Questionnaire

The online questionnaire (see Appendix B) was initially designed to uncover the five core personal aspects associated with teacher agency: identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity. Items from the existing scaled surveys used in studies by Mu et al. (2015), Pantić (2017a) and Babino and Stewart (2018) were modified to focus on issues of language instruction and special education. I planned to administer the questionnaire twice with each focal teacher participants, at the beginning and near the end of the study to explore changes over time. However, when reading the initial questionnaire results, I became more interested in the reasons behind the choices than the scaled answers such as strongly agree or disagree. Therefore, I used the questionnaire as an interview artifact to further inquire teacher participants' perceived identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity. For instance, Ms. Elizabeth reported “strongly disagree” for the statement of “I act as school system developers and decision makers.” She explained during the first interview:

I'm part of the PBIS leadership team. But when I view this school year in particular... I think of the times that we have written to the board...or you know the discussions that we've had around our feelings about concurrent teaching, our feelings of how the year is going, our feelings around decisions that the school board makes. You know they asked for our voice, but it's not really anything that's considered. It's kind of just like white noise. (03122021_Elizabeth_interview 1)

If I had not used the questionnaire as an interview artifact, I would not have known Ms.

Elizabeth's feeling about her leadership role.

Interview

With the four focal teacher participants, the three-interview series approach (Seidman, 2013, see Appendix C) was used to (1) establish the context of their lived experiences through their personal life and schooling histories; (2) explore details of their current teaching experience including their professional roles, individual and collective inclusive practices, and expectations of their students; and (3) discuss their sensemaking of their teaching, school policy, and environments. Interview questions were adaptive and responsive to data from the questionnaire, observation, and document analysis. Although the overall focus of my questions revolved around the interview protocols approved by the IRB, I was flexible about the order and focus of questions depending on how the teachers' responses evolved.

I conducted one additional interview (see Appendix C) with the afore mentioned two school staff and the principal. These interviews were to gain additional information about district and school policies regarding language instruction and special education, school culture, and their personal dispositions about inclusive education and focal teacher participants' work. Conversations with these individuals also assisted me in collecting useful documents I would have not known about otherwise. For instance, the principal mentioned the resources and advice the school had been seeking from Utah Department of Public Instruction or The Center for

Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. Information from these two centers later proved to be very helpful to understand dual language instruction.

Interview time and place were scheduled in person during the school days when the opportunities arose, then I sent formal email invitations along with interview protocols later. 14 out of the 15 interviews were conducted via Zoom at the time and place selected by the participants. I recorded all interviews with Zoom and kept the audio recordings and autogenerated transcripts. The last interview was done in person with the principal at school during the summer break. I used a phone voice recorder. The shortest interview lasted for 23 minutes and the longest for 2 hours and 36 minutes. On average, each interview lasted for 77 minutes. All participants used their native language – Mandarin or English – for the interviews.

I used three narrative interview techniques recommended by Seidman (2013) to generate rich, detailed, context-specific stories. First, I assumed every participant's competence in narrating their lives to acknowledge all kinds of ways of sharing, including staying silent. Therefore, I allowed participants to take longer turns to talk (Riessman, 2008), maintained eye contact, and gave confirmation signs, such as nodding my head, appropriately. This, however, implied that quite a few times during the interviews, the teachers shifted the conversation towards information not particularly related to my research topics. Most of the time, the participants redirected themselves back. I gained a more holistic understanding of the school community from the stories that are not particularly relevant to me. For instance, Ms. Lilian mentioned a conflict between the former Confucius institution teacher and a former English classroom teacher, both no longer work at the school. The conflict happened when the English classroom teacher told the Confucius institution teacher that her English language art class was more important than the traditional Chinese painting class the Confucius institution teacher had

gained the principal's permission to teach. This story made me realize that the privileged status of English against Chinese has roots deep in the history of School of Hope.

Second, I worked to ask for concrete details of a participant's lived experience before exploring their attitude and opinions about it. For instance, I asked the teacher participants to describe an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting they had attended before asking their feelings and thoughts about the IEP meeting. Third, I adjusted some follow-up questions to respond to the data from other data sources. For example, I observed the daily lunch bunch between Ms. Fei and Ms. Elizabeth when they made many small collaborative plans and shared their feelings of the day. I asked them about the lunch bunch during our interviews and learned their strategies for bridging English and Mandarin classrooms. In summary, I was actively involved either as an attentive listener or as a contributor, co-constructing these narratives with the participants (Riessman, 2008).

Observation

I conducted observations over a four-month period, for approximately 20 hours per week, in a variety of settings, virtually or in-person with permission. These locations included teacher classrooms, staff meetings, school hallways, and school events. Observations occurred during the third and fourth quarter of the school year. In the third quarter, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school was using a concurrent teaching model, with half of the students learning in person and the other half joining the class virtually. Then in the fourth quarter, all students returned to school in person four days a week. Therefore, all my classroom observations were conducted in person.

For school observations, I did nonparticipant observations. I paid close attention to policies and stories shared in staff meetings and daily interactions. I also noted who dominated

each conversation for particular purpose, and in turn, how other people contributed to the outcome. For instance, I attended the 2020/2021 kindergartener orientation virtually and took note of how the principal introduced the school and how the teachers responded to questions.

For classroom observations, I conducted participant observations to learn more about the content of the teaching materials as well as the overall teaching and learning context. During the first week of classroom observation, I focused on classroom settings, such as table arranges and classroom decorations. In the second week, I focused on people and relationships, such as the interactions between the adults in the classroom. In the third week, I focused on verbal behavior and interactions, such as language use among students. From the fourth to the twelfth week, I focused on events, such as classroom instruction and student participation. Observation protocol of different weeks can be found in Appendix D.

Participant observation allows field workers to see first-hand how teachers “grapple with uncertainty and ambiguity, how meanings emerge through talk and collective action, how understandings and interpretations change over time, and how the changes shape subsequent actions” (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 5). I also followed up with the focal teachers in our informal conversations during lunch time or break time, ranging from 5 to 30 minutes. These conversations centered on participants’ views on newly posted meso- and macro-level policy and news, as well as context-specific instructional decisions of the day. During the informal conversations with teachers and staff who were not participants, we sometimes would discuss issues relating to my research topics. Although I did not record these conversations, I did write reflective memos after these conversations.

Writing ethnographic fieldnotes needs regular and systematic planning and management (Emerson et al., 2011). At the end of each school visit day or early next morning, I spent hours

writing and memoing different types of data. For ensuring both a general and deeper understanding of the data collection procedures and processes, I followed Emerson et al.'s (2011) advice and took four sets of notes: (a) observations at the moment, including spaces, people, interactions, relationships, activities, and conversations that took place; (b) full, detailed descriptions expanded on the observations after each field session; (c) a fieldwork journal to record and reflect on issues and ideas arising during fieldwork; and (d) in-process analytic writing of provisional data interpretation.

Document Collection

A variety of documents were collected to contextualize the interview and observation data and understand school and district education policy. These documents consisted of special education and language teaching policies, school newsletters, school district and school board documents, school district and school websites, report cards from the state Department of Public Instruction, school-board meeting minutes, staff meeting notes and schedules. I also photographed various types of school and classroom artifacts. One significant type of artifact was teachers' lesson plans, teaching materials, and student work, which helped me understand how focal teachers designed instruction and adapted learning materials to meet the learning needs of students with IEPs, and how learners respond to the modification and accommodation. The second type of artifacts were photographs of classroom learning spaces, decorations, school rules, posters, and school environment.

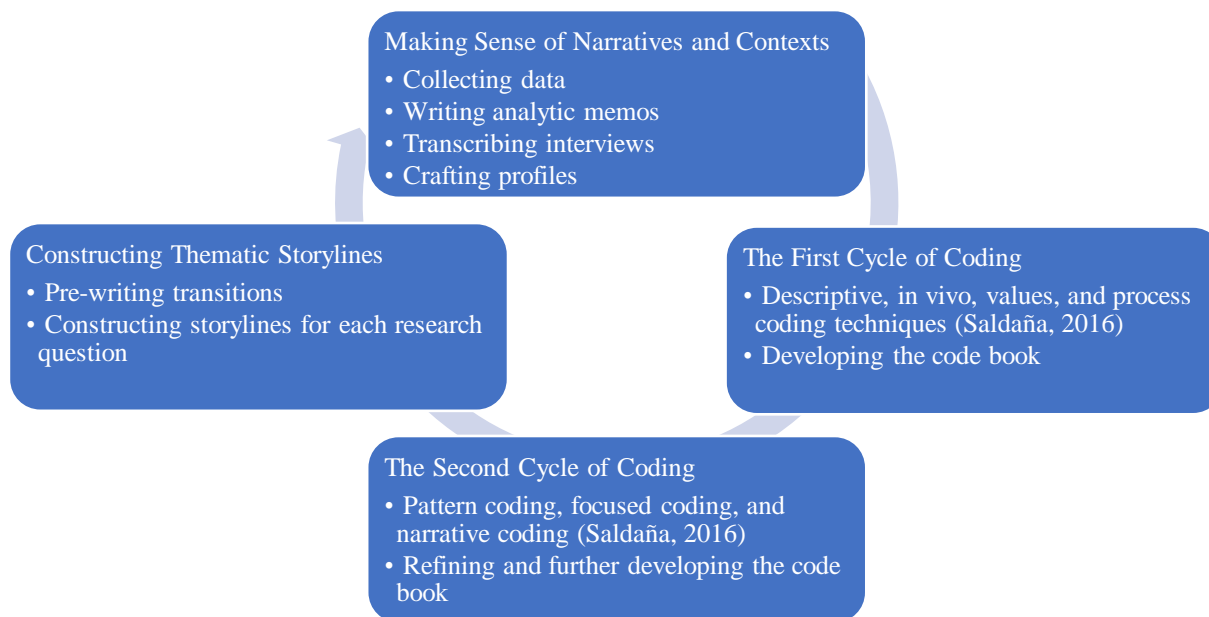
In the end, I generated 4 questionnaire entries, 37 ethnographic fieldnotes from school and classroom observations, 15 audio-recorded individual interviews, 41 photographs of artifacts, 231 documents, and one analytic memo journal (see Appendix E). All data were later de-identified and uploaded into NVivo 12 software for data analysis.

Data Analysis Process

Allred and Gillies (2002) argue that “The phrase ‘data analysis’ implies wrongly that there is a prior stage of data collection that occurs without the interpretive involvement of the researcher. It therefore constructs the object of study as fixed, observable, existing prior to, and independently of the researcher’s gaze” (p. 158). Therefore, I decided to present my data analysis process as follows: (1) making sense of narratives and contexts, (2) the first cycle of coding, (3) the second cycle of coding, and (4) constructing thematic storylines. Figure 5 demonstrates what each process involves.

Figure 5

Data Analysis Process



Making Sense of the Narratives and the Environments

Data Generation and Analytic Memo. The sensemaking of narratives and narrative contexts started during the data generation. Writing and organizing fieldnotes served as the first level of analysis when I chose certain information to record and elaborate on. At the end of each observation day, I wrote extended fieldnotes and labeled each fieldnote with the date, people,

and setting (e.g., 030221_Fei_Classroom). Interviewing and transcribing the interview data myself made me listen to the interviews several times, which greatly helped me develop an initial sense of each participant's values, attitudes, and perspectives of teaching and learning. I recorded some initial reflections and questions into the analytic memo between and after interviews. I named each interview transcript with the date, people, and interview number (e.g., 052921_Elizabeth_interview 3). Data from the questionnaire was not coded qualitatively or conflated into scaled results but served as a triangulating reference to make sense of the interview and observation data. Searching, reading, and organizing relevant documents and artifacts helped me construct a holistic contextual knowledge about the classroom, school, and district context. I named each document and artifact according to its content (e.g., K/1 schedule) and stored them based on the categories of data (e.g., school policy). I kept writing the analytic memos while organizing the documents and artifacts.

Data Transcription and Translation. I conducted all interviews in the participants' native language, English or Mandarin. Alldred and Gillies's (2012) argue that transcribing is an integral part of data analysis and requires "critical reflection on the intractable uncertainties of meaning-language relationships" (p. 158). Therefore, I transcribed all the data myself. I did three rounds of transcribing.

First, when transcribing interviews conducted in English, I used Zoom autogenerated transcripts as the starting point. I listened to the recording and edited the transcripts word by word. When transcribing interviews conducted in Mandarin, as Zoom cannot recognize the language, I first used dictation function with Microsoft Word to dictate all recordings in Mandarin and then manually edited the transcripts word by word.

During the second round of transcribing, on the edited transcripts, I listened to the

recordings again while editing typos, deleting word repetitions, half-word utterances, and non-speech utterances like “Oh,” “er,” “um,” “hum,” and formatting the transcripts. I found adding punctuation difficult because Chinese and English have different rules of punctuation. Alldred and Gillies (2012) also point out that adding punctuation attributes and fixes meanings by producing streams of phrases and clauses. I realized that transcribing is not as a technical procedure as I thought it would be.

During the third round of transcribing, I listened to the recordings one more time to further edit errors and add transcription symbols to represent some conversational context, such as pauses, laughs, and signs (see Appendix F for interview transcription symbols). Because I decided to focus on the content rather than the format of utterances and to make sentences neater to read, I decided not to elaborate on detailed linguistic clues. However, during the data analysis process, there were times I went back to audio-recordings to find the tone of the participants to detect the implied meaning of certain utterances.

Regarding translation, I figured it is impossible to translate all the transcripts from Mandarin to English. Therefore, I decided only to transcribe the excerpts quoted in the finding chapter. Being a native Chinese speaker, I am aware the set of assumptions, values, and sociocultural meanings certain Chinese words carry. However, these Chinese words are difficult to be literally translated into English. Therefore, I used a combination of literal translation and open translation to portray the intended meanings with the most appropriate English words/expressions I know of.

Crafting Profiles and My Autobiography. I decided to develop a profile of each participant and my autobiography because of my active engagement in the school community (see Chapter IV). I believe that these profiles could provide important cultural context and

background to the reader and give them the opportunity to know more about each individual participant's ongoing lives, both personal and professional. I also believe that being transparent about my roles, positions, and identities in the field could justify why and how the study evolved. In addition, "because narrative inquiry is an ongoing reflexive and reflective methodology" (Clandinin & Caine, 2012, p.171), crafting an autobiography allowed me to continually attend to my inquiries personally, practically, and socially.

Using Seidman's (2013) guidance, I created the teacher profiles in the following steps:

- 1) I read through all the interview transcripts and highlighted passages of interest and importance.
- 2) I selected all the passages highlighted and put them together as a single transcript for each participant.
- 3) I reread the new document and highlighted the most compelling quotes.
- 4) I crafted portraits using a third-person voice. I placed my own words in brackets, used ellipses when omitting materials from a paragraph or skipping paragraphs or even pages in the transcripts. I also deleted from the profile certain characteristics of oral speech that a participant would not use in writing, for examples, repetitious "you know" and other such idiosyncrasies that do not do the participant justice in a written version of what he or she has said. I changed some grammatical structures (e.g., verb tense) to keep the flow of the narratives.
- 5) With the transcripts in Mandarin Chinese, I crafted the profiles in English directly based on the selected passages (see step 2) in Mandarin Chinese. For certain words with rich and unique meanings do not translate literally into English, I kept them in Mandarin Chinese and provided a detailed explanation in bracket.

After I crafted each profile, I conducted a member check with the participants by emailing them a copy of the profile and interview transcripts. I asked them to read their profiles and transcripts as they want and provide feedback specifically noting anything that they want to change or add. All participants responded with some brief comments with few corrections. By doing so, I enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of this study and accomplished triangulation of the data (Seidman, 2013).

The First Cycle of Coding

After developing the profiles of each teacher participants, I began the first cycle of the coding process by examining all data collected about each teacher case. To deal with ethnographic and interview data that emphasized the importance of sensemaking, interactions, actions, and contexts, I used thematic and performative analysis. Thematic analysis is used to illustrate the content of speech, with prior theory serving as a resource for interpretation (Riessman, 2008; Schiffrin, 1996). In other words, thematic analysis tells “what” of narratives. Performative analysis aims to construct integrated and holistic stories within the narrative environments where narratives are staged performance (Riessman, 2008). In other words, Performative analysis reveals “purposes” and “contexts” of narratives, such as “who,” “to whom,” “when,” and “why.” Riessman (2008) comments, “attention to broader contexts, beyond the interview or ethnographic situation, is a great strength of the dialogic approach” (p. 137).

To achieve the purposes of thematic and performative analysis, I used (a) descriptive, (b) in vivo, (c) value, and (d) process coding techniques to identify internal (whats) and external (whos, whens, and whys) organizations of narrative texts for further exploration (Saldaña, 2016). A combination of these four coding techniques allowed me to construct an inductive and holistic meta-synthesis of data from interviews, observations, and document analysis (Saldaña, 2016).

The applications of different coding methods are presented below (see Table 3).

Table 3

Examples of First Cycle of Coding: Descriptive, In vivo, Value, and Process Codes

<p>Descriptive codes: Descriptive coding is one basic technique that is appropriate for documenting and analyzing ethnographies with a wide variety of data sources, especially fieldnotes. It provides an inventory of related topics in short words or phrases.</p>		
Examples of initial codes and coded segments	Self-efficacy	My ability to see differently, think differently, hear differently, attack differently, try differently, perceived differently, approach differently, assume differently, see outside of the box, try outside of the box. I just thought "I get this, I get this." And so, I thought, well I can become a special ed teacher. (030621_Harriet_interview 1)
<p>In vivo codes: In vivo coding highlights participants' voicing of their views and actions in actual language.</p>		
Examples of initial codes and coded segments	<p>"OK-ness with it"</p> <p>Double coded as collaboration</p>	And I would say it's like an OK-ness with it because, I know that kids do so much better if they're not just hearing it from the same person over and over, but if somebody else is coming in, somebody new. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)
<p>Value codes: Value coding dives into participants' inner cognitive activities, such as beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and ideologies around certain issues.</p>		
Examples of initial codes and coded segments	Unwilling to collaborate	对两个老师来讲, 其实真的是 extra work, 因为就是有 extra meeting, extra talking, 还有什么, extra compromising, 你就不能完全按照自己的方式走。(For two teachers, it does need extra work, because there would be extra meeting, extra talking, and extra compromising, and you cannot move forward in your own way) (050121_Fei_interview 2)
<p>Process codes: Process coding is used to search for routines, rituals, action, and consequence by using "-ing" words.</p>		
Examples of initial codes and coded segments	Refusing to stand on the side	They come in and they stand on the side. I hate that. I hate that. I refuse to be that person. And there are a lot of regular ed teachers that don't know what to do with me. Cuz I don't like to stand on the side. (052921_Harriet_interview 3)

As the coding process continued, some initial codes were modified to make them clearer for coding, and some of them were regrouped. For example, the original code "collaboration"

was divided into (1) collaboration—between general educator and special educator, (2) collaboration—between Mandarin and English classes, and (3) collaboration—between teachers and families. About 135 annotations were attached to the initial codes to describe the rationale or to clarify. For example, the annotation for the code “attitude and value on language instruction” is “implying the assumption that language is fixed, and switching between multiple languages is highly cognitive work, thus more difficult for students with disability doing such work.”

At the end of first cycle of coding, about 215 initial codes were developed from the database. I created a preliminary codebook that was constantly refined and developed during the first cycle of coding process. I also kept writing the analytic memos. In the analytic memos, I reflected, within each case, how different data sources triangulate, complete, and/or disconfirm each other, as well as if and how the data answered my research questions.

Second Cycle of Coding

In the second round of coding, I conducted cross participant analysis and organized the initial codes into overarching categories for emergent themes. During this second coding phase, I conducted pattern coding and focused coding (Saldaña, 2016) by using deductive codes drew from the theoretical framework of teacher agency. Pattern coding is an approach for grouping similar initial codes into subcategories and categories. In focused coding, there searches for the most frequent or significant subcategories and categories to develop the most salient themes. I also used a narrative code “stories about students” to identify stories told and observed about students with disabilities at the school. Narrative coding allowed me to piece together the fragments into a collective story by teachers about dual language learners with disabilities.

During this second cycle of coding, I started connecting data across teacher participants. Initial codes from the first cycle of coding were all grouped into deductive theoretical codes. For

example, the initial codes “feeling prisoned to the classroom teacher” was put under the parent code “collective efficacy.” All the parent codes were then pattern coded into 26 subcategories and later grouped into 9 major categories. These 9 major categories are “agency,” “autonomy,” “competence,” “identity,” “purpose,” “school and district culture,” “school and district structure,” and “school and district material.” See Table 4 below. In addition, by writing analytic memo to elaborate ideas, I began to identify themes that repeatedly emerge across cases and data sources.

Table 4

Categories of Codes

Categories	Subcategories
Agency	Individual agency Collective agency
Autonomy	Sense of control and efficacy of classroom teaching Sense of control and efficacy of classroom management Sense of control and efficacy of collaboration Sense of control and efficacy of curriculum design and implementation
Competence	Knowledge of and skills in classroom teaching Knowledge of and skills in classroom management Knowledge of and skills in collaboration Knowledge of and skills in curriculum design and implementation
Identity	Professional identities Personal identities
Purpose	Values and attitudes towards teaching and learning Values and attitudes towards inclusion and special education Values and attitudes towards about language and culture Values and attitudes towards collaboration
Reflexivity	Reflection on individual actions and ideologies Reflection on school and social contexts
School and District Culture	Discourse on disability Discourse on dual language immersion programs Discourse on language and culture Discourse on special education Student and family characteristics
School and District Structure	Charter school policy Division of labor Language education policy Special education policy

School and District Material	Curriculum and teaching materials Professional development and mentoring Staffing Time and space
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Constructing Thematic Storylines

As Gubrium and Holstein (2009) argue, stories and storytelling reside on situational terrain where the storyteller and the researcher look backward and forward to unfold a net of narrative possibilities in various directions. Therefore, in this study, narrative inquiry was a process of creating a dialogic understanding of inclusive education while bridging the so-called theory–practice divide. It is also a process of creating an educational landscape for both the researcher and the researched to reflect on, share, and experience agency for inclusive education together (Craig, 2007). Constructing thematic storylines is also a process of presenting the finding in relation to the research questions the study aimed to answer. During this process, I recursively move back and forth (1) between with-case analysis and cross-case analysis, (2) between the data and the relevant literature, and (3) between the data and my analytic memo.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

As Riessman (2008) points out, a narrative study requires the imagination of storytellers, listeners, and readers to be interrogated, therefore it allows many voices and subjectivities. It is important to treat interviews as “occasions for narrative work and not just information transfer, considering the dynamics of how interview narratives are constructed and what transpires under their auspices” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, p. 37). I took three strategies to minimize threats to credibility and trustworthiness.

First, as Kinloch and Pedro (2014) suggest, being a “researcher-as-participant-as-listener-as-learner-as-advocator,” one needs to allow “room for conflict, complications, silences, and pauses to exist between and among people as they learn to listen to each other in the space

between language and silence, language and action” (p. 29). I made myself a good listener, being sensitive to counternarratives and underlying assumptions that are not readily accessible through interview or observation methods alone. Member checking occurred during data collection and throughout the analytic process. For example, after writing the narratives about the life history of each participant, I shared these narrative profiles and the interview transcripts with the participants for their feedback. I also became close friends with two participants who became the key informants. When we got together during the weekends, I regularly discussed my initial hunches and preliminary findings with them.

Second, I engaged in the self-reflective process of “bracketing” by recognizing and setting aside my prior knowledge and assumptions, and by opening conversations to uncover the information that I do not know that I do not know (Chenail, 2011). My goal is to make sense of what teacher agency means to each participant instead of identifying the definition or my definition of teacher agency. In addition, as Duneier (2011) points out, “there are situations in which there is no way to avoid telling stories with ethnography that won’t be lies to some people” (p. 3), because researchers choose or have access to only certain groups of people at the expense of others. To avoid deceiving myself into thinking that no other alternative perspectives exist, I constantly questioned myself the following four perspectives on power presented by Muhammad et al. (2015): (1) privilege that comes with the researcher’s identity or identities within the specific community and relationship; (2) the level of power sharing during the research process itself where a research design and direction can or cannot be influenced by the participants; (3) authorship of the findings as to whose voices are privileged and being heard; (4) the power that is exerted to maintain certain status quo and construct dominant knowledge. Additional reflexive practices included seeking peer evaluations and debriefing from colleagues

and mentors throughout the data analysis process. During the weekly meetings with Dr. Andrea Ruppap and three other colleagues, Sarah, Radeen, and Gabby, I often shared my preliminary findings and relevant data for feedback and suggestions.

Third, writing memos about my own thoughts, emotional responses, and activities related to data facilitated the audit trail process. As Emerson et al. (2011) point out, when inscribing experienced or observed realities via fieldnotes, or survey questionnaires, or recorded slices of interviews into written form, reduction occurs inevitably. Therefore, rather than triangulating the data from various resources, I followed Ferguson and Ferguson's (2000) suggestion of contextualizing the data. Here, they suggest tracking back and forth between what I think I already know, what different data sources seem to be telling me, and how I, together with the participants, make sense of alternative meanings in ways that advance our knowing and acting.

Relational Ethics and Positionality

Rather than asking about validity or reliability, I agree with Clandinin's (2013) emphasis on ethical and moral responsibilities by asking myself how I am fulfilling my role in the relationship with the participants and the community, and what my obligations are in the relationship. "As we are guided by relational ethics and always remain aware of our short- and long-term responsibilities, we try hard to negotiate ways in which we can be helpful; we do not turn away from participants' needs and wishes" (Clandinin & Caine, p. 169). Therefore, it is important for me to be transparent about the interplay between my own professional and personal identities in the negotiation of relationships. In the following section, I reflect on my personal journey and researcher positionality in terms of my sociocultural, and professional identities. In Chapter IV, I further elaborate on how my professional positionalities and personal journeys influenced the processes of data generation and data analysis, and how my relationships with the

participants changed during study. I decided to add narratives about myself to Chapter IV, because as I continuously negotiated my short-term obligations and long-term responsibilities, I quickly realized my naïve understanding of the complexities of engaging in research with humans. I was reminded of how “all research projects exist in the midst of live lives” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), not just the participants’ lives but mine as well. In addition, writing myself into the text is “one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher’s influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don’t exist” (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 274).

My Sociocultural, Linguistic, and Professional Positionalities

As an international student from China, I came to the United States knowing almost nothing about education system in the United States, especially special education. I came to pursue a master’s degree and a teaching certificate through the special education training program at UW-Madison. Therefore, my knowledge about the U.S. school system is mainly from my teacher education program, which includes various courses and a year of full-time student teaching in the classroom. Later, being a long-term substitute teacher at the School of Hope, I got to know what it means to be a general education teacher. Being able to see many diverse classrooms and working with a variety of teachers and staff, I have developed a more complicated and situated understanding of inclusive education and become a firmer believer in inclusive education as a critical means to achieve social justice and equity for all. However, I know that ways of knowing and ways of doing can be two different things. I have been in many situations when I failed to advocate for myself or my students. I attributed the failure to my reserved, conflict avoidant personality. I blamed myself for being an obedient student at heart. I also have observed many inclusive education advocates choosing not to challenge exclusionary

and discriminative practices in certain situations. I realized that working in an education system pervaded with dominant ideologies like ableism, we all participate in perpetuating the systemic oppressions and exclusions to different extent. Thus, the concept of human agency caught my attention and inspired the study.

As a graduate student in the United States, I see myself as a foreigner. I had great difficulty finding a community or developing a sense of belonging to any cultural groups. I was the only international graduate student in my master's program and till my graduation I did not see myself as a member of the cohort I was taking the same classes with. My sociolinguistic identity impacts my everyday experiences deeply. Having been in the United States for more than seven years, every single day, I am still aware that English is not my first language. However, my bilingual and transnational experiences have facilitated my relationship building with the teachers, students, and parents at the School of Hope. I developed a close relationship with the two Mandarin classroom teacher participants, with whom I shared many similar transnational experiences with.

Finally, as a graduate student in a well-resourced university, I acknowledge my privileges and responsibilities. As Chenail (2011) argues, qualitative researchers are a research instrument. I am the primary one defining the topic to study and deciding what data to collect or not to collect, where and when to collect the data, and how to use the data collected. When I first introduced my study to the school principal, we both agreed on being explicit about my role as a researcher while working at the school as a supporting staff at the same time. We also informed the parents of the school about my responsibilities and roles. The school principal once asked me about my research goal, and I told her that doing no harm to the school community is what matters most to me. However, I quickly realized that when attending to issues of equity and

social justice, I bring strong criticism and skepticism, questioning everything I see at the first glance. In addition, in a school community where there are conflicts between different groups, doing no harm to one group (e.g., teachers) may indirectly negatively impact another group (e.g., students). Therefore, as I worked with the participants, I learned to listen with empathy and make extra effort to understand the reasons behind each decision and action of the participants. At the same time, I maintain a critical perspective to understand how myself and the participants participate in the systemic oppressions. I follow Vaught's (2011) suggestion in understanding these actions as manifestations of the larger system rather than individual faults.

Summary

The current study builds on previous studies of teacher agency using a narrative ethnography methodology. This methodology aligns with this study's sociocultural approach to teacher agency to uncover the impacts of contextual and personal factors on teachers' agency construction. It also allows the use of multiple data collection tools to account for the temporal, relational, and situational nature of agency. Teacher participants were interviewed at several points during the school year, observed in classrooms and other school environments. A variety of documents were collected to study school policy and culture. These sources of data were then compiled into text format for several rounds of data analysis. Within and cross participant analysis was completed through pattern coding to generate categories and, eventually, broad themes (Saldana, 2012). In the next chapter, I craft participant and school profiles to familiarize the readers and myself of teacher participants as a holistic person living in contexts.

Chapter IV: Setting and Participant Profiles

I start this chapter with an overview of the community in which the focal school is located, because I want to set the scene for the study before reporting findings specifically related to the research questions. Then I describe each participant using a thick description of how I see them and how they portray themselves as individuals and teachers. Therefore, I include direct quotes from the participants to illustrate and support my assertions. Later in the chapter, I bring my autobiography into the study to demonstrate my navigation of the participant-researcher role, its impacts on how the research was approached and developed, and how my relationships with teacher participants affected me. In addition, describing the contexts and participants allows me to present the findings as completely as possible, resisting the tendency in research to “pulverize life into minute abstracted fragments and particles that are of little use to practitioners” (van Manen, 1990, p. 7). Names used throughout the paper are all pseudonyms.

The Victor School District and Neighborhood Community

This study took place in a K-5 public charter school with a school-wide Chinese-English immersion program. It is located in a Midwestern city, named Victor, in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2020, the population of Victor city is approximately 14,030, with a 23.7% population increase since 2010. The racial makeup of the city is 90.1% White, 4.3% Black or African American, 3.4% Asian, and 2.1% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race are 0.8%. An overwhelming majority (92.6%) of the residents speak English only at home. It is a fast-growing, wealthy city with a median household income of \$96,990, and 2.7% of the population below poverty line. The city provides high quality infrastructure and diverse city services, such as a public library, a community theatre, and a senior center.

Victor school district is a suburban public school district, serving students from Victor

city and a few neighborhood towns. According to the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Victor school district has about 700 employees serving a total student population of 5,636 in 2020-2021 school year. The ratio of students to teachers is 14:1. The racial makeup of the student population is 62.3% White, 7.0% Black or African American, 4.1% Asian, 0.1% American Indian, 19.7% Hispanic or Latino of any race, and 6.7% two or more races. 13.2% of the student population are categorized as English Learners (ELs) by DPI based on students' scoring on an English Language Proficiency (ELP) Screener. 7.8% of the student body receive special education services. 28.1% of student are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The school district has seven elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school, three of which are public charter schools.

“Every Student MUST Be Successful!” (Capitalization in original) is the mission of Victor school district, which is displayed on the school district website and mentioned in almost every public media about the district. The mission is said to be achieved through the district's equity framework that drove the development of the 2018-2023 strategic plan with five pillars: authentic relationships; safe, inclusive learning environments; high expectations for every student; supporting and empowering staff; and equitable allocation of resources (District Website, 2021). In 2013, the district board of education launched “a tool for equity” called Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), with which “students are given more choices in how they pursue and pace their learning as well as how they achieve and demonstrate the mastery of the specified academic content standards” (District Website, 2021). Throughout the district website, words of “every” and “must” are frequently underlined, bolded, in italic or capitalized.

Victor school district is also committed to preparing students with bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural competence by offering two types of language immersion programs:

Spanish-English two-way immersion and Chinese-English one-way immersion. Career and college readiness, and graduation with the state's Seal of Biliteracy is considered as the evidence of success for these dual language immersion (DLI) programs. Registering for a DLI program takes place between mid-January through mid-February, the same period when parents may apply to a charter choice placement school for the following year. Because DLI programs have limited spaces, if there are more applicants than the spaces available, the school board established enrollment criteria will be fulfilled first. Additional placements will then be issued by random lottery. According to the 2018-2019 Family Handbook for School of Hope, students must meet one of the following three criteria to be enrolled after first grade: (1) experience in a different Chinese immersion program or school, (2) test results from a Mandarin language proficiency assessment, (3) Mandarin language proficiency through language background or prior language immersion experience. The students that request but are not picked by the lottery will be placed on a waiting list (District Website, 2021).

In addition, Victor School District is known for their strong support of technology access for teaching and learning. Since 2016, every student in K-12 has been provided with an iPad. This 1:1 technology for all is also called Access 4 Learning (A4L), with a goal of preparing "Common Sense Media's digital citizenship" (District Website, 2021). Teachers are required to attend technology related trainings. During the school year of 2020-2021, to facilitate teachers' navigation of the virtual and hybrid instruction, the district provided a full week of intense technology training before school year started, and additional training throughout the school year. Most classrooms in the district are equipped with an Apple TV or a Smart board. Each teacher has an Apple laptop for their everyday teaching.

Victor School District claims that special education and related services are delivered

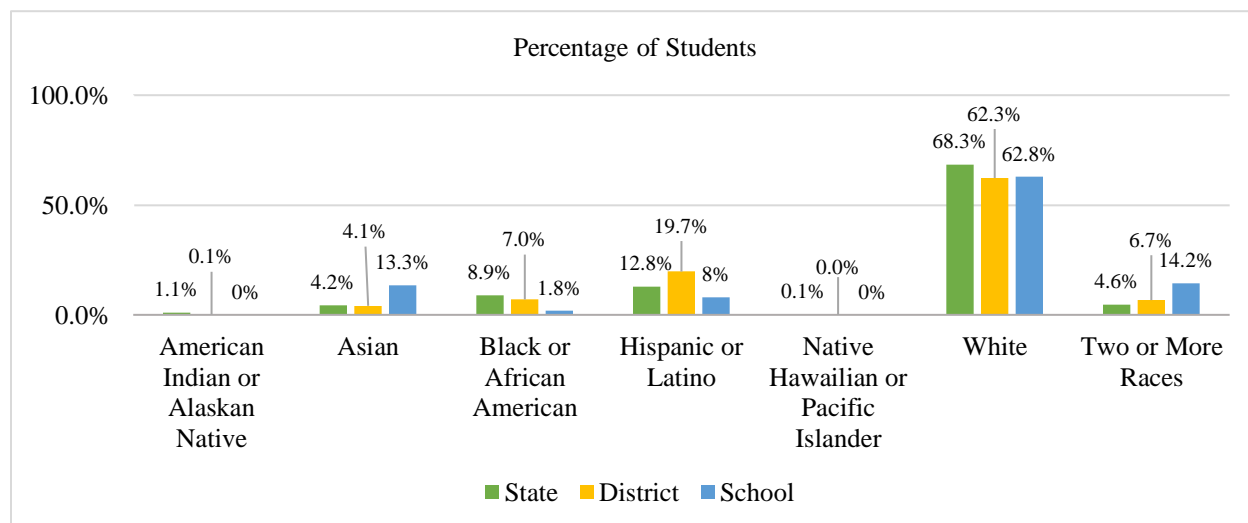
with “a philosophy of intergrade service delivery” that focuses on “special educators’ work in collaboration with general educators to meet the needs of all students within the classroom” (District Website). All school districts in the state are required to report data annually about the educational environments where students with disabilities receive special education services. In the school year of 2020-2021, about 7.7% of the student population in Victor school district received special education services. In contrast, the state percentage is 13.5%. To improve postsecondary outcomes, the district also offers a transition program for 18 to 21-year-old students to learn functional vocational, independent living, and social skills. The most recently available DPI data shows that in the school year of 2019-2020, 51.9% students with disabilities graduated from high school with a regular diploma in 4 years or less, comparing to the state average of 69.8%.

The Focal School: School of Hope

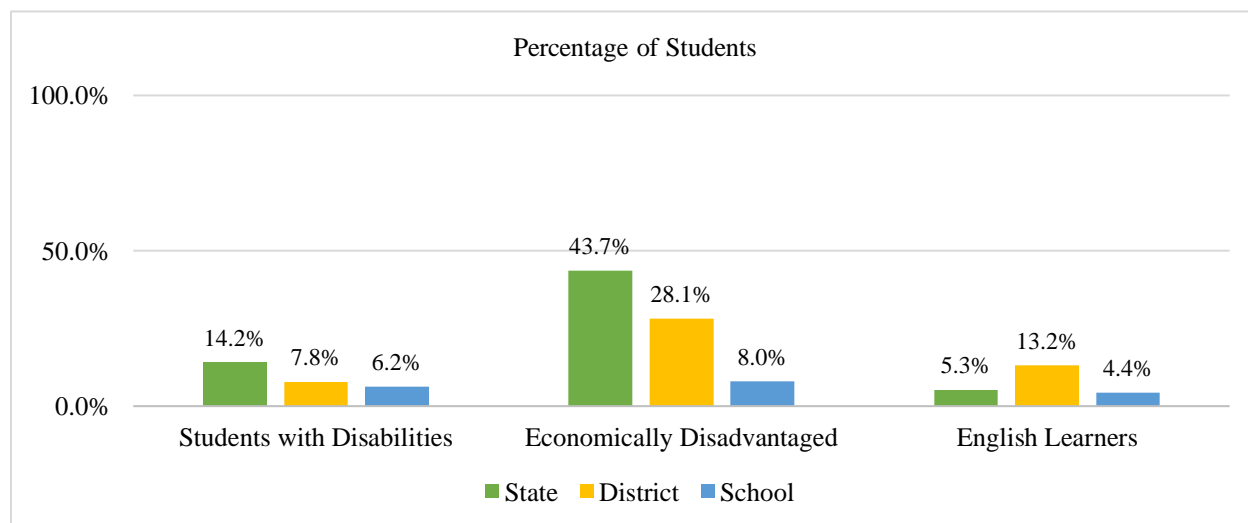
School of Hope is the only public Chinese-English immersion charter school in the state. It began in 2010 with a multiage class of 22 kindergarteners and first-graders and has expanded to a K-5 elementary school serving 113 students in 2020-2021 school year. The racial makeup of the student body is 62.8% White, 13.3% Asian, 1.8% Black or African American, 14.2% two or more races, and 8.0% Hispanic or Latino of any race, with 8.0% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 6.2% receive special education services. Most students speak English only at home, and very few students are from Mandarin-speaking households. According to the DPI 2020-2021 school report card, student achievement in both English language arts and math “significantly exceeds expectations” on the accountability ratings. Figures 6 and 7 show student demographic information in the state, district, and school.

Figure 6

Student Demographic Information about Race and Ethnicity in the State, District, and School

**Figure 7**

Student Demographic Information about Disability Status, Economic Status, and English Language Status in the State, District, and School



According to the district website, School of Hope describes itself as “50/50 Chinese immersion school” (2021) because it delivers 50% of the curriculum in Mandarin and 50% in English. Students spend half of the school day with the English classroom teacher and the other

half with the Mandarin classroom teacher. In kindergarten and first grade, students learn Chinese language arts, science, and math in Mandarin. Then from second grade to fifth grade, students learn Chinese language arts, science, and social studies in Mandarin (See Table 5 for dual language instruction time allocation). The decision about which subjects to be taught in Mandarin was a random call according to the teacher participants. Howard et al. (2018) defines one-way immersion as foreign language immersion programs where most or all students speak the majorized language, often English, at the time of enrollment. Therefore, School of Hope is a 50/50 Chinese-English one-way dual language immersion school.

Table 5

Dual Language Instruction Time Allocation

Grades	Subjects taught in Mandarin classrooms (50%)	Subjects taught in English classrooms (50%)
Kindergarten – First grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese language arts • Science • Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language arts • Social studies
Second grade – Fifth grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese language arts • Science • Social studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language arts • Math

History of School of Hope

School of Hope was first founded by a group of white middle-class English-monolingual parents who saw Mandarin Chinese as a marketable language for college and career readiness in a globalized world. According to the staff at the school, since its establishment in 2010, parents and teachers feel that they must constantly prove the need for and value of learning Mandarin, because they received more questions than interests from the community in the early years of the school. Teachers and staff members shared that they were not well supported by the school district when the school struggled in securing its own physical space. At the beginning, School of Hope was housed in a public elementary school and a public middle school next by. It also

shared services with both buildings, such as special education and related services, guidance counseling, food services and other education support services. In 2016, the school moved all their classrooms to the same building with the elementary school, while still sharing space and resources. In the same year, the school was notified that it failed to obtain a minimum score of “meets expectations” rating on the accountability determination as reported annually on DPI issued report cards for three consecutive years (District Website, 2021). Principal Alicia was appointed as the new school principal in 2016-2017 school year and successfully implemented a schoolwide reform. The district school board passed the second renewal agreement on the operation of School of Hope for an additional five years starting from 2017-2018 school year. The school then received the Award of Excellence for Language Programs from the state in 2017. Finally, in September 2020, School of Hope moved to a remodeled building with another public charter school under the administration of Principal Alicia.

School of Hope experienced a high staff turnover during the years 2010-2018. Certified Mandarin and English bilingual teachers were hard to find, as Principal Alicia confessed:

Finding teachers and allowing them to be able to continue to stay [is difficult]. We deal with visa issues. We deal with teachers who would love to be here, but they're not certified. I need certified teachers to be in the school. This isn't just like I post a position and I get 50 to 80 responses. I maybe get two. And only one of them is certified and maybe they're only certified in high school. (062621_Alicia_interview)

Currently, there are three certified Mandarin classroom teachers: Ms. Fei, who joined in 2014-2015 school year now teaches kindergarten and first grade; Ms. Lola, who joined in 2016-2017 school year now teaches second grade and third grade; and Ms. Ying, who joined in 2017-2018 school year now teaches fourth and fifth grade. Ms. Harriet, the special education teacher, joined the team in 2015-2016 school year.

Despite the location, administration, and staffing changes, the school mission remained

the same since its establishment, that is, “to educate Global Citizens: to prepare children for the demands and responsibilities of Global Citizenship by providing the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to move naturally between different languages and cultures” (School Website, 2021; capitalization in original). Focusing on the development of “global competency,” the school has partnered with the Confucius Institute (CI) and has been designated as a Confucius Classroom by CI since 2015. In 2015, CI provided an initial grant of \$10,000 to improve and expand the school’s Mandarin Chinese language and culture program, with additional funding for subsequent years. In addition, every two years, CI sends one Mandarin-speaking teacher from China for two-year-long classroom support and provides professional training and cultural resources. Through CI, the school also have access to the Summer Bridge program for international and cultural immersive visits.

As a public charter school, parent involvement is important for the survival and development of School of Hope. The school is governed by a council of parents, staff, and community members, who have autonomy in determining policies related to the day-to-day operations of the school, such as budget allocations, annual enrollment, curriculum, instruction and assessment, school policies and procedure, and fundraising. Curriculum is chosen by the governance council based on the state Academic Standards and Education for Global Citizenship Standards with an international focus (School Website, 2021). Parents also volunteer in the school’s classrooms, on school committees, organize fundraising activities, attend fieldtrips, and arrange Chinese cultural events.

Special Education in School of Hope

School of Hope has one special education teacher, one special education assistant (SEA), and shares a school nurse, occupational therapist (OT), physical therapist (PT), and speech and

language pathologist (SLP) with the other schools in the district. The school has had difficulty securing a long-term social worker or a school psychologist. A special education supervisor, who serves two other elementary schools, supervises special education and related services, and evaluates special education staff. The special education supervisor also serves as the Local Educational Agency (LEA) representative for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Because the role of LEA representative is filled by the special education supervisor, Principal Alicia is not required to attend any IEP meetings and plays a less active role in special education related decision making. However, she is aware of the challenges the special education staff face at a dual language immersion school like School of Hope.

It is challenging for them if they don't know the language, and so it is very helpful that the special education teacher is a heritage English speaking teacher, and our special education assistant is a heritage Mandarin-speaking teacher. We really need a balance like that within our school in order for this to be successful with special education. Because otherwise we can't expect someone who is an expert in special education to also be bilingual, and so it does really help that we have that happening. Now, that's said learning another language is a very challenging experience. And so they take a little bit more effort on the part of the [general education] teachers to make sure that the time is given adequately, to give to those students in special education, so that they can take the time to learn the language. ...This isn't always happening. And so, that is an area that we need to still continue to work on because making sure that they're getting what they need to learn the language is very important. (062621_Alicia_interview)

As Principal Alicia mentioned in the interview, the special education teacher speaks English only, thus she works in English classrooms most of the time and provides pull-out instruction for English language art and math.

Educator and Staff Participants at the School

In the following section, I attempt to introduce each participant in this study as a whole person with multifaceted characteristics and identities. The narratives of these participants are limited but they are important to make sense of the findings in later chapters. My references to their teaching practices are solely for the purpose of describing their teaching philosophy.

Detailed description of their teaching will be described in Chapter V. These narratives facilitated my ongoing interactions with the participants and their words. This chapter presents eight narratives, including my autobiography.

Principal Alicia, the Principal

Principal Alicia is a white, English-monolingual mom of three children. She entered the field of education in 1990, starting as a librarian and then an elementary classroom teacher. “Looking for a little bit of a change,” she pursued the administrator certification and became the principal for School of Hope in 2016. She was appointed as the principal of another public charter elementary school at the same time. As a new principal of School of Hope, Principal Alicia made tremendous efforts to keep the school renewed every five years, researching and helping teachers compile a consistent report card on Chinese language learning outcomes, seeking curriculum and teaching materials for both Chinese and English language arts, requesting professional development on bridging English and Mandarin classrooms, as well as collaborating with parents. All staff members spoke highly of Principal Alicia. Ms. Harriet, the special education teacher, commented:

[Principal Alicia] came as the principal and started really developing [School of Hope] and bringing it together. And the program, the whole school and program, kind of starting to come together cuz it was, you know, kind of like ((waving two hands in the air to show how the school was disorganized)). [We] really watch the school, you know, come together. She has done so much for it. (03062021_Harriet_interview 1)

During the individual interview, Principal Alicia talked about School of Hope with great enthusiasm, emphasizing students’ exceptional academic achievement and their language and culture immersion experience through core subjects, as well as art, music, and physical education. Years of experience as an elementary school teacher made her a welcome collaborator and leader for school staff. She took on multiple responsibilities other than being a principal.

During the data collection period, I found Principal Alicia on “car duty” almost every morning and at the end of every school day, guiding students into the school building or to their parents’ car. She did “lunch duty” at least twice per week, helping students sit six feet apart due to the COVID-19 and handing out individually packed lunch in the cafeteria. During the week when all students came back to school in person, she visited each classroom to read to the students. “We want them to come to school enjoy being here, you know, enjoy the love of reading, become lifelong learners. We want them to recognize that learning another language is a powerful and wonderful experience that they will take with them for the rest of their lives,” said Principal Alicia.

Regarding challenges she encounters as a principal, she admitted that working with families of a charter school is one of her biggest challenges.

But as charter school parents, they have more of an invested interest in their children’s education. They have specifically chosen the school. The neighborhood schools have parents, they’re interested, they’re invested, and there was definitely questioning... There’s not a very strong interest in the actual curriculum itself. ...With here, they’ve already made this choice, so they’re there. They want to know. They want [to know] everything that’s going on. So, communication was a hard thing for me to learn about, and it is a challenge that I have to continue to respond to. (062621_Alicia_interview)

In addition, running two different schools during the year of pandemic was “a really unique opportunity experience.” Principal Alicia added:

I’ve been told my job is fascinating because of the multiple hats that you need to wear and just really trying to serve two schools. ...So, this past year, during the pandemic was obviously extremely challenging. But what added to the layer of it, was that we moved two schools into the same building. So just within a week before school started, we still did not have floors. We didn’t have internet and we didn’t have phones and we were supposed to bring kids back during a pandemic with masks on and keeping them six feet apart. So, there was a lot that had to be done, and a lot, most of it was out of my control, and so I just had to be a calming presence for everybody as we move through it. (062621_Alicia_interview)

Ms. Elizabeth, the K-1 English Classroom Teacher

Ms. Elizabeth described herself as a “dog-mom.” She was the only child in her family, and a white, English monolingual general education teacher with four years of teaching experience. She was in her late twenties, born and growing up locally. Her current house was just a few miles away from the school, so she usually arrived at school around 7:10 in the morning to set up the classroom for the day. At the time of the study, she was in her third year at School of Hope, teaching English language arts, social study, and social emotional learning to kindergarteners in the afternoon and first-graders in the morning. “Relationships,” “caring,” and “authenticity” were the three words she used to describe herself as an educator.

Ms. Elizabeth went to a neighborhood K-5 charter school with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. She described her K-5 schooling as “the biggest time in [her] life, where [she] was like the most outgoing, where [she] was like not afraid to take risks” (03122021_Elizabeth_interview 1). It was also in elementary school when she was placed in special education for speech and later attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). She could not say “SHs,” “Rs,” “CHs,” or “Js.” She was put on Adderall for ADHD with anxious and obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Being on Adderall affected Ms. Elizabeth in and out of school. She had no appetite and was off the growth chart because she would not eat much during the week. Then she would make it up during the weekend by taking off the Adderall and eating a lot more. Thus, she was and still is very self-conscious about eating and exercising. When she was in middle school, she started to become shier because “in middle school that’s where like kids are just, they’re just mean. And so middle school was rough” (03122021_Elizabeth_interview 1). The shyness continued into her high school. Ms. Elizabeth was and still is unsure of herself and the people around her.

Teaching was not Ms. Elizabeth's first career choice, even though her family had always told her that she would make a good teacher. She went to college for nursing, but her first semester was "very rough," with issues in both social relationships and academic learning. She started wondering if nursing was something that she wanted to pursue. When she had to decide on a major, she chose elementary education, undecidedly. She shared that her professors in the college were not supportive and questioned her decision. In the winter of 2010, due to the stress of school and a loss of purpose in life, she started to struggle more with restrictive eating and over-exercising.

Ms. Elizabeth started college in 2010 and graduated in 2016, and during that time, was in and out of treatments for her eating disorder. When she started student teaching, one professor kept questioning her: "I think you might need to do this [student teaching] more than once. We're going to give you an advisor who's going to be hard so that way we can just like really know if this is a good fit for you" (03122021_Elizabeth_interview 1). Feeling discouraged, Ms. Elizabeth relapsed into eating disorder but recovered and completed student teaching and teacher education program successfully. Because of this experience, Ms. Elizabeth said that when she thought of who she was as a teacher and what she wanted for her students, she wanted to "be there for the kids," to support them in ways that they need.

The first year at School of Hope "felt almost like a traumatic experience because of the behaviors and the lack of support." Recalling her past three years, Ms. Elizabeth commented:

Classroom management was not strong my first year, because I was just trying to help everybody stay safe. ...I spent a lot of the summer cleaning the classroom and organizing it and making it into like my own, rather than necessarily looking at content and curriculum. And so, when the school year started, I viewed it almost like the day-to-day, felt more like I was tutoring, or I was like substitute teaching. And it was like little things that weren't connected. And so, the first year was just hard year. The second year got better. The second year, I've gotten my kindergarten certificate that summer, and so I had taken like four classes, four accelerated classes. ...And so, I felt strong going into my

second year because I was like I know all this stuff about how to be a kindergarten teacher. (031221_Elizabeth_interview 1)

During the data collection period, I witnessed the growth of classroom management skills in Ms. Elizabeth, and an increased willingness to collaborate with the special education teacher and her Mandarin-speaking teaching partner. She actively participated in school Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team to develop her leadership skills. Regarding her roles as a teacher, “relationship with my students is probably what I value the most,” said Ms. Elizabeth.

Ms. Fei, the K-1 Mandarin Classroom Teacher

Ms. Fei was a new mom of a lovely, 9-month-old baby girl at the time of the interviews. She was an Asian, Mandarin and English bilingual general education teacher with nine years of teaching experience. Ms. Fei was in her early thirties and loved outdoor activities. She brought great energy to her classroom every day. she had worked at School of Hope for about seven years, teaching kindergarten and first grade Chinese language arts, math, science, and social emotional learning. “Community building,” “growth mindset,” and “positive reinforcement” were the three phrases she used to describe herself as an educator.

Ms. Fei was born in a big family, having six sisters and two brothers. With parents too busy to look after her, Ms. Fei grew up with her grandparents in rural China where public schools are under-resourced and short of teachers. Thus, she was raised up with free-spirit, independency, and no interest in study. When her parents brought her back to a city for better education at the age of ten, she still felt disengaged from learning. In fourth grade, her teacher publicly acknowledged her strong writing skills. Since then, she fell in love with writing and became one of the top students in her class. Every time when she recalled this experience, she said:

我现在我自己也会去 reflect, 就是我没有经常去认可学生。就算这个学生可能他其实非常的不起眼, 他跟别的学生[比], 其实他很弱很弱, 那我是不是有在去不停的去找, 去找可以认可他的地方, 让他尝到这种[被认可的]滋味。

Now, I often reflect on my own teaching to see if I acknowledge students' achievements often, including students who do not usually catch my attention or, compared to their peers, are underachieving in academics. I ask myself if I keep finding every possible way to celebrate different intelligences so that they all can get the taste of being seen and acknowledged. (032121_Fei_interview 1)

Education was not Ms. Fei's first choice when deciding an undergraduate major.

Influenced by legal dramas like *Boston Legal*, she studied law at a Chinese university. However, during the second year of her undergraduate education, she lost interest in law. When she was thinking about what to do in the future, she came across the recruitment information for a teacher education program from Michigan State University. It was an online master's program in teaching and curriculum, and at the time, was collaborating with Confucius Institute. Ms. Fei spent her last year of college writing program applications, attending teaching training from the Confucius Institute, and preparing for life abroad.

In 2011, Ms. Fei landed in Michigan. She took courses online and taught for the Confucius Institute at the same time. In her second year, Ms. Fei was assigned to a high school in the city of Detroit. Ms. Fei was shocked by the poverty and infrastructural neglect she saw. The high school was in an old factory building, next to a busy main street. Students at the school were mainly African Americans, with complicated family backgrounds. Several school guards in police uniforms patrolled the halls, giving Ms. Fei the feeling that something terrible could happen in any minute. It was a dark and traumatizing year, as Ms. Fei recalled. She knew nothing about African American history or culture, or about the long history of racial discrimination in the U.S., and she had no idea about how to build relationships with the students. Teaching was not happening at all. Every day was a struggle. Some students refused to

follow directions and found different ways of bullying her, such as hiding her lunch box, and setting a classroom trash bin on fire. One memorable experience brought Ms. Fei to tears. A student's phone rang during a class. It was too loud to ignore so Ms. Fei went down the classroom to find out where it was from. The ring stopped when she walked down the classroom but rang again when she walked back to the front. She knew she was being played. After several rounds, she called the office for help. The main office was too busy to send staff support. A supervisor from the Confucius Institute came for classroom observations now and then and relentlessly criticized her teaching skills. She survived the year, completed her teacher education program in two years and a half, and found the job at School of Hope in 2014.

The first year at School of Hope was an “奇葩 (interesting and odd)” experience. The school was newly founded with low enrollment. Ms. Fei was asked to teach both K-1 multiage and 3-4 multiage classes. These two classrooms were in different school buildings because School of Hope was sharing space with two different schools at the time. Running back and forth between two buildings and preparing for Chinese language arts, math, and science lessons for two different multiage groups, Ms. Fei said she had no weekends at all that year. However, she still appreciated teaching at School of Hope when recalling her teaching experience in Detroit. “去过地狱的人, 就觉得哪里都是天堂 (People who have been to hell would think that everywhere else is like heaven),” said Ms. Fei. In 2014, the school reorganized its grades as student population increased. Since then, Ms. Fei has been teaching kindergarten and first grade as two separate grades.

Ms. Lola, the G2-3 Mandarin Classroom Teacher

Ms. Lola was the only child in her family, and an Asian, Mandarin and English bilingual general education teacher. She described herself as perseverant, competitive, perfectionistic, but

at the same time, “flexible” and “clumsy.” “Caring” and “collaborative” were the two words she used to describe herself as an educator. She had served in her current role at School of Hope for about five years. She taught Chinese language arts, science, and social studies to second and third grade students.

Ms. Lola enjoyed her elementary and middle school learning experience, showing great interests in all subjects and topics. Physics was her favorite subject. After entering high school, due to the pressure from standardized tests, she lost her passion. Her father passed away the year Ms. Lola took the college entrance exams. She lost her purpose in life and was simply trying to get through the days. To attend a university of a comparatively higher rank, she found that education study is the only choice. Ms. Lola said, “我没有想当老师...是老师选择了我。(I never thought about becoming a teacher. ...It is the job of teaching that chose me.)”

Ms. Lola chose elementary education as her undergraduate major but was not interested in it. There was a chance when she could change her major to business study, but she gave it up and decided to study abroad. When she recalled her undergraduate experience, Ms. Lola said, “我应该不是因为不喜欢教育，而是应该我不知道我要啥。(I might not dislike the major of education. I simply didn’t know what I wanted or liked back then.)”

Ms. Lola applied for various graduate programs in education and was accepted by the University of Michigan into a Master of Arts in Education program without a teaching certification. Ms. Lola said the program exposed her to a different world. After overcoming cultural shocks, language barriers, and heavy academic requirements, Ms. Lola started settling down and decided to stay in the United States. School of Hope happened to be looking for a Mandarin classroom teacher when Ms. Lola completed her graduate program. While teaching at School of Hope, she attended a teaching licensure program called Advanced Certification

Elementary (ACE) to get her elementary education certificate, which took her two years.

Recalling her past five years at School of Hope, Ms. Lola said: “我是从零经验开始做教室的那种老师的，就是 classroom teacher，然后一开始的挑战很多，不过一点点都过来了，中间也和别的英文老师还有中文老师都学到了很多。(I started as a classroom teacher with zero experience. Full of challenges and struggles at the beginning but, little by little, I thrived. I learned a lot from many other English and Mandarin classroom teachers in the meantime.)” There was a bilingual resource teacher who came to her classroom often to support Spanish-speaking students. She noticed Ms. Lola’s struggles as a new teacher right away and offered to stay after school to plan lessons together. Ms. Lola said:

因为那个时候我整个人就是属于一个特别懵的状态，也不知道该问谁去帮忙，而且你问谁帮忙，你可能都会觉得自己，一问的问题很傻，二是不是会给别人添麻烦。所以也不知道从何下手去问。所以其实都很多时候都是自己一个人在教室里面，就是想办法，想办法。就是真的是有一种要抑郁的感觉。然后她就主动教我，就是从零到，就是当你，对这个东西完全陌生的时候，你不知道从何开始的时候，是他主动告诉我该怎么做。然后那个时候我就哭了。

I was completely lost back then. I didn’t know who to ask for help. And when asking someone for help, I felt first, my questions were stupid, and second, I might bring them troubles. So, I didn’t know how to ask for help. So, most of the time, I was alone in my classroom, racking my brains, depressed. There she came, offering the help and planning with me from scratch. I cried. (03222021_Lola_interview 1)

During the data collection period, Ms. Lola told me she missed her previous teaching team where the bilingual resource teacher, her English classroom teaching partner, and herself would co-plan lessons every week to bridge Mandarin and English classes.

那个真的是一个非常 ideal 的一种教育。老师就是觉得非常，就是因为你在你的 co-plan 的过程中，你可以做出非常好的 project，然后就像，那种感觉就是，你知道，就是学生在两个教室之间来回穿，然后他会带着这个东西过去，然后在那边找到一种 reinforcement，这是你 ideally 的一种 bridging 嘛。

That was a very ideal way of teaching. Through co-planning, teachers can create awesome projects. In these projects, students go back and forth between the English and Mandarin classes, bringing things they learned from one class and finding reinforcement in the other class. That is an ideal bridging between Mandarin and English. (03222021_Lola_interview 1)

However, the bilingual resource teacher and the English classroom teacher left School of Hope, and Ms. Lola had never had similar collaborative experience again.

Ms. Harriet, the Special Education Teacher

Ms. Harriet was a single mom raising two sons. Before becoming a special education teacher, she was a professional dancer, traveling around the world to perform modern dance. Ms. Harriet had worked in the field of education for 16 years at the time of the study. She was white, English monolingual, approaching middle age. She has served in her current role as a special education teacher at School of Hope for about for about six years. “Curious,” “creative,” and “collaborative” are the three words she used to describe herself as an educator. Ms. Harriet is also one of the presidents of the teachers’ union in the Victor school district.

Ms. Harriet thought special education as a field that found her. “I did not aspire to be a special education teacher. I did not aspire to be a teacher. I did not aspire to teach in the public schools,” said Ms. Harriet. She had a Bachelor of Science in Communication and a Master of Fine Arts. She spent the first half of her adult life and all her childhood dancing in United States and internationally. Thus, she saw herself always as a professional dancer first. Her dancing experience seeped into her special education teaching deep. Her email signature says: “Your smart brain, and my smart brain together makes a better outcome.” It was her own quote. It came from her belief in collective thinking and efforts developed from her years of collaborative dancing.

“Life is a funny thing,” said Ms. Harriet when talking about how she entered special

education. Ms. Harriet had to change her career because she needed to provide a steady stable income for her sons as a single mom. She has taught as a professor in Dance Department in a university. But returning to that position meant leaving the United States, which would have been problematic with her children. As she was deciding which direction to go, she moved to Victor school district because she had family in the area. Both of her sisters were teachers in Victor school district. When she was getting ready to either attend law school or get a degree in teaching, her sister sent her a job advertisement for a special education assistant (SEA). She had no idea of what a SEA or working with people with disabilities meant. She read the job description and went for the interview. It was August. The director of student services was desperate, calling her two hours after the interview to hire her. Ms. Harriet became a SEA in a middle school.

Within two months or so I realized I totally know how to do this. I totally get it. And I completely attribute that to my entire dance collaborative creative background. One hundred percent. My ability to see differently, think differently, hear differently, attack differently, try differently, perceive differently, approach differently, assume differently, see outside of the box, try outside of the box. (03062021_Harriet_interview 1)

A year later, she decided to become a special education teacher, because it would provide her a higher income and good benefits. She found an alternative route teacher education program specifically designed for career-changing professionals with a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

While she was working on her special education certificate, Ms. Harriet stayed working in the district as a SEA in a middle school for a year, and then moved to a high school when a special education teacher went on maternity leave. She worked as a long-term substitute teacher for about two years before she became a full-time certified special education teacher at the high school. She worked there for nine years. In 2015, Ms. Harriet joined School of Hope as the only special education teacher, working with students from kindergarten to fifth grade.

The way she got to School of Hope was “kind of weird,” as Ms. Harriet commented. The director of special education called her in one day and asked if she would like to work at the elementary level. She did not have a certification for elementary education at the time and had no idea about the “weird little Chinese school.” It was another difficult time of her personal life, “not the time to be making a really big professional career move.” She had to take courses again for an elementary certification. She was starting her national board certification that year as well. She was glad that she made the change because she was getting tired of high school, and she liked being the only special education teacher. “It gave me a freedom and some autonomy,” said Ms. Harriet.

She had six students in her caseload, who were qualified for special education under varied eligibility categories, including autism, emotional behavioral disability, and significant developmental delay. She was always the first to arrive at school and the last to leave. All students at the school know Ms. Harriet because she intentionally made herself available to all students. Commenting on her job responsibilities, Ms. Harriet said,

I don't speak Mandarin, so for me to begin to navigate in this program and then to teach or to educate my Mandarin[-speaking] colleagues who didn't know much about special education at all. So, it's been this huge learning and continues to be a really big learning path for everyone, not only for my Mandarin[-speaking] colleagues but constantly for my English-speaking colleagues. I mean. I just feel it's a constant teaching situation for my colleagues as well. To teach them or to keep educating them how to work with students with special needs, whatever those are. So, although that might not be written in the job description. (03232021_Harriet_interview 2)

I found Ms. Harriet was always busy with work, providing pull-out instruction, supporting classrooms, talking to teachers or staff in the hallway, responding to emails, checking in with families, and attending meetings. She was never at rest.

Ms. Lillian, the Special Education Assistant

Ms. Lillian was an Asian, Mandarin and English bilingual special education assistant

(SEA). She has served in her current role at School of Hope for about for about 5 years. Before coming to the United States, she was teaching English in early childhood in China. She worked in multiple childcare centers after coming to the United States. She was planning to become a certified classroom teacher and had taken a few courses for the certification. Meanwhile, she looked for education assistant (EA) positions rather than SEA positions because she had no knowledge about special education. School of Hope enrolled a student with focal epilepsy and other neurological disorders and thus needed a SEA badly. Ms. Lillian was hired for that student. After working with that student for four years side by side, she developed interest and a sense of accomplishment in working with students with disabilities.

During the school year of 2020-2021, Ms. Lillian started taking more teaching responsibilities in Mandarin classrooms via Zoom and in person. Her previous job responsibilities were providing behavior guidance and simple medical care for the student she was hired for. When the student left the school district in 2020, Ms. Lillian was assigned to work with all students receiving special education services at the school, providing academic accommodations in Mandarin classrooms.

我就很高兴今年有机会，就是可以接触很多其他学生。... 那么今年我感觉就是逐渐的从那个 zoom 特别是这个 zoom 开始，我就正式的进入了这个 teaching，比如说这边的所有的这个特殊教育的学生，我都今年都能够教到，而且还可以教到非那个特教学生，特殊学生。我今年今年其实是很好的，对我来说。从这个角度来说，我觉得我很有成就感。

I appreciate having the opportunity of working with many other students with disabilities this year. Starting from the virtual instruction via Zoom in particular, I took up some teaching responsibilities officially. I also got to work with students without disabilities. So, I feel good this year. I gained a great sense of accomplishment from this experience. (03212021_Lillian_interview)

Ms. Lillian described her role as somewhere between a coach and a friend, because she saw the importance of building trust and close relationships with the students and setting a

bottom line to maintain a structure for teaching. Different from a general education teacher or a special education teacher, who had to be strict in behavior management, she said she could be more flexible and giving students less pressure in following directions or completing tasks.

Ms. Yun, the Confucius Institute Classroom Teacher

Ms. Yun was an Asian, Mandarin and English bilingual teacher from China. In China, she taught Chinese language arts in a high school for 9 years. In 2012, she became a Confucius Institute teacher and went to Indonesia teaching Mandarin Chinese at a dual language immersion private school until 2015 when her child was seriously ill. She went back to China and continued teaching at the same high school until coming to the United States in 2019 as a Confucius Institute teacher at School of Hope.

Comparing her experience working at the language immersion school in Indonesia and at School of Hope, she described them as two completely different cultures and education systems. In Indonesia, she was a lead classroom teacher, teaching Chinese language arts in Mandarin only and had strong support from the school and community. She explained that this was because it was a school founded by Chinese Indonesians who wanted to retain their Chinese culture and language heritage. At School of Hope in the United States, she was a classroom resource teacher taking minimal teaching responsibilities because she was not proficient in English.

就是你生活在这样一个国家，真的，语言这一关过不了的话，根本就融入不了这个社会！我不说，就算是语言关过了，你要融入都是比较难的事情。语言关过来的话，就要你要跟白人一起像跟像跟中国人跟华人一起一样的做朋友的话，那都还是不容易的事情。

Living in a country like this, seriously, if we cannot speak the language, there is no way to be included in the society. Even when we finally learned the language, inclusion is still difficult. It is not easy to be friend with the white people compared to making friends with Chinese or Asian people. (03142021_Yun_interview)

She said that in Indonesia as well as in China, teachers shared an office where they could

exchange ideas about teaching and information about students, or simply chat and have fun together. While in the United States, teachers all stayed in their own classrooms throughout the day and worked independently. “然后可能在美国，它是更强调就是工作要独立的，就是自己每个人都要独立。当然也是会跟其他人合作是吧，和其他同事会有合作，但是，我觉得人跟人之间的那种界限感，那种距离感会更远一些 (Maybe here, they emphasize independency in work, that everyone should be independent. They will collaborate with others of course, like working with other colleagues, but the boundary or distance between people is further than that among Indonesian or Chinese teachers,)” said Ms. Yun.

Ms. Yun spoke highly of American education though, especially educational services provided to students with disabilities.

就是美国人真的是非常的保护儿童的，他们非常的就是重视儿童啊。然后大家就是用了一种服务的态度，用这种爱的态度。你看他们就是老师们啊，包括校长，他们工作人员展示在学生面前的一面，就是永远都是很慈爱，然后很跟他们融为一体。然后很喜欢他们，很欣赏他们，都是以这种姿态来跟学生，就是以这种态度来自于学生相处的，就让学生觉得他是被重视的，是被看见的。

Here in the United States, people really protect and care about children. Everyone takes a serving and caring attitude. Teachers, including the principal, and all the staff are always kind and build relationships with students. And they show love and appreciation. Students are being valued and acknowledged. (03142021_Yun_interview)

My Autobiography

I was born in a small town in the southern China. As the only child in a family where my dad was a middle school teacher and my mom was a kindergarten teacher, I was taught to be independent since my earliest childhood memory. Becoming a teacher was the last thing I would have chosen for my career when I was little. My dream was to become a doctor and I was very good at STEM subjects such as math, physics, and chemistry. However, the Chinese college entrance system closed the door to my dream. I ended up in the field of English and Japanese

Literature Studies. I never fell in love with my major, but I truly appreciate knowing two foreign languages that exposed me to different cultures.

I speak, live, and laugh in Mandarin and a Chinese dialect, a dialect that sounds completely different from Mandarin. Since high school, I have been away from my hometown because it is too rural to have a high school. Therefore, I am used to taking leave and returning, packing and unpacking. I was told that education is the only way to a good life and the college entrance exams will determine what my future would look like. I studied hard in my little ten square-foot space until I had a peek into a different world.

I intentionally sought opportunities to volunteer in rural schools during my college years. Every summer and winter break, I went to different rural schools where staffing was in severe shortage, just as electricity, water supply, and other basic facilities. Life was hard there for sure, with only the elderly and young kids staying. But I was longing for endless mountain views, roosters crowing in the early mornings, shining fireflies, the big bright moon, millions of twinkling stars at night, and child's eagerness for knowledge. During one of the home visits, I met a boy of 12 years old who had never attended school. His grandpa claimed that the boy was of low intelligence and thus could not be educated. I felt uncomfortable hearing that comment and realized that I never knew anyone with disabilities at my school. I started wondering where children with disabilities go for education and became interested in the field of special education.

Special education training programs were still new and rare in China then. Therefore, I decided to seek graduate study abroad. My early years in the United States were filled with fear and vulnerability. I tried to open myself to the culture, the people, and the language. However, in a classroom surrounded by no one spoke or looked like me, I had to force myself to become a different person, to smile out of discomfort, to acquire new ways of doing and thinking that

leading to fierce conflicts with my cultural, social, and economic background. I became invisible, silent, and felt less than.

One incident that I rarely mentioned to anyone in my teacher education program happened in the very first month of my student teaching year. A student I was asked to work closely with told her parents that I was trying to choke her. According to her description, the incident happened when I was taking her out to the hallway for a break during the class time, and there was no one around to verify what had happened. Her parents came to school, with a baby boy in the mom's arms, and asked for an explanation one early morning. A meeting was held in a resource room, with the principal, my cooperating teacher, and the family sitting around a U-shape table. I sat inside the curved side. My brain was blank during the meeting. I saw mouths moving. I knew they were talking about me. I did not have the language to defend myself, but I was not given the chance to talk, either. The meeting ended when it was discovered that the student could not be consistent with stories she told. I did not get an apology and was told not to get close to the student anymore. How would the situation be different if I had the agency or capacity to advocate for myself? If I could speak English well, would I have felt less helpless? If the parents had not known that I am Chinese, would they have reacted differently? Till today, I still have no answer or closure. But the concept of agency took root in my heart since then.

Being employed by and conducting my dissertation study at School of Hope was not planned ahead of time. In Spring 2020, before the pandemic shut down schools, I was volunteering at School of Hope by working with students with disabilities in Mandarin classrooms. That summer, Principal Alicia contacted me asking if I could be the long-term substitute teacher for Ms. Fei, who would be taking her maternity leave. I took the offer without knowing how challenging it would be. Being a classroom teacher during the pandemic school

year of 2020-2021 helped me understand the daily lives of public-school teachers, especially the uncertainties they must deal with every day. The pandemic made the year unique. I noticed new patterns in practices of exclusion in the name of better “inclusion” for others. The nation, state, district, and school had to come up with alternative ways of teaching, learning, and collaborating. Therefore, things that had been hidden became visible. At School of Hope, for example, I did not notice the lack of collaboration between English and Mandarin classroom teachers until I became one of them. My curiosity in supporting students with disabilities in a dual language immersion program emerged.

The Insider/Outsider Continuum

I realize that my roles, responsibilities, and positionalities are not static but co-constructed and situated in my relationships with the teachers, students, and other staff at the school. During data collection, I was hired as a part-time building substitute teacher, supporting in two Mandarin classrooms most of the time. The school administrator approved 20 hours of employment and the remaining school hours for conducting the study. Therefore, I was at school four full days a week (Mondays were at-home learning/teaching days). Working during the pandemic, when staff shortages were severe, and policies and regulations could be changed at any minute, I took up many unexpected responsibilities temporarily. For instance, I provided virtual instruction in math, Chinese language arts, and social emotional learning to kindergarteners whose families chose to remain in virtual instruction throughout the school year. Because of my teaching responsibilities, I became an insider, and in many ways a participant myself in the study. Therefore, I carefully documented my participation and interaction with the participants in my fieldnotes and reflective memos. For instance, on March 6, 2021, I wrote:

As the third quarter unfolds, I find myself busy running from one Mandarin classroom to another. I feel I am more an insider than an outsider. I have to support students across all

the grades and substitute for Mandarin classroom teachers quite a lot. Somehow, they all have many personal days off work. As an insider, I seem to become less sensitive to the events, conversations, and interactions. Some incidents or conversations are not noticed as important until a few days later. I was too busy doing my work.

In addition, because of my daily interaction with the teachers and staff at School of Hope, building relationships became even more essential and complicated than I expected. I felt great obligations to the lived experience and knowledge shared with me by participants, as well as a sense of responsibility to do my job well. Again, the pandemic played an important role. School days were filled with an air of anxiety and uncertainty most of the time. Living within this midst, the shared feelings were intense. On March 20, 2021, I wrote:

One thing I am concerned about is my position as a colleague as well as a researcher. As colleagues, we talk and chat about our work, students, families, and other colleagues. We usually center our conversations around how a student's academic achievement can be improved, or how their behavior might be "managed" more effectively. While we are chatting, my instant thought is to take a note of our conversation before I forget. But I don't want to be intrusive. So, most of the time, I wait until the end of the school day to write from my memory. I also often refrain from asking questions or initiating conversations related to my study because I don't want to take up their time.

In addition, I noticed that I had more communications with Mandarin classroom teachers than with English classroom teachers. I tried to seek a balance between the time spent in Mandarin classrooms and English classrooms, but due to my job responsibilities, I worked more in the Mandarin classrooms. After completing data collection, I moved in with one of the Mandarin classroom teachers who helped me when I was dealing with the grief of losing my grandpa to stomach cancer in September 2021. I cannot treat them as study participants only to be mined for data.

Yet, I do not feel that I am an insider of the family community because most social gatherings and school events were cancelled due to the pandemic. I failed to receive any parent consent to participate or have their child to participate in the study. Therefore, I had limited

opportunities to know students' family lives and stories. In addition, because of my age and sociocultural background, I have very limited background knowledge of the lives of middle-class white families, interracial families, or immigrant families. Thus, I intentionally seek information about the family community from the participants and from publicly available documents such as the family handbook or the school website built by and for the family community.

Recalling the experience, I cannot neglect the impacts of my presence on the school community. Ms. Harriet, the special education teacher, told me that her schedule and Ms. Lilian's schedule would be completely different if I had not been at the school. I cannot ignore the changes I had been experiencing, either. At the beginning of the data collection, I did not know that I would be so involved in the school. I had to constantly negotiate the tensions inherent in my teacher-researcher, insider-outsider position. It has been a long journey for me, acquiring the strategies to present myself differently in the classroom at different time, knowing when to insert and when to retreat. It was also a time when I experienced emotional trauma and fears relating to both my mom's and my grandfather's health conditions, and insecurities associated with being an Asian international student when the Asian community encountered racist and xenophobic attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic. I felt the need to calmly respond to whatever was coming up for me.

Summary

In this chapter, I set the scene for my study through describing the setting and the participants. I reflected on my own identities, positionalities, and subjectivities that have influenced the design and implementation of this study and revealed the changes I have experienced in relation to the participants. I hope, through writing myself into this study, I can gain a better understanding of my identity, develop a stronger sense of agency, and turn it into

emancipatory action. In the next chapter, I draw from interview data, observation data, and document data to answer the three research questions of the study.

Chapter V: Findings

In the previous chapter, I elaborate on the ecology of the research site by attending to its demographics in the neighborhood, the school district, and the history and policy of the focal school. The description provides a window into school and district culture and structure. I also share narrative sketches of each participant, outlining their personal and professional journeys before working at the focal school. I describe each participant with multidimensional identities as well as my roles and relationships with the participants in transparency. I organize this chapter around themes that answer the three research questions: (1) How do Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) programs teachers perceive and exert agency to negotiate inclusive education for dual language learners with disabilities? (2) What are the personal factors regarding identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education? (3) What are the contextual factors of the school and district that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education? While drawing mainly on interview data, I also supplement my arguments with inputs from fieldnotes and policy documents to provide a holistic account of the participants' perceived and enacted agency for inclusive education.

Perceptions and Practices of Teacher Agency for Inclusion

The first research question that this study addressed is *how Chinese-English dual language immersion (DLI) program teachers perceive and exert agency for inclusive education.*

Adopting a sociocultural approach, I conceptualize teacher agency for inclusive education as a temporal, relational, and situational achievement. Through intentional engagement with the school contexts, teachers individually and collectively redistribute learning opportunities,

leverage multiple resources, cultivate different curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and involve multiple stakeholders to work against practices that perpetuate norms of ability, language, and differences. All four teacher participants initially said they were unfamiliar with the term of teacher agency. When I asked them to talk about their everyday intentional and autonomous teaching practices and decisions, their stories revealed that they all did engage in everyday agentic work to teach in ways that they saw as inclusive. And their enacted agency for inclusive education varied from person to person.

A Low Sense of Teacher Agency

During the interviews, when I mentioned the term of teacher agency, teacher participants shared that they did not think they had agency or did not know what teacher agency meant. For instance, Ms. Fei said: “这个 term 还挺让人难理解的。... 那你说这种 teacher union, 是不是也算呢, 他就是代表老师去跟上面的人去 negotiate (The term is quite difficult to understand. ... How about teacher union? They represent teachers and negotiate with the authority on behalf of teachers. Does this kind of work count as agency?)” (032121_Fei_interview 1)? Similarly, Ms. Harriet said, “I don’t know what that means...so, I understand it better when you use those other words, so activism and advocacy...so when I think of teacher activism, I think right away to like my work in the teachers’ union” (052921_Harriet_interview 3). Such comments demonstrated that teachers felt powerless as an individual teacher and that only through the teacher union could they participate in decision makings.

This low of sense of agency was also demonstrated in their comments about their

experiences of teaching during the pandemic and their role as a teacher. For instance, during the school year of 2020-2021, the focal school went through three different teaching models: half-day in-person half-day virtual, full-day concurrent teaching, and full-day in-person teaching. Teachers had zero input in these decisions and received unclear instruction on short notice every time when the teaching mode was shifted. Principal Alicia mentioned in the school letter to families on April 7, 2021:

Getting our school's schedules, staffing, processes, and network of structures all set and ready for April 13th for our students has been a detailed and time-consuming undertaking. My sincere thank you to our teaching staff for helping to orchestrate this third "first" day of school.

Getting ready for each new "first" day of school, however, was far more complicated than the email sounded. Teachers were given notifications less than a week earlier. Ms. Fei said: "一般等老师知道的时候,都已经定下来了,没有我们商量的余地 (Usually, when teachers are notified of the decisions, it's been nailed down. There is no room for us to negotiate)" (031821_Fei_observation).

When talking about their professional role as a teacher, Ms. Harriet complained:

I think teachers, I mean the teaching profession is at all-time low, right? So, I wonder why? Well, why? It's because it's hard, and it's a low-paying job, and teachers are blamed for everything. Look at this year, right? Look what teachers are doing. They're teaching social-emotional. We're feeding kids in school. ... We're giving them health care. We're exercising them. We're teaching, oh yeah, and then we're teaching them how to read and do math and how to write, you know. We're teaching them manners. And during the pandemic, who got blamed for all the woes of children? Schools. Who wants to be a teacher and take all that on? So, if teachers aren't filled up. ... Their cup is empty. They don't get anything to give. So, the agency is about having teachers advocate to be heard to administration, to school boards. (052921_Harriet_interview 3)

Ms. Lola shared similar opinion, saying:

那老师如果都有温饱问题解决不了,他怎么可能去,让每一个孩子都觉得,提供感情的需要,那不就是在掏空自己,燃烧自己,这不就是就变成蜡烛啦。但我们不应该把老师比作蜡烛。...你应该让一个快快乐乐,每天白白胖胖的老师在教室里,才

能把你们的孩子教的快快乐乐。

If a teacher's basic needs are not met, how can you expect them to provide emotional support to each student? Isn't that a way of emptying ourselves, burning ourselves to fulfil the needs of others? Like a candle? But we cannot treat a teacher like a candle. ... You should first make sure that teachers are happy, satisfied, and fulfilled so that they can create a nurturing classroom where students enjoy learning. (050821_Lola_interview 3)

Ms. Elizabeth added:

I feel teachers are blamed and pointed fingers at a lot, and I think that affects how we feel about ourselves, how effective we feel. And how we feel about our ability to teach. ...I think that we need to be seen as people who are, we're doing our best every single day, just like doctors, nurses, celebrities, right? Those are typically the professions where "Oh my god, a person's a doctor, like they're amazing." Wouldn't it be just so crazy if you were like "I'm a teacher," and somebody was like "that's so amazing." And I just don't think that's how it is right now. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)

The comments above demonstrated that teacher participants are not empowered to teach inclusively and meet needs of all diverse students. Their sense of teacher agency was limited, especially in terms of negotiating with top-down policies. They asked to be heard and acknowledged by policy makers. As I observed, individually, teacher participants exerted their agency in their everyday classroom teaching. Classrooms were where they felt having control over and exerting agency individually.

Varied Individual Practices of Teacher Agency Within Classroom Bounds

Literature has shown that teachers' agentive actions for inclusive education vary, in both kind and extent, from context to context (Li & Ruppert, 2021). In this study, general education teachers' agency for inclusion was mainly manifested in their individual classroom practices, such as seeking collegial support, building relationships with students, creating culturally and linguistically rich curriculum, and providing accommodations and modifications under the advice of the special education teacher. The special education teacher mainly enacted agency for inclusion by collaborating with general education teachers as an equal partner, giving advice

about differentiation and universal design for learning aligned practices, and sharing the stage while supporting in classrooms. In the following section, I use narratives by and about each participant to demonstrate their situated practices of teacher agency embedded in daily teaching.

Ms. Elizabeth: Constantly Seeking Collegial Support and Building Relationships with Students. As an early career teacher, Ms. Elizabeth was unsure of herself, sensitive to the social hierarchy within the school, and feeling vulnerable when speaking up. To develop knowledge and skills in inclusive education pedagogy, Ms. Elizabeth constantly sought advice and feedback from colleagues and the school principal and worked long hours preparing lesson plans. She was the only teacher I observed working collaboratively with Ms. Harriet, the special education teacher. However, she said that rather than advocating for collaborative teaching, she felt just “okay with her [Ms. Harriet] being a part of the teaching process” (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3). Admitting that “I want to be more inclusive. I just don’t know how to” (031221_Elizabeth_interview 1), Ms. Elizabeth added:

I would say that she [Ms. Harriet] is also a person who I feel like I can go to for questions regarding, you know, not just the special ed students, but really any students because they have a different lens of how they were trained rather than ... how general ed is trained. I’m sure there’s many other courses that you take for special ed that general ed doesn’t necessarily take. And so, to get those feedback, the tips, the tricks from special ed teachers is very helpful. And so, I would say that the work that [Ms. Harriet] does with the kids on her caseload is great. I would say it’s also really helpful for all the other children because it brings things to light that I guess I didn’t really know about. (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2)

When I observed Ms. Elizabeth’s classroom, I saw Ms. Harriet taking over, breaking down and writing task directions step by step on the front board, leading reading or writing groups with a mixed of students with and without disabilities, or walking around the classroom redirecting kids back to work. Meanwhile, Ms. Elizabeth gave whole class instruction and responded to student questions.

Ms. Elizabeth also worked closely with Ms. Fei, the Mandarin classroom teacher who taught the same groups of kindergarten and first grade students. Having the same lunch schedule, Ms. Elizabeth used the lunch time as the planning time to “talk about behaviors...talk about strategies, things that we can do differently” (031221_Elizabeth_interview 1) with Ms. Fei. As a dual language immersion school, School of Hope had long been working on the development and implementation of language bridging to help students grow in both Mandarin and English and mastery of grade level standards in subject contents. Teachers had also been planning curriculum units for academic content bridging between Chinese and English classrooms to help create a seamless environment for students. Ms. Elizabeth was the most active participant in “bridging Mandarin and English so that the kids can see the similarities or make those connections in their brains” (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2). At the time of the study, Ms. Elizabeth and Ms. Fei mainly worked on bridging their classroom environment, setting the same classroom behavior expectations, desk arrangements, and line-up orders. Their goal was to minimize transition time and confusion from one classroom to another.

Ms. Elizabeth never felt comfortable seeking help or collaboration because “then you have to admit that you can’t do something, or that you need help with something (031221_Elizabeth_interview 1), or “whenever there is another adult in the classroom, I feel like oh my God, they’re judging me” (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2). However, Ms. Elizabeth knew that she was not strong in classroom management, and not sure how to deal with a scripted curriculum. For instance, she felt she had to read verbatim from the lesson guidance provided in the Second Step curriculum for social-emotional learning. She also believed that students could learn a lot from the special education teacher. Therefore, she actively stepped out of her comfort zone and exert agency in seeking collegial advice and support.

Ms. Elizabeth performed agency in building relationships with students. She recalled how she was treated differently as if there was something wrong with her when she was diagnosed as having attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and speech issues. She said she wanted to be “the opposite” of how she felt and added, “I wouldn’t want them to feel you know different or that I viewed them different or less than. I would want them to feel just as important” (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2). She pointed out:

Adults are always making meaning out of things, and so, if our children aren’t seeing themselves recognized in the books that we read, if they’re not seeing themselves recognized in the posters around the classroom, if they’re not seeing themselves recognized as an important person of the classroom, then they...would think that they are not as important, that they are lesser than. ... When I choose those videos in the morning, I choose videos that focus on kindness, but they’re also not just white women or white men reading it. I tried to find videos of people with accents, videos of people of color reading it. I try to find videos that celebrate diversity, while also focusing on kindness. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)

Therefore, relationships with students were what Ms. Elizabeth valued the most about her responsibilities as a teacher because it had “a cumulative effect of how the child feels about their education and how they feel about their ability” (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3).

Ms. Fei: Teaching Universally, and Engaging Students in Decision Making. Having seven years of teaching experience, Ms. Fei was confident in her teaching of Mandarin. She commented: “You know what you are doing, 对吧, 然后你有这个 confidence, you know you are good at it. 而且你有好几年的这个经历。这个 experience 告诉你, 你做的东西是 worked, 就是 what you are doing is working (You know what you are doing, right? Then you have the confidence, you know you are good at it. And you have years of experiences. This experience proves you that your strategies worked, that is, what you are doing is working.)” (022121_Fei_interview 1). With such confidence, she actively improved her inclusive practices such as differentiation, scaffolding, and universal design for learning aligned strategies. For

example, as the only Mandarin classroom teacher teaching math in Mandarin at the school, Ms. Fei attended professional development in math curriculum and teaching, studied common core standards, and communicated with Ms. Harriet every week to learn what accommodations or differentiations she could provide for students with disabilities in her math class. She said before becoming a fulltime teacher, she did not even know what special education meant. In her early teaching years, when she was planning math lessons, she could only think of students whose academic achievement was average.

你只能想到说, 我这个学生, 这种 average students, 给他设计的课程是满足他的这个需要, 然后你没有办法想到说可能这个学生程度高一点程度低一点需要什么? 但是如果一开始就有这个 mindset, 然后去按照那个 mindset 去训练自己的话, 那的确就是, 你设计的课程越来越, 就是可以受众更广一点, 我觉得是很有意义, 但是的确不容易。...就你开始设计的时候, 你就把那个想到了, 那就不会是一个额外的。

At the beginning, you can only think of the average students and design lessons to meet this group of students. You won't be able to consider needs of those who might be academically higher or lower. But if you have the mindset of meeting universal needs, and train yourself with that mindset, you can slowly make your lessons accessible to a larger group of students. I think it's very meaningful, not easy though. If you can universally design your lesson from the very beginning, thinking of a wider range of students' needs, there won't be extra work to do later. (050121_Fei_interview 3)

In addition, she searched for math aligned read aloud books for Ms. Elizabeth to review and use to reinforce taught math concepts in the English classroom.

Regarding teaching Mandarin language arts, Ms. Elizabeth said she could not rely on Ms. Harriet for advice because Ms. Harriet did not speak Mandarin. She also pointed out that “这个中文, 它就是一个漏网之鱼。第一, 明文没有规定说你这个中文要放在它的这个 IEP 里面。然后要去 check in, 要去这个 document [Mandarin learning often gets overlooked. First, there is no written policy saying that Mandarin learning related goals should be written in an IEP, or to check in and document related progresses]” (03212021_Fei_interview 1). Therefore, to meet a wide variety of learning needs of young kids and cultivate their interests in Mandarin, she self-

taught teaching techniques like using music, imagery, physical response or sensation, games, mime or gesture, and positive praise.

More importantly, she engaged students in decision making frequently. She had students come up with strategies to memorize Chinese characters or sentence structures, choose books for shared reading, vote for activities, and be a leader and a peer helper to each other. For example, when all students returned to school in person, there were kindergarteners who had never attended school in person. Therefore, they knew nothing about school and classroom routines and rules. Ms. Fei had other kids explain those rules and routines and assigned them table partners for help. During the lunch break, I told her that I appreciated her always giving student choices and ownerships in their own learning. Ms. Fei replied:

你说的对，把 ownership 给学生。然后 teacher as facilitator。而且你有没有发现，如果老师一直在讲你要做什么做什么，他们就厌了。耳朵就已经听的麻木了，不如让学生讲，他就觉得很有兴趣...有时候思路清楚的，我都自愧不如。

You are right, we should give students ownership. Teacher as facilitator. And I don't know if you've noticed, if a teacher constantly telling the students what to do or not to do, they get bored and won't listen. Then might as well have the students talk. Other kids may become interested again... Sometimes, they have a clear train of thoughts that I don't even have. (041521_fieldnote_lunch talk)

Ms. Lola: Critiquing the Rigor of Chinese Curriculum and Lack of Schoolwide

Collaboration. Moving into her fifth year of teaching at School of Hope, Ms. Lola felt more confident and comfortable working with a diverse group of students, including students with disabilities. Recalling her first three years at the school, as a non-certified new teacher, she said she was extremely overwhelmed by classroom management and making up Chinese curriculum day by day. She constantly questioned herself, feeling completely lost regarding what to teach and how to teach. She admitted that she used to rely on Ms. Harriet completely for supporting students with disabilities in her classroom because she was too overwhelmed to even notice if a

student was struggling with activities. Slowly, she reached out to colleagues for help, observed a variety of classrooms, co-planned lessons with her English classroom partner, language resource teacher, and the special education teacher, conducted research on teaching Chinese as a second language, and took teacher education courses during weekends to be certified. She took advantage of every possible resource and opportunity to develop her knowledge and competence in teaching inclusively.

Five years later, however, she realized that she still struggled with providing high-quality and culturally rich language instruction to all. This time, she attributed her failure to the lack of a rigorous Chinese curriculum and schoolwide collaboration. Unlike Ms. Fei who had a set of textbooks designed for students with no prior exposure to Chinese, Ms. Lola had to make up a Chinese curriculum and learning materials for the second and third grade students who had a wide range of Chinese language proficiency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Ms. Lola critiqued:

学校缺的是一个, 就什么 curriculum coordinator, 需要的是自上而下的这种中文, 包括中文自上而下的也需要有 curriculum 的联系。然后也是需要横向的。...其实我们中文老师也坐下来聊过。但是其实聊的时候大家有很多很多的意见, 就是各种各样不同的意见交织在一起, 最后就是没有什么 progress。...因为我们每个人都有自己的 perspective, 每个人都有自己的局限。因为我不是专门做 curriculum design, 那所以我才说, 从一开始我就一直说我们需要的是 someone paid for us。然后从一个直接给我们这样一个 authority, 然后就我们也需要 be educated。...我是一直对这个项目我有希望他去改, 就有些地方他不对, 我就觉得我有很多的 criticize...我没有这样的专业性去做这样一个 push 的人。但是我觉得应该有 push, 这是我 personally 的一个 opinion。但我肯定推不动, 我也不想, 我也没有办法去推了。我也不是没有尝试过。

The school needs a curriculum coordinator to help with vertical Chinese curriculum collaboration. And then of course horizontal collaboration. ... Our Mandarin classroom teachers did sit down and talk about curriculum reform. But everyone had different thoughts and opinions, so we cannot make any progress. ... We all have our own perspectives and limitations. I am not an expert in curriculum design. So, as I said earlier, we need an authority. We also need to be educated. I have long been hoping to change the

program. There are things that are not right, and I have many criticisms. ... But I do not have the expertise to push a curriculum reform. I don't want to. I cannot. I did try though. (032221_Lola_interview 1)

Having tried to coordinate a schoolwide team for Chinese curriculum design but failing to make any progress, Ms. Lola said she focused on improving her own teaching curriculum and materials. For example, the school used a reading program called Level Chinese. It is very similar to the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy program that provides leveled books for guided reading instruction. However, Ms. Lola questioned the logic of the leveled books:

其实你去看 level, 每个 level 的 words, 我一直想问的是, 为什么你选这词啊, 对吧, 那我为什么要在 level C 去教面包? 为什么不能把有先教了呢?

When you look at the required words to be taught in each level, I have been wondering, how do you decide what words to teach? Right? Why should I teach the word bread in level C? Why cannot I teach the word has/have first? (041721_Lola_interview 2)

Therefore, she spent her own after school time in doing research and creating teaching materials that would meet students' interest and would not reinforce stereotyped or essentialized Chinese culture. Lola added:

对于中国文化的刻板印象是很存在的, 就是一些 typical 的事情。...我觉得你要是觉得所有的中国的审美都是红色, 然后龙, 都是穿旗袍, 那就太简单了, 不是吗? 那其实中国有很多现代的东西啊。包括就是一些白瓦黑墙, 或者是你至少你多元一点。...就不是一想到中国就是万里长城, 就是你好, 就是吃饺子, 就是去饭店用 fortune cookie。...所以我才会给他们看一些什么 authentic Chinese 啊。

There still exist stereotyped impressions of Chinese culture, things that are considered as typical. ...I have been thinking that if you believe Chinese people only like red, dragon, or cheongsam, don't you think it's too simple? China can be very modern, like buildings with white tiles and black walls. Or at least, be more diverse. ...Don't say Great Wall of China, Nihao, or dumping every time when you think of China. That's why I have the students watch authentic Chinese. (041721_Lola_interview 2)

Regarding teaching students with disabilities in her classroom, Ms. Lola also embraced differentiation and universal design for learning pedagogy. She said:

那你在听他讲这个对这个孩子 *overwhelming* 的时候,你自然而然也会去想到,哦,那对别的孩子要怎么去,就是不是也是 *overwhelming*。只不过那个孩子他比较老实,或者是这个,只不过那个孩子他可能相对来说他更能,他的包容能力更强。但是其实对他来说也不是最好的一个学习状态。...就是当你 *benefit* 这个孩子的时候,其实所有的孩子都能受到 *benefit*。

When you listen to Ms. Harriet talking about how certain tasks would be *overwhelming* to a student, you will naturally think if it would also be *overwhelming* to other students. Simply because that student is quite and keeps things to themselves, or that student can take on more challenges, showing no struggle does not mean that they are learning to their best. ...When you provide support that *benefit* this student, all the other students can *benefit* from the same support. (032221_Lola_interview 1)

As she developed a sense of efficacy in teaching more inclusively, Ms. Lola started to take up most of the responsibilities in providing modifications and accommodations rather than waiting for the special education teacher or the special education assistant to come.

Ms. Harriet: Refusing to Stand on the Side, and Constantly “Educating” Others and Self. Before working at School of Hope, Ms. Harriet had been a special education assistant at a middle school for a year and then a special education teacher at a high school for 9 years. Therefore, as the most experienced teacher as well as the only special education teacher at School of Hope, she was considered as the “glue of collaboration” by Ms. Elizabeth. And Principal Alicia described her as a teacher who put “their heart and soul into providing what it is that those students need in order to be successful.” Aware of her unique position at the school and commitment to collaborative creative work, Ms. Harriet constantly inserted herself in general education classrooms, refused to stand on the side, and initiated emails offering advice or information about working with students with disabilities, in her words, “to keep trying to educate my dear colleagues” (052921_Harriet_interview 3). Commenting on her role and daily responsibilities as a special education teacher, Ms. Harriet said,

I have spent my career as a special ed teacher, working hard to figure out each classroom teacher, figure out what makes them tick, what makes them work, what their story is, what their method is so that I can gain their trust. I can gain their respect so that I can

begin to get in there, so that I can begin to collaborate with them, because I hate working on the side. I hate it. I just, I find it, especially with kids with disabilities, especially, out of all the kids in the classroom, especially with kids with disabilities. Working on the side, it goes against everything in special education. Everything.
(030621_Harriet_interview 1)

I never saw Ms. Harriet sitting or standing next to students with disabilities only. She walked around the classroom, working with all students who needed help and trying to group students with and without disabilities for small group instruction. However, Ms. Harriet still felt “like a failure, all the time, always” (032321_Harriet_interview 2). She added:

Maybe you can get them to modify some of their styles to do better with the kid, but I haven’t seen a lot of teachers really change their teaching style. But I’ve been able to get teachers to come around and understand “hey this kid needs this.” Now, do they themselves implement it? No, I have to give it to them. And I have to keep saying, “look this kid needs this, get it? This has to happen.” And at least they know it and can speak it. Do they do it? No. But at least they can talk about it after five years.
(032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Ms. Harriet’s frustration over having to constantly remind general education teachers of the needs of students with disabilities in her classroom was manifested in the following email on April 13, 2021.

Thank you for making me aware of changes to your schedule for this final pivot. As a kind reminder: When changes are made to regular education schedules and there is a student with an IEP in the classroom, this can cause changes to the minutes required by that student’s IEP (a legal document). Adjusting the special education coverage for that one student can then cause a domino effect of adjustments and change to multiple student schedules. ...I simply wish to continue to educate how the world of special education works with the world of regular education.

This was just one of many similar emails Ms. Harriet sent to teachers and staff when classroom teachers changed their class schedules without notifying her of the changes. In our interview conversation on May 29, 2021, when I mentioned about these emails, Ms. Harriet said:

I am constantly trying to educate my dear colleagues, and I, it’s only because for so many years, teachers and they’re not being mean, they’re not being cruel, they just don’t know better. They honestly just don’t know better. But what they’re doing is they’re creating... a really hard thing for special ed and...the related service people. And OT, PT, and

speech travel between buildings. So, let's just take [teacher], the speech pathologists, right? So, say like she has a speech scheduled, several students scheduled for Monday afternoon, and kind loving regular ed teachers schedule a couple of extra recesses for Monday afternoon, and they don't tell anybody, and [teacher] is driving over from [school] because that's her morning building, right? She is zooming over to get over to work with her three [School of Hope] speech students. ... She walks into the classroom, and no one is there. ... And she finds out, oh, they're out playing. When that happens, one time, okay. It happens two times ((frustrated face)). When happens three times ((angry face)). (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Ms. Harriet also pointed out how she felt scheduling specialized instructional time to fit into general education class schedule did not work for students with disabilities.

So those kids that struggle with transition and struggle with changing schedules, and those students who have to leave. ... So, here's a kid who has to stop an activity, maybe mid-activity for a break, now the break is supposed to help him manage his day better, but he might be in the middle of math. ... Or he's supposed to stop so he can go do speech, then he comes back into the room, stuff is going on, instruction is happening and now he's got to pick back up. His brains got to pick back up and he's got to fit in. So, the kid in the classroom who maybe has the most struggle doing exactly that is being asked to do the hardest thing that he struggles with. Right? And then we get frustrated with him, or I get frustrated with him for having a hard time. ... So, I try to keep educating my regular ed colleagues about these things. Slowly, slowly, slowly. And if I could figure out a way for a kid like [student] to not have to disengage, to go take a break, that is supposed to make his day be smoother, I would. I'm still trying to think about it. Or how can he have speech, where he doesn't have to disengage, leave, and then reinsert, right? (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Feeling “prisoned” or restricted to the classroom teachers but understanding that classroom teachers were also “prisoned” to their curriculum and things they were required to teach, Ms. Harriet said she would “continue to impart to them, [general education teachers], tips, tricks, skills, strategies, and techniques that not only work for my kid but for the ten other students that can benefit from those same strategies” (032321_Harriet_interview 2).

Besides “educating” general education teachers, Ms. Harriet also kept educating herself in inclusive pedagogy. Admitting that she had been wrong in past – “I'm sure there are other special educators who do a far better job. ... I always feel like a failure ((bitter smile)). I feel like I do some things really well and other things, I'm clueless about” (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

– Ms. Harriet said educators had to be a lifelong learner. For example, she took professional development training in social emotional development and engaged in a year-long project called Breathe for Change.

I've been fascinated about how the brain works. ... You know, what makes the brain absorb information this way? Or why doesn't this kid's brain work that way? Why doesn't this method work for this way? Why is [student] in second grade still not reading? Why isn't, these strategies and skills that I've been, that I'm using, why aren't they clicking with her? So, I'd like to dig into that and figure it out, you know, I kind of I spend time really thinking about it, and then I go research and try and pull it apart. ... I like to pull apart the emotional piece of a kid along with the academic piece of the kid, along with the behavioral piece of the kid, because it's all related.
(032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Learning from the Breathe for Change project, Ms. Harriet incorporated yoga in her one-on-one reading and math instruction with a second-grade child with intellectual disabilities.

So, this year when she comes into work with me, ... we go through the yoga sequence, and then after the yoga we go over to my whiteboard, and we talked about how we're feeling now. Do we feel calmer? Are our bodies focused? Do we feel ready for learning? ... Then we do our math together, and then we do our reading together. And I mean this whole thing takes like 20 minutes out of our 30 minutes of time together ((laugh)). But I have this great quote that's up on my board she [the student] said "yoga helps me do numbers better" and in general, she does work better with me. She's more focused. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

However, she admitted that mindfulness activities could only be done when she pulled students out for one-on-one instruction because "classroom teachers very typically are very precious about [their own teaching], cuz they're all by themselves in their classroom and their classroom is theirs" (030621_Harriet_interview 1).

Collective Agency for Exclusionary Practices

Despite their individual agentic effort to create inclusive learning environment, teacher participants seemed to collectively use their agency to exclude some students with disabilities. One example of their collective actions to justify exclusionary practices was evidenced in their everyday written and verbal communication in constructing deficit-oriented narratives about

students with disabilities. These narratives attached pathological meanings to students' behavior and learning. During the time of the study, I worked at School of Hope as a part-time educational assistant, supporting students with disabilities by working with Ms. Fei, the kindergarten and first grade Mandarin classroom teacher, in the morning, and Ms. Lola, the second and third grade Mandarin classroom teacher, in the afternoon. Therefore, I was involved in most conversations about students who I worked with. I noticed a widely and repeatedly shared narrative about a student who received special education services under the eligibility category of emotional behavioral disorder. The student was placed in virtual learning at home when the school resumed in-person instruction for all students. The student had been at School of Hope since kindergarten, so all teachers and staff at the school knew him well. I was told that the student had trashed different classrooms, broken school property, used inappropriate language, hit classmates, and thrown objects at people. The school had police come for intervention since kindergarten. Narratives among teachers about that student were so negative that I was initially hesitant to build a relationship with him. As I worked with the student more, I found that he had long been denied a social and learning membership in his class community even though he spent all his school time in the general education classroom with his peers.

All the previously mentioned agentive inclusive strategies teacher participants practices were use when working with the student, such as building relationships with students, creating a classroom community where students see themselves as a leader and peer helper to each other, or taking time to know students' needs for personalized support. When I asked the teacher participants to describe their experiences working with any student with disabilities, they all used that student as a counter example to show how inclusion did not work for him. They either expressed that they could not find a way to connect with him or emphasized the harmful impacts

his behavior had on his classmates. For instance, Ms. Elizabeth said:

So, like my first year was the third-grade group and they're just behaviorally, they were like behaviorally just really, really challenging. [Student] was not getting any support... and so it felt a lot more like I was trying to figure out how to manage those behaviors. Then I really felt like I could teach the other students, because if chaos is happening on one side of the room, then the other children aren't going to be able to focus on the learning, they're going to be focusing on the chaos. (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2)

Ms. Lola was the current Mandarin Classroom teacher of the student at the time of the study. She was the only one who said something nice about the student among all teachers and staff.

就我觉得他还挺酷的。我真的是真心挺喜欢这个小孩儿的...就是[student]所有的 pattern 都是他做一些,他觉得无聊了,他要做一些他觉得有聊的事儿,但这些事是恰恰跟学生学校的 rule 肯定是 against the rule 的,但你当你要 redirect 的时候,你如果 push 他坐下,那他一定就会开始就是爆发,所以基本上都是这样的一个 pattern。...就是一般来说对于学生的 follow up,在[student]这是不管用的。你没有如果 if。所以把他的水杯拿走之后他很生气。然后再加上所有的老师都围在那儿他更生气。我如果是[student],我也很生气。...但可能后来我现在有点理解,因为这是学校的规矩,就是只是说对于[student]他已经不适合这个环境了,他已经这个这个地方对他来说,已经是太过于就是这个约束太强了,你对其他的已经怎么说呢被社会化的孩子,或者是被 socialize 的被 civilized 的孩子 ((laugh)),他是可以 follow,他是可以明白为什么要 follow the rule 的。但对与[student]来讲这个 rule 已经是 beyond 他的那种他可以接受程度了。所以你一方面 embarrassed him,另一方面这个约束太强了,他就是不接受。所以就是所以我觉得对于[student]来讲学校现在已经是一个非常 struggle 的 place 了。

I think [student] is a cool kid. I truly like this kid. ... There is a pattern in the [student's] behavior. Often when he becomes bored, he would engage in things he thinks interesting. But usually, things that he thinks interesting are against rules of our school. So, when you redirect or demand him to sit down, he would flip. Always in this pattern. ... The regular follow up procedure does not work for [student]. Logic like "if ... [or else ...]" does not work for him. So, when they took away his water bottle in case he throws it towards people, he got angry. And when all the supporting teachers standing around him, he became even angrier. If I was him, I would feel angry as well. ... Later I realized that it is the rule of the school, the school environment that does not work for [student]. This place is too restrictive to him. For other students, those who are socialized or civilized ((laugh)), they can follow the rules and understand why they should follow the rules. But for [student], these rules are beyond his acceptance. On the one hand, teachers embarrassed him in front of his peers, on the other hand, the school is too restrictive for him to adapt to. So, in my opinion, the school is a very struggling place for [student] now. (041721_Lola_interview 2)

However, as understanding as Ms. Lola was, she still agreed on virtual placement for the student

because she felt all the inappropriate behavior the student performed had caused harm to the other students and affected her instruction. Ms. Lola admitted the mismatch between the student's support needs and the current school environment. But she felt incapable to change the school environment. To some extent, she also attributed negative pathological meanings to the student's behavior. For example, during our informal chats at school, she shared her fear of having the student in her classroom because they might resort to unsafe behaviors at any moment. Such association of violence with emotional and behavioral disorders had a negative impact on her advocacy for the student even though she had a comparatively good rapport with the student.

Ms. Harriet, who was considered an advocate for students with disabilities by everyone at the school, was also a contributor to the collective narrative about the student. The very first information Ms. Harriet shared with me about the student was his disability category. She wrote in his individualized education plan (IEP) that: “[student] received a medical diagnosis of Autism in Fall 2020. He also has a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Adjustment Disorder with Academic Inhibition.” (Capitalization in original) The student received special education services under the disability category of emotional behavioral disorder. But Ms. Harriet added information about his “medical diagnosis,” pinpointing problems within the student.

She also highlighted the student's inappropriate behaviors throughout the IEP documents. For example, when describing the student's present level of academic achievement, Ms. Harriet regularly ended a sentence with “however,” adding things that the student could not perform to the requirements, especially his noncompliant behaviors, such as “flatly refused to do the work” or “not a fan of showing his work.” In the functional performance section, Ms. Harriet portrayed

the student as choosing to be the “outskirts” and “simply stop, shrug, ... refuse to engage in talking about it to learn what to do or how to do it” or engaging in “aggressive or even violent” behavior. To justify virtual learning as the least restrictive setting for the student, Ms. Harriet repeatedly used words like “typical” and “normal” to emphasize his deviance and difference as a barrier to participating in a “normal classroom” for “all kinds of safety reasons.”

Furthermore, the way Ms. Harriet described the student’s behavior was vague and subjective in the IEP, for example, “shows signs of becoming disengaged” or “at the beginning of the path or on the path to losing control.” “Specialized support for emotional or behavioral concerns-classroom support and guidance for [student] in navigating emotion and behavior” was one of the supplementary aids and services to be provided but there was no further detailed instruction of what kinds of emotional or behavioral support and guidance would be implemented.

In addition, past experiences have proven that exclusionary and punitive strategies did not work for the student who had been suspended regularly and encountered police intervention since kindergarten. However, the IEP team seemed to continue using stricter and narrower disciplinary rules followed with punitive consequences with the student. Restrictive strategies were used frequently to “hold him accountable” when the student “has the potential of becoming destructive and/or violent.” Proactive or preventive strategies were seldomly followed through to prevent his behavior from escalating. Restorative practices were not in place to restore relationships with the student.

From an outsider’s perspective, narratives about the student were recognizably problematic. However, all teacher participants participated in reproducing and reiterating such negative narratives through their everyday conversations, email exchanges, meetings, and

documents. I did not observe critical reflection on this deficit-oriented approach to the student, approach that located problems within the student and required the student to have full control of his emotion and behavior on his own. Compared to teachers' relationships and interactions with other students with disabilities who had less behavioral and emotional needs than that student, I observed more restrictive disciplinary practices with the student by teachers and staff at the school. They seemingly had internalized unquestioned discriminative narratives about the student. And they failed to use their agency to challenge and change these discriminative narratives but actively contributed to exclusionary practices.

In summary, teacher participants in this study shared a low sense of agency in making changes at the school level or beyond. They perceived teacher union as a platform to collectively make their voice heard, valued, and treated respectfully by policy makers. Driven by their previous teaching and schooling experience, they resorted to different agentic inclusive practices in their everyday classroom teaching. However, when working with certain students with disabilities, their collective decisions and actions were inclined towards exclusionary practices. In the following sections, I highlight the major personal and contextual barriers to teacher participants' agentic efforts for inclusive education.

Personal Factors That Influence the Practice of Teacher Agency

The second research question this study addressed is *what are the personal factors regarding identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity that influence Chinese-English DLI teachers' agency for inclusive education?* Two themes emerged: (1) A low sense of autonomy in collaboration confined their agentic inclusive practices; and (2) mixed attitudes towards inclusion and a deficit view of disability made teachers fail to maintain agentic inclusive orientation.

Perceived Autonomy in Collaboration

The small size of school community afforded teacher a high sense of collegiality, as in Ms. Lola’s words, “相亲相爱 (fond of each other)” (04172021_Lola_interview 2). Ms. Elizabeth also described that “it feels like we’re all working together. ...And it feels very welcoming, and community, and it feels like a second home” (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2). Ms. Fei shared similar feelings: “我觉得我们学校的整个文化, 就是同事之间非常的 flexible, 然后 open minded, 互相关系都非常的亲密, 然后也会真的会互相就是不光是说真的帮助, 也会就 emotionally 互相帮忙 (I think our school has a culture of colleagues being very flexible and open minded. We have very close relationships. We do not just help each other in our work but also emotionally support each other)” (042421_Fei_interview 2). Ms. Harriet also commented on the smallness of the program, saying it “allowed me to make relationships with the small team that [School of Hope] is” (032321_Harriet_interview 2). I was also impressed by the welcoming and friendly school atmosphere when I worked at the school as a substitute teacher. However, such a harmonious and close collegial relationship did not translate to schoolwide collaboration.

Collaboration Between Mandarin Classroom Teachers and English Classroom

Teachers. As a dual language immersion school, School of Hope claimed that one of their core philosophies was “educating children in two languages simultaneously” (School Website). English and Mandarin classroom teachers should collaborate to intentionally co-plan content instruction in both languages and integrate language instruction into content area instruction (District Website). However, Ms. Harriet critiqued:

A really frustrating place for me is that this whole concept of bridging between is a real fallacy in our school. And that is a place that I have sort of watched from the sidelines for the six years that I’ve been there. ...I actually get frustrated and irritated, and I used to try to do more with that content in bridging, I [have] just given up. Because it’s actually a requirement in our school that the teachers are supposed to work together and literally

bridge and share and create units together. We actually had professional development on it and [Principal Alicia] has brought people in to teach us about how to do it. And our teachers don't do it. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

General education teacher participants either did not know how to co-plan and co-design lessons to bridging English and Mandarin teaching, or they did not have the desire to lead a collaborative team. Therefore, even though general education teacher participants were aware of the benefit of collaboration in promoting students' academic and language learning, they still failed to use their agency to transform the school culture of collaboration. For instance, Ms. Fei commented:

因为你 share 学生，你就应该让他觉得是，这个 transaction 是 seamless。...我们往年是那个科学课，那个 mystery science，它都有两部分，第一方面是一个，有点像是一个 discussion 的 video，然后接下来是一个 hands on，像去年都是他先放那个前半部分的 video，跟学生，因为里面有很多讨论啊什么的，然后后面那个 hands-on 的地方才是我来上。...如果他们已经提前了解了，理解了这个概念，那么后面的 hands-on，我就可以用很多中文。...那个真的非常难，就你很难去 match。

Because you share students, you should make the transaction seamless for them. ... For science lessons, we use Mystery Science which has two parts: videos for discussion and hands-on activities. Last year for example, Ms. Elizabeth would introduce the videos to students and engage them in discussions in English first. Then I would guide students doing the hands-on activities. When they've learned the concepts or terms, I could use more Mandarin during these hands-on activities. ... But this content bridging is very hard. It is very hard to match. (050121_Fei_interview 2)

Ms. Lola said, years ago, she co-planned with an English classroom teacher, a language resource teacher, and Ms. Harriet, the special education teacher years ago. Since the English classroom teacher and the language resource teacher left the school, she could no longer find a team like that.

我们四个人就真的是 go ahead，就是 step forward。然后去做一个就是，所有的备课都一起，每个星期星期一一起备课，然后去想我们怎么去把中文英文联系在一起。所以在那个过程中，整个这三个老师都对我有很大很大的影响。因为就是学到了很多备课上的东西，包括你怎么 efficiently 的去推动这个事情。...包括怎么去 inclusive，然后 universal design。

Four of us literally go ahead, step forward. Every Monday, we plan all the lessons together. We would co-plan and look for the connections between English and Mandarin. I learned a lot about lesson planning and leading a collaborative team efficiently. I also learned how to make the class inclusive by using universal design for learning pedagogy. (032221_Lola_interview 1)

But with her current English classroom teacher partner, Ms. Lola said she was not able to make the collaboration happen.

我之前做那个，就是教那个 social study 的时候...我去找过我搭档，我跟她说我要做什么，但是她就不会去跟我一起合作做这个。她不，她有她自己一整套的 unit，她不能去打破，她也不愿意去打破。这个是需要，这个真的是需要你从头开始算的。就是你开学初你们俩做的时候，你们俩就决定了要一起做，你们的 curriculum 上的课，就要同步一起来。如果没有这样的一个 agreement 的话，你做不了。

There was a time when I was planning for my social studies lesson, I went to my partner telling her what I was planning to do. But she was not willing to collaborate. She had her own curriculum units that she cannot change, or she does not want to change. Collaboration needs to happen from the very beginning. Before a school year starts, we need to decide to work together and move on with our curriculum together. Without such an agreement at the very beginning, we cannot do bridging. (041721_Lola_interview 2)

Ms. Elizabeth said: “I feel like there is that hierarchy of like, gosh, I don’t want somebody to be mad, and negotiating [required in collaboration] means recognizing something’s wrong” (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3). Therefore, to avoid conflicts and negotiation, Ms. Elizabeth would rather stay quiet and work longer hours.

Collaboration Between Special Education and General Education. Findings revealed that collaboration did not happen between special education and general education, either. Ms. Elizabeth admitted:

One of the struggles I think with special ed is that, and I know that I’m faulty of this as well, is that sometimes we view special ed students as special ed students, and regular ed students as regular ed students. And we don’t really intermingle, or we don’t really view our special ed students is also our general ed students and so that goes to those inclusive practices that are so important. But they just kind of slip your mind sometimes because you’re like “oh there’s a teacher that’s completely like helping this child, this child is OK.” (050121_Elizabeth_interview 2)

Such a prevailing perspective of seeing special education and general education as separate and

inclusive education as fitting special education into general education had a great impact on the partner relationship between Ms. Harriet and general education teachers. Ms. Harriet said: “the world revolves around regular ed. And yet, when there’s this struggling child in their classroom, regular ed is the first to come running and saying, ‘help, do something, do something, do something’” (05292021_Harriet_interview 3). Frustrated, Ms. Harriet never stopped finding ways to collaborate. She said:

There are some teachers that are really willing to do mixed groupings within their classrooms and they’re really fine about mixing regular ed and special ed and letting you teach those groupings, they’re really fine about that. And when you have those opportunities, that’s so cool. They’re willing to relinquish to you and allow you to teach small groups within their classroom and when that happens it’s like holy cow. That’s really cool. Or to sort of share the front stage, holy cow. When those opportunities happen, that’s really great. And then the kids, the students, see the special educator in a different light too. And then they see those children that are pegged, you know the special ed kid, that line becomes blurred as well, because not every special ed kid is huge needs, right? And probably there’re eight other kids in that classroom that benefit from what we can offer. And that regular teacher can really use us in a big way. If they’d only let us. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Ms. Harriet attributed her agentic commitment to cultivating collaborative school culture to her previous collaborative experience as a professional dancer. She saw collaboration as improvisation, as creating new things.

On the bottom of my email is a line that says your smart brain, and my smart brain together makes a better product, and I recently just changed it cuz I never liked “a better product” and I always hated that it sounded like a factory or something. So, I recently just changed it to say, better outcome. I made that up. That’s not a quote from any place or anywhere. That’s me. What that comes from is my very deep-seated belief ...you know, collective thinking, smart brains together. That comes from my dancing years of collaborative work because when you are dancing with others, you create dance. (030621_Harriet_interview 1)

Commenting on reasons why the general education teachers failed to collaborate, Ms. Harriet critiqued that “American classroom teachers teach in a silo, teaching in their one-room schoolhouse.” She added:

I think it has to do with preciousness like I've talked to before. "This is my classroom. I teach this way. These are my units. This is how I teach my reading, my social studies, my math, my classroom, my walls." And that idea of opening my unit, opening my lesson, opening literally my walls, and letting go of how I teach this unit and going "oh, your social study unit and my reading unit or my writing unit, how can we merge them and create something newish." So that means I'm going to have to let go of some stuff and you're going to have to let go of some stuff and we're going to create something new. That's huge. And that's letting go of a lot of preciousness. ... That is a really hard thing for educators to do. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

In summary, teacher participants all reported a sense of collegiality and a sense of belonging to the school community. However, they did not have the ability or competence in co-planning and co-designing lessons for English and Mandarin instruction, nor the autonomy to effectively cultivate schoolwide collaboration. This limited sense of autonomy in collaboration constrained their agency for creating an inclusive learning environment with a blurred line between special education and general education, between English classroom and Mandarin classroom.

Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education and Disability

Teacher participants shared their mixed attitudes towards inclusion and deficit-oriented views of disability. To some extent, their understandings of inclusive education embodied an equity-oriented stance towards inclusive education. However in some instances, they perceived inclusion as conditional and space to educating students with disabilities alongside their typically developing peers. They also perceived disabilities as deficits to be fixed. This mixed attitudes towards inclusion and deficit stance towards disability made teachers fail to maintain their agentive inclusive orientation.

For example, I asked Ms. Elizabeth why in the questionnaire she chose "somewhat disagree" for the statement of "I frame disability as a social construction, not denying physiological aspects of impaired bodily functions." She said:

I think everybody has a disability of some sort. I don't think there's anybody in the world whose quote unquote like normal. Right? We all have differences, and those differences affect us to a different ability. But there are children and I keep going back to [student] because it's just so apparent with him. ... Whether it's socially constructed because they're just not fitting in with like what's quote-unquote normal. I think that's where I tend to overthink things a lot because if disability is a social construction and normal is a social construction, then what are the parameters between normal and disability. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)

She acknowledged, although uncertainly, that disability and difference is socially constructed against normalcy which is also socially constructed. She also added:

I feel like inclusion is like at the heart of education, whether a child has special needs, or whether the child is black, I feel that inclusion needs to be the heart of everything. ... I mean we always have to analyze what groups are favored in a curriculum, what groups are being recognized in a book, what groups are being marginalized in a book. So there always has to be this focus of who is getting more opportunities and how can we readjust this so that way it's more equitable. ... Inclusion does not just mean special education. It has to mean everything. I think inclusion and equity is very, very similar. ... And so, I think we have to think of inclusion as cumulative that when children are not being included, when they're not in an inclusive environment, those situations build on each other and have a cumulative effect of how the child feels about their education and how they feel about their ability. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)

However, Ms. Elizabeth's equity-oriented approach to inclusive education was contradicted by her educational practices towards students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Based on my classroom observations, Ms. Elizabeth called the office and the special education teacher often to pull out students who demonstrated disruptive behaviors. She felt the need to protect the learning of the majority at the expense of some. Therefore, inclusion is conditional. For another example, when I asked her thoughts about students who were behaviorally challenging, Ms. Elizabeth said:

I think of kids like [student], where the general classroom environment, it just doesn't work for him, and not only does it not work for him or not right now at least. Not only right now does it not work for him, but it affects all his other classmates. You know, so in first grade when I had him, we evacuated the classroom so consistently and you have to think of how that affects the other children too. (052921_Elizabeth_interview 3)

Similarly, Ms. Fei defined inclusive education as follows:

我觉得 inclusive education，就是给这个有 special needs 这种学生，跟他的 peers 一样的这个环境一样的机会，然后在这个平等的环境跟机会的基础上再给他提供他所需要的额外的 support，而不是把他从他的这个群体中抽离出去。就是他感受的，他看到的，他感受的，他听到的都，应该是跟他的 peers 一模一样的，然后在那个前提下它再额外去得到一些更为这个，更为细致的这个帮助，更为个性化的帮助。

I think inclusive education is giving students with special needs the access to the same learning environment with their peers. And based on this equal learning environment and opportunities, we provide them with additional support they need rather than remove them out of the group. Things they feel, see, sense, and hear should be the same as what their peers receive, and in addition they receive other more carefully designed and personalized help. (060921_Fei_interview 3)

When commenting why it is necessary to pull out a student due to their disruptive behavior, Ms.

Fei said:

比如说他这个 emotional 是一个很大的问题，他没有这个同理心。...应该说从我们的角度来讲，感觉说他这么多年跟所有的别的孩子在一起，也一起上了那些 Second Step，上了那些 emotional，这个 social emotional learning，但是好像对他来讲没有什么，没有什么进步，他依旧还是对别人完全不关心，没有同理心。

For example, [student] has a big problem with his emotional regulation. He does not have empathy. From our [teachers'] perspective, it seems that he made no progress in social emotional competencies after all these years of learning Second Step lessons with his peers. He still shows no care to others, no empathy. (060921_Fei_interview 3)

Instead of reflecting on the classroom environment and her teaching practices, Ms. Fei attributed the student's disruptive behavior to their lack of empathy, and implied that the student had not and would not change their behavior.

Ms. Harriet was frank about her feelings about inclusion, saying: "So inclusive. ((long sigh)) I am mixed about how I feel about inclusion." Her mixed feeling regarding inclusive education came from seeing failed collective efforts to make inclusion truly happen.

I think there are special ed teachers who just want to help. They just want to be nice and help. Well. Great. It takes more than being nice and just wanting to help. I think it takes research into each kid that's on your caseload. I think it takes diligence in figuring that kid out and knowing what that kid needs. Constantly! ... And it takes being willing to talk to the teachers and the nurses and the secretaries and the custodians and the parents and the related services people. ... And sometimes inclusion might work for this, but not

for that, maybe it works for math but not for reading. And I think you have to have guts to be a special ed teacher. So, I don't think inclusion works all the time. And here's something else. Inclusion doesn't work with every regular ed teacher and that's a sad fact. And unfortunately, we're not supposed to write the IEP that way. But I don't know the go around. (052921_Harriet_interview 3)

Ms. Harriet's description of "inclusion might work for this, but not for that, maybe it works for math but not for reading" also revealed an understanding of inclusive education as space educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Caught up in her attitudes towards inclusion, Ms. Harriet felt too much of her time was spent going backwards to fix things that had been done wrong to students. She added:

And again, special ed teachers, I think, supposedly are trained in alternative and diverse ways of learning and teaching, and methodology, and all this stuff, so why not use that expertise, and team and collaborate with the regular ed teacher, so that delivery, from the get-go, is delivered in ways that can reach more kids in the classroom from the start. So that inclusion could happen more. And then 10 other kids in the classroom who are like, "I don't get it," will get it. (052921_Harriet_interview 3)

Again, like the other teacher participants, Ms. Harriet took a deficit view of disability. For example, she mentioned many times that she could not understand why families sent their child to a language immersion school:

You know I often scratch my head like, ...why are you picking a Chinese Mandarin immersion charter school when your child has autism? ... Do you know who [student] is? Yeah, fifth grade. The greatest kid on the planet. Dyspraxia. So, processing, you know, and speech thing. ... Oh man, you know, he was somebody that way back, you know at four years old he was diagnosed. So, just really? Really? Chinese? Really? Come on ((laugh)). (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

It seems that in Ms. Harriet's perspective, students with disabilities were not supposed to and cannot learn a second language.

In summary, teacher participants in this study shared mixed attitudes towards inclusive education and took a deficit view of disability. Teacher participants' definitions of inclusive education implied an equity and justice-oriented approach that all students should have equal

access to and participation in high-quality learning opportunities. While at the same time, their narratives about students with disabilities were deficit oriented. They also perceived inclusive education as space and conditional, applying criteria to decide when, where, and whom to include. As a result, they failed to maintain their agentive inclusive orientation, resorting to exclusionary practices (e.g., office referral) to prioritize the needs of the normalized majority.

Contextual Factors that Influence the Practice of Teacher Agency

The last research question that this study addressed is *what are the contextual factors of the school and district that influence Chinese-English DLI program teachers' agency for inclusive education?* As illustrated in Chapter II, teacher agency in this study is conceptualized as a temporal, relational, and situational engagement by actors with the context. Therefore, a teacher's development and practice of agency is contingent on the context. In this section, I want to highlight the system in place to discourage, disempower, and confine teachers' agency for making transformative changes to best serve all students. I organize the three identified contextual factors into material, cultural, and structural dimensions.

Material: Resources and Time

Material Resources. School of Hope encountered material resources-related challenges as a dual language immersion school. For example, a consistent curriculum map and core standards for Mandarin Chinese learning did not exist. Language teachers had to create their own curriculum and teaching materials from scratch, as Ms. Fei commented:

我觉得我前 5 年, 都是在摸索这个 curriculum 的。...我每年都在调...我感觉我花了 5 年的时间才开始比较就是东西可以有一套体系, 我知道就是, 比如说 kindergarten 这个年底我想要他的语言达到的目标是什么。然后我都有什么 topic, 有什么 sequence, 然后我要怎么去 assess 他们。但是真的很花时间。因为本来就是, curriculum design 他就是一个 full time job, 就有专门的人来做这个事情。...就像我现在弄出来的东西, 我也不觉得是非常非常合格的。

I think I spent my first five years creating a curriculum for Chinese language arts. And every year, I had to make same changes. I think it takes me at least five years to figure out a system that I can use. For example, now I know what language proficiency goals for the kindergarteners to meet by the end of a school year, what topics to cover, in what sequence, and then how to assess their progress. But it takes me a long time. There are people designing a curriculum as a full-time job. And the curriculum I created is still not in high quality in my opinion. (050121_Fei_interview 2)

In addition, there were no subject (e.g., math, science) matter teaching materials in Mandarin Chinese. Ms. Fei taught math and science in Mandarin and Ms. Lola taught science and social studies in Mandarin. They both said they had to literally translate teaching materials they had, which took them a long time and still did not help students' learning of subject concepts.

比如说那个 science 的时候, 我就还想出来一个方法是干啥来着, 就把那个视频给静音, 那个 Mr. Dough, 我就静音, 然后我就用中文去配音。但是你知道这样的工作量非常大。我就得提前去把他每一句要说的话我自己去听了, 然后我大概记得, 他那个时候在说什么。但这样你说有没有很有效率呢? 的确, 表面上看起来好像, 就是孩子听到全是中文对吧? 但是第一, 他没有那个得到那个 fun, 因为那些视频都是专门设计了。他那个语调啊, 他什么时候停顿, 是可以刚好抓住的学生她的好奇心跟她的那个注意力, 对吧? 你把那个音频关掉, 那学生看的云里雾里, 然后你又在旁边配一大堆这个中文的音。你对他们来讲, 看起来全是在, 她好像他在学中文。其实他没有真的在学, 就不光是说这个语言她没有真的在学, 但是这个 science 有没有真的学。

For example, when I teach science, I used to mute the science videos by Mr. Dough, then I dubbed them into Mandarin Chinese. But you know, the workload was extremely heavy. I had to listen to every single sentence ahead of time and memorize what he said. But was it efficient and effective? Indeed, it appeared that students were fully immersed in Mandarin Chinese, right? But first of all, they did not get fun from those videos which are specially designed. For examples how tones and pauses are used to catch students' curiosity and attention, right? But when you muted the video and dubbed it into Chinese, students are confused. It appears that students are learning Chinese, but they are not actually learning the language, let alone science. (042421_Fei_interview 2)

English classroom teachers encountered similar challenges. Working in a charter school, teachers had the autonomy in deciding what curriculum to use. As a relatively new teacher who was not familiar with many curricula, Ms. Elizabeth said:

I still struggled with curriculum because while I knew the standards and I knew what needed to be taught, I struggled with establishing a scope and sequence, and so, at the beginning of the school year, we were always asked to make a curriculum map of how

we plan to teach, what and when we plan to teach, and so I was able to look at the standards and you know space them out as to how I wanted them to be taught but, actually, like nitpicking those standards and putting a scope and sequence within those standards of this is where we're starting, and this is the endpoint, I had struggled with. (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2)

Therefore, these teacher participants spent most of their planning time determining what to teach and creating materials.

Furthermore, these teacher participants all taught two different grades simultaneously, one grade in the morning and the other grade in the afternoon. Their workload regarding lesson planning, family communication, and other classroom management was doubled or even tripled compared to teaching one grade only. Working under such under-resourced and overloaded working conditions, these participant teachers were significantly discouraged from exerting agency in collaboration and changing their established practices to meet the needs of all students.

Human Resources. Hiring, training, and keeping certified Mandarin speaking teachers and staff was difficult. For example, Principal Alicia talked in the interview about the biggest challenges she faces as an immersion program principal:

Finding teachers and allowing them to be able to continue to stay [is difficult]. We deal with visa issues. We deal with teachers who would love to be here, but they're not certified. I need certified teachers to be in the school. This isn't just like I post a position and I get 50 to 80 responses. I maybe get two. And only one of them is certified and maybe they're only certified in high school. So, finding teachers, keeping teachers, and then when they get here, helping them with behavior management because their experience as a student in China is very different than what they experienced in our United States classrooms here. (062621_Alicia_interview)

Ms. Fei, Ms. Lola, and Ms. Harriet all highly appreciated that Ms. Lillian, the special education assistant, could speak Mandarin. However, they all shared that it would be ideal if Ms. Lillian had the knowledge and skills of giving evidence-based instruction for students with disabilities, because she was the only one who could support in Mandarin classrooms. Ms. Harriet added:

The district needs to be careful in their hiring of special education assistants. ...I cannot humanly cover all the minutes of specially designed services to the students in [School of Hope]. I cannot humanly do it. So that means I have to pass some of those minutes to the SEA. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Time. Time was another commonly mentioned challenge by all teacher participants. As a 50/50 dual language immersion school, half of the school day was allocated for English learning and the other half for Mandarin Chinese learning (i.e., morning instruction in English and afternoon instruction in Mandarin across content areas on a daily basis for the first graders).

Table 6 is the third quarter weekly schedule for the first grade taught by Ms. Fei and Ms. Elizabeth in 2020-2021.

Table 6

First Grade Third Quarter Weekly Schedule

	Time	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
		Week A	Week B		Week A	Week B	
Ms. Elizabeth's English classroom	7:30-7:55	Breakfast					
	8:00-8:20	Phys. Ed	Morning Meeting		Phys. Ed	Morning Meeting	
	8:20-9:05	Morning Meeting	Second Step	Reading	Morning Meeting	Writing	Reading
	9:05-9:30	Recess					
	9:30-10:00	Independent Reading		Word Work	Independent Reading	Social Studies	Word Work
	10:00-10:10	Art	Music	Brain Break	Art	Music	Brain Break
	10:10-10:55			Writing			Writing
Ms. Fei's Mandarin classroom	10:55	Switch Classroom (between Ms. Elizabeth and Ms. Fei)					
	11:00-11:30	Chinese Read Aloud					
	11:30-12:35	Recess, Lunch, Transition time					
	12:35-12:45	Down Time					
	12:45-1:20	Math					Science
	1:20-1:30	Brain Break					
	1:30-2:05	Chinese Language Arts					
	2:05-2:15	End of Day Transition, Pack-up					

Note: Monday is asynchronous learning day at home

As the schedule shows, classroom teachers had very little time to teach both content and language. Therefore, balancing time for English and Mandarin Chinese instruction had long been a struggle for Principal Alicia. She said:

Yes, if they're only immersed in that language for two and a half hours a day, that's all of time. And you know, in some cases, it's less. If they have a special that morning or related arts that morning or there's a community gathering, or there's something that's happening, it might be less minutes than that. And instructional minutes are very important for myself as an administrator to be monitoring. And the parents are sometimes saying well, "what can we do to get more Mandarin minutes in the day?" "Nothing" is my response to that because ...we are a 50/50 immersion program. If we were 80/20, it would look different. But we're 50/50 and we have English-speaking teachers here who need to get their minutes as well. We can't just start like pushing our Mandarin minutes into it, because then the English teachers are going to be struggling with what they need to accomplish. So, the balance is extremely important and teachers on both sides need to just really take advantage of minutes and understanding that can't waste them. (062621_Alicia_interview)

Therefore, to get required content or curriculum covered, classroom teachers, both English and Mandarin classroom teachers, became more precious of the time they have, "pumping away on creating their next lesson of their unit," as Ms. Harriet critiqued.

Scheduling was even more complicated for Ms. Harriet, who tried to support in general education classrooms for all students on her caseload. However, as she did not speak Mandarin, Ms. Harriet chose to support in English Classroom mainly. She explained:

Now, I have you [the author] and Ms. Lillian [the special education assistant] that I can schedule into the Mandarin classrooms. But before, I would be in that Mandarin classrooms. So, let's just take Ms. Lola for example. I used to go into Ms. Lola's classroom too. Right? So, Ms. Lola is teaching, I have no idea what she's saying. Right? So, I'm doing it by her you know gestures and, you know, when she pauses, if I have no idea what she's talking about and I really need to know, then I'll go up to her and go: "quickly tell me what you're doing" or something like that. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Ms. Harriet continued:

I always feel like a failure in the Mandarin classes. ...I should be checking in with every single teacher and every subject, so math, science, social studies, writing, and reading, and Chinese ... It's impossible. So, I pick and choose. I have no idea how [student] is doing in Chinese. I have no idea. I feel, that's awful. We're going into fourth quarter. I have no idea. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

Therefore, Ms. Harriet helped Ms. Lillian develop some instructional skills, which took time.

So that means I have to, myself and the SEA, have to carve out time in a week so that I can explain and teach maybe, depending on the SEA. First of all, I've got to get from the

classroom teacher, okay, what is, what are the math lessons for the week, what are the science lessons and if it's in Mandarin, holy cow, then there's that whole lot of level. Right? but so I've got to get that information first, then the SEA and I have to carve out time in a week to sit down and I might have to teach that person how to teach the student. That's a lot. (032321_Harriet_interview 2)

In summary, teacher participants felt they were under-supported in terms of material and human resources, and time. They spent their time in making up teaching materials, figuring out curriculum map, preparing students for standardized testing, and managing classroom behaviors. Feeling overwhelmed and exhausted, teacher participants felt discouraged to improve let alone change their teaching materials, practices, or pedagogy.

Cultural: Elite Bilingualism

School of Hope was promoted as an international school preparing “global citizens: to prepare children for the demands and responsibilities of Global Citizenship by providing the knowledge, skills and experience needed to move naturally between different languages and cultures” (School Website, Capitalization in original). To show that the school was “being culturally responsive” in recruitment (Governance Council Meeting Minutes, 03/08/2021), and advertise the school as a diverse and inclusive setting where students from different linguistic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds learn alongside each other, photos used in school social media platforms always had kids of color standing in the center or studying alongside white kids. However, as I have demonstrated in Chapter IV, the school enrolled predominantly white students, and 95.6% of the students spoke English at home.

When I asked all teacher participants how they would describe the school to outsiders, they all tended to emphasize language and culture immersion. For instance, Principal Alicia commented:

Our students, they spend half of their day learning in English and the other half of their day learning in Mandarin, and so we provide our students with the opportunity to learn

from a heritage English speech speaker and a heritage Chinese speaker. That's a really important part of the school because it really honors what we're trying to do, which is help our students become bilingual and become bilingual in two very challenging languages. ...But truly the idea is that we are immersing them into the language, and it isn't just sitting there, like it's a language class. (062621_Alicia_interview)

However, when I pointed out to them that I noticed only a few Mandarin heritage speakers and asked why more white parents would choose our school, their answers revealed a collective construction of bilingualism as white, middle-class, non-disabled, and English-speaking capital.

For example, Ms. Elizabeth described the student population:

I feel like our kids are very you know well off, they have what they need, and probably more you know, even though it's tuition free. I feel like the parents who send their kids to [School of Hope], are socio-economically financially well off because they're able to afford that luxury of "Oh, I can send my child to a school where they can learn a different language versus I send my child to the public school," wherever they are, "because I have all this stress amongst my house that I need to worry about that, I'm not even gonna worry about a decision like that." (050221_Elizabeth_interview 2)

Ms. Elizabeth's comment implied a perspective that learning a different language is a privilege to socio-economically well-off families, and that working-class families did not prioritize their children's education. Such deficit view on working class families was shared by Ms. Fei as well, she said:

经济基础决定上层建筑啊。当一个家庭他每天忙碌奔波于三餐的时候,他会去想学一门外语吗?你说一个父母他对他孩子的那个教育的投资,其实取决于他们对于教育的认知跟态度。他们从来都没有就是 benefit from knowing a second language, 他们没有那个 experience, 他们不能理解就是说学习一门外语能有多有用, 对吧?

Economic foundation determines the systems and beliefs in a society. Similarly, when a family is busy working for food, they won't think about having their child learn a second language. Parents' investment in their child's education highly depends on their attitude and knowledge about education. For those who never benefit from knowing a foreign language, they won't know how beneficial learning a foreign language is. (032121_Fei_interview 1)

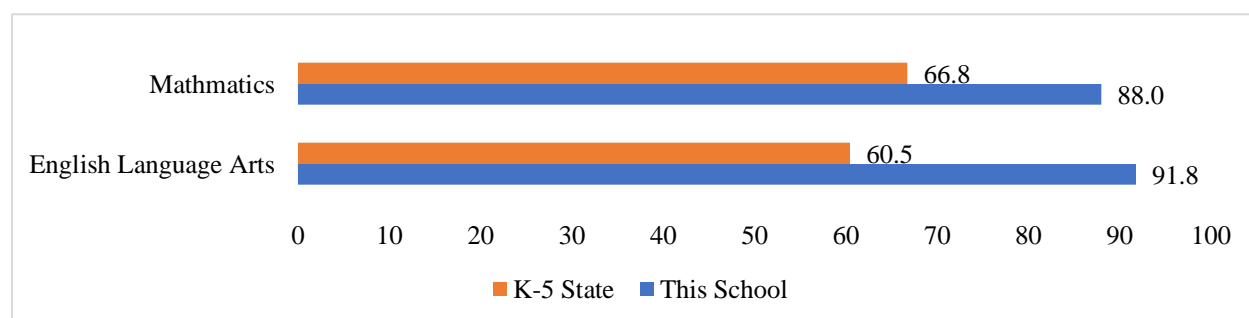
Both Ms. Elizabeth and Ms. Fei bought into the idea of school choice and that working-class families did not choose the school because they do not value bilingualism. They did not

name race or ethnicity when talking about working class families. But based on my daily interactions with them at school, working class families to them were also often families of color. It did not occur to them that working class families might not have access to information about the school because the school was advertised by and among white, middle-class families who claimed, “word-of-mouth and neighbor-to-neighbor referrals continue to be our best advertising” (School Newsletter, January 2021). Furthermore, school and district websites, family handbook, advertisement posters, and other public documents for families were all in English with no Mandarin or other minoritized language translation.

In addition, there was a shared belief in meritocracy and a school culture of language commodification. For instance, based on the information from the school website, the school’s “ground-breaking curriculum will create fluency for children in a foreign language, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills while also enhancing academic performance in all subjects including the English language and Math” and “Mandarin Chinese is currently the most marketable language for job-seekers in global business.” The school was framed as a place of success, academic achievement, and economic growth. According to the school report card for 2020-2021 school year, School of Hope “significantly exceeds expectations” of students’ test scores in English language arts and math (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Student Subject Area Scores



This high academic achievement became a big attractor for families. And the school attributed students' academic achievement partly to learning a second language, as Principal Alicia said:

There also is a lot of research that is done with language learning and how it ... opens up their brains just that little bit more, and it makes them more successful in their English language learning. In addition, because they are learning that other language, the test scores from our students really show that. ...So, there's some evidence there that shows that the students are doing extremely well with their assessments and so parents look at those kinds of things when they are researching and trying to figure out what's going to be a good place for my child coming into kindergarten. Many of the families also, they contact me because they're very interested in a school that is going to be more challenging for them. So, I have families who contact me and say, "my child is already reading, are already doing this at the ages of three or four years old, should we push them into first grade." (062621_Alicia_interview)

This perceived advantages in children's brain development of learning a second language at young age was shared by Ms. Fei as well:

这个 language 对小孩子来讲非常实际的这个 benefits 就是对他大脑的发育是很好的。因为 language 其实学一门外语可以, 它可以让你脑子里面的某些那些, 在 otherwise 不会被被这个 activated 的地方可以把它启动。其实这个有很多 research 去 back it up 。

A very practical benefit for a child learning a second language is brain development. Because learning a new language would activate certain parts of your brain that won't be activated otherwise. There is a lot of research backing it up. (042421_Fei_interview 2)

Avant STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) was used to measure students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in Mandarin Chinese. However, families seemed not worried too much about their child's learning of Mandarin, especially families of students with disabilities. Ms. Lola described IEP meetings she attended: “不会问中文 ((laugh))。会问数学和 reading。所以啊, 就这么一个学校, 家长都把这当成一个 extra benefit (They won't ask about learning goals for Mandarin ((laugh))). They would ask about math and reading in English. So, this is our school. Families see Mandarin learning as an extra benefit)” (041721_Lola_interview 2).

Emphases on global competitiveness, economic advance, and academic achievement were prevalent among families as well. The website created by and for school families, there listed the following benefits of being in a language immersion school:

Immersion students develop greater cognitive flexibility and better nonverbal problem-solving abilities; Immersion learning is NOT a detriment to English-language learning; Immersion students regularly test at or above their non-immersion peers on standardized tests; Multilingualism is key to opening doors to many of the careers in the global community.

In addition, some school families posted video “testimonials” on the website confirming the above-mentioned benefits. Among 16 English-speaking families in the 17 minute-video, only one second-generation Chinese American mom said she would like her children to learn their heritage language at young age, but her children spoke English mainly at home. The white father of the same family said in the video: “It’s a great school with high test scores and an amazing opportunity for young kids to learn a foreign language with 50/50 foreign language instruction.” All families in the video represented white, middle-class values, and all children were academically high-achieving students.

In summary, the whole idea of success, achievement, and growth was constructed based on assessment results in subject matters, such as English language arts and math, that were tested in English. Mandarin Chinese was simply a tool to activate brain development, improve English language learning, and testing scores. The discourse of elite multilingualism overshadowed the discourse of educational equity around ability, race, and heritage language maintenance. The claimed promises of cultural immersion, bilingual and biliteracy competence were not designed for all, but accessible to the white, middle-class, and able-bodied families mainly.

Structural: Accountability Explicit Policies

Through textual analysis of district and school policy documents, governance council and

staff meeting minutes, and school websites, I found policies in place to keep the community exclusionary. I identified two prominent types of policies that implicitly excluded those who are deviant from the white, non-disabled, middle-class, and English monolingual values.

Accountability-Explicit Academic Policies. The first type of policies centered on accountability-explicit academic performance. Families of the school cared a lot about their children's test scores, while none of the teacher participants thought those standardized assessments were meaningful, as Ms. Harriet critiqued:

Those tests are awful. I hate them. ...Because [student] benefits from, "oh, yeah, [student], remember, we did this in October? Let's do a quick review." [Student] does well, if you "hey [student], let's get out the whiteboard. Remember this is fractions. Let's do a little work on fractions here and then let's do the problem." Cannot do that on the STAR test. And in reading, when they have to read a passage and then it's comprehension test, well, that's exactly [student's], part of [student's] whole conundrum. You can have a great comprehension with [student], if you do this ((pulling strings motion)), pull it out, piece by piece by piece by piece and talk him through the comprehension. But that's what [student] requires. Can't do that on a STAR test. So, those tests are not designed for the kids that can show you the learning. (052921_Harriet_interview 3)

However, teachers still had to administer these tests because "家长想要 data (families asked for data)," said Ms. Fei during our informal chats one day. Testing results were more of a tool to communicate with families than to inform teachers of their teaching and student learning. Principal Alicia commented: "It [standardized testing] becomes a great communication tool to families who are interested in our school because they see that we are exceptionally exceeding expectations. So, accountability comes through that and then also by taking the STAMP assessment [a foreign language proficiency test]" (062621_Alicia_interview).

In addition, despite the autonomy a charter school was granted, School of Hope operated under the rules of a public school system. The school still had to follow board policy prescribed to them. Principal Alicia said, "having a charter renewed every five years is our way of proving back to the district that we are continuing to be successful. So that is another part of the

accountability mechanism that is in place” (062621_Alicia_interview). One of the accountability mechanisms to demonstrate school performance was “student performance on state and federally mandated testing will meet or exceed district average in all areas and grades tested” (Charter School Contract).

In summary, School of Hope relied on high achieving students to keep the program in existence and thriving. Accountability-explicit academic policies were in place to force teachers to teach to test, compromising Mandarin learning while prioritize English language learning and subject learning goals, pulling out students with disabilities for intensive academic instruction, and using the same academic requirements to classify them into “high,” “median,” and “low” students. The school recruited students from economically well-off families who had been accumulating resources for their children.

Accountability-Explicit Behavior Policies. Accountability-explicit behavior policies were in place to highly structure the school in order for students to achieve academic gains at a predetermined rate. Textual analysis of dual language education materials and policy documents revealed that students with disabilities were rarely discussed. When they were discussed, it was not in a way that would lead to the inclusion of students with disabilities in bilingual spaces. For example, within a 38-page family handbook, students with disabilities were mentioned only once, and it was about removing a student with disabilities from class or changing their educational placement for violating classroom code of conduct. As described in the handbook, the classroom code of conduct placed all responsibility on students, expecting them to be self-disciplined and “know and abide by the rules of behavior” to “allow teachers to instruct effectively.” Teachers were asked to apply a strict, zero tolerant disciplinary code that did not account for students’ disability and difference. Students who did not meet the behavior

expectations were described as “dangerous, disruptive, or unruly” and thus should be removed from class.

Furthermore, punitive strategies were used for a “minor or major offense” as part of the schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and support plan. “Minor” behaviors included “interrupting, blurting out, food or gum chewing, work refusal, wandering, not following directions, homework incompleteness.” To handle these “minor” behaviors, restorative strategies were suggested, such as “expressing affective statements” and “asking additive questions” to find out triggers for or reasons behind these behaviors. However, restrictive strategies were also suggested, such as “verbal warning, contact parents/caregiver, loss of privilege, time out, removal from class,” all of which were punitive and did not help teaching new skills or building relationships with students.

For “major” behaviors, such as “abusive/inappropriate language, threats to self or other, excessive wandering, property destruction, chronic non-compliance, or refusing to follow directions,” restrictive and punitive consequences followed, including in and out of school suspension, loss of recess time, and even police referral. All teacher participants complained that these behavior intervention strategies were reactive rather than proactive and thus not effective. They also shared that they did not have the support and time to implement restorative and proactive strategies.

Minoritized students with disabilities were further erased from school policies and space. For example, after reading through three years of school governance council meeting minutes, again, I found students with disabilities were mentioned once. “There is a new rule in place regarding the lottery to align with DPI requirements. Siblings are still given preference, but students who receive free and reduced lunch, and students with disabilities are no longer given

preference” (Governance Council Meeting Minutes, 03/08/2021). Studies have shown that historically, African American, Hispanic or Latinx, and Native American students are more likely to be economically disadvantaged and placed in special education. This policy demonstrated that race, class, and disability, collectively and interactively, functioned as a tool to exclude those who are deviant from the white, non-disabled, middle-class, and monolingual values (Cioè-Peña, 2021b).

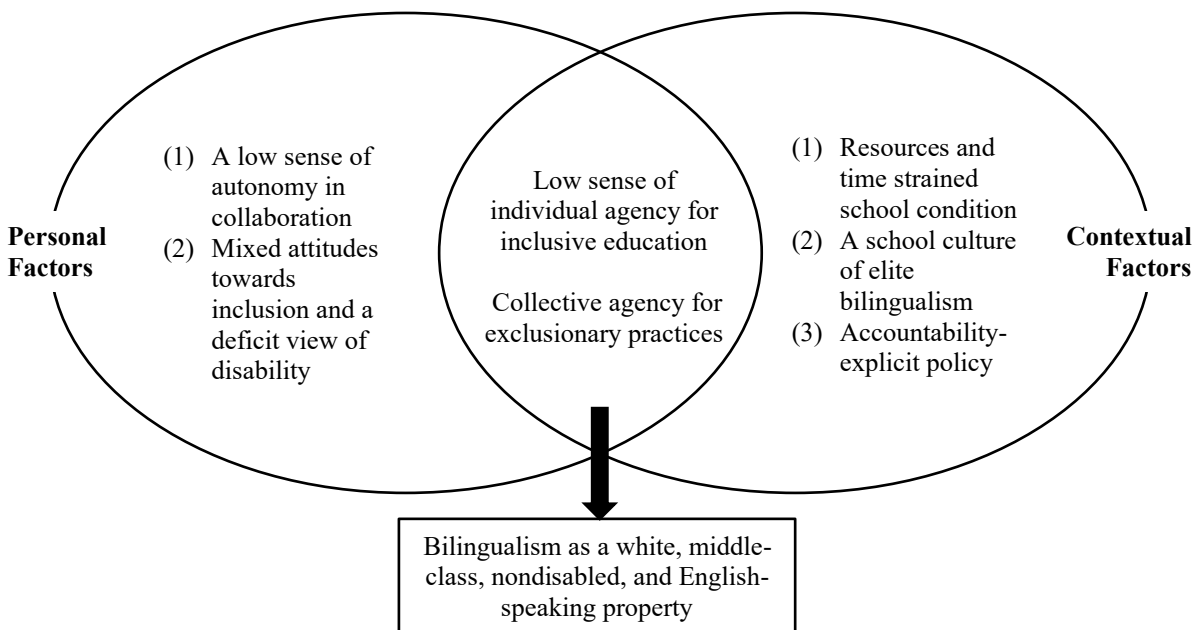
To sum up, this study was situated in school and district systems that reproduced and maintained inequity and exclusion among dual language learners with disabilities. First, the focal school encountered resources, staff shortages, and time related challenges as a public DLI charter school, especially material and human resources for enriched bilingual and bicultural teaching. Second, the school was advertised to be a place of success, achievement, and growth based on assessment results in subject matters, such as English language arts and math. Mandarin Chinese was framed as a tool to access better job opportunities, activate brain development, improve English language learning, and testing scores. The school was marketed to and by families of students who represented the value of white, middle-class, nondisabled, English-speaking identities. Standardized assessments were used as a media to communicate with families and prove school performance. Tests were also used to identify individual students who lag in different content areas and thus need intervention. Accountability-explicit behavior policies, such as the restrictive classroom code of conduct and punitive consequences, were used to erase and remove students with disabilities. If we compared school and society rules and policies to a toxin in air, teachers working in such school and district environment had been taking in the toxic air without awareness, and thus enacted their agency for exclusionary practices rather than negotiate inclusive education for all students, especially dual language learners with disabilities.

Summary

In this chapter, I draw on interview, observation, and document data to investigate how Chinese-English DLI program teachers perceive and exert their agency for inclusive education, and how personal and contextual factors interact and influence their agency practice. Findings reveal that teacher participants had a low sense of agency, especially when negotiating with administrators about top-down policies. Driven by their previous teaching and schooling experience, they strategically engaged in varied agentive inclusive practices within their individual classrooms daily. However, when working with DLLs with disabilities, their collective decisions and actions were inclined towards exclusionary practices. Two personal factors contributed to their low sense of agency for inclusion and even enabled their collective agency for exclusionary practices, including (1) a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, and (2) mixed attitudes towards inclusion and a deficit view of disability. Three contextual factors confined, discouraged, and negated teachers' agentive efforts towards inclusive education, including (1) resources and time constrained school condition, (2) a school culture of elite bilingualism, and (3) accountability-explicit policies that erase and remove DLLs with disabilities from bilingual space.

Chapter VI: Discussion and Conclusion

In this present study, I explore dual language immersion (DLI) program teachers' perceptions and practices of teacher agency when negotiating inclusive education for dual language learners (DLLs) with disabilities, as well as personal and contextual factors that influenced teachers' exercise of agency for inclusive education. Findings reveal that teacher participants had a low sense of agency, especially when negotiating with administrators about top-down policies. Driven by their previous teaching and schooling experience, they implemented varied agentive inclusive practices in their individual classrooms. However, when working with certain DLLs with disabilities, their collective decisions and actions were inclined towards exclusionary practices. Two personal factors contributed to their low sense of agency for inclusion and even enabled their collective agency for exclusionary practices, including (1) a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, and (2) mixed attitudes towards inclusion and a deficit view of disability. Three contextual factors confined, discouraged, and negated teachers' agentive efforts towards inclusive education, including (1) resources and time strained school condition, (2) a school culture of elite bilingualism, and (3) accountability-explicit policies that erase and remove DLLs with disabilities from bilingual space (see Figure 9). In this chapter, I organize discussions around each finding and implications for teacher education, professional development, and DLI education policy. I then conclude this chapter with limitations and directions for future research.

Figure 9*A Summary of Findings***Perceptions and Practices Related to Agency for Inclusive Education**

Teacher participants in this study expressed a low sense of agency and felt estranged from the concept of teacher agency. They associated teaching with a high emotional cost and little to no sense of accomplishment. When describing their everyday work, teacher participants in this study frequently used words like “intense,” “draining,” “overwhelmed,” “anxious,” “tried,” or “exhausted.” Therefore, they felt discouraged from making their best efforts to support all students’ learning and wellbeing. Despite their low sense of agency for inclusion, teacher participants did strategically enact varied agentic inclusive practices within their individual classrooms. For example, Ms. Elizabeth worked on building trusting relationships with students and creating a home-like classroom environment where students’ difference and disabilities were

recognized and celebrated. Ms. Fei had students take ownership of their own learning and created mutual supporting space among students. Ms. Lola engaged in Chinese curriculum design agentively. She worked to create a Chinese curriculum and teaching materials that would not reinforce or reproduce stereotyped and essentialized images of Chinese culture. Ms. Harriet, as the only special education teacher at the school, strived to promote equal status in a collaborative teaching partnership by refusing to stand on the side as a peripheral assistant. She also persistently shared her solid knowledge of special education policies, evidence-based interventions, and assessments for individualized services to students with diverse learning needs. These findings are consistent with Pantić et al.'s (2021) argument that “teacher agency may not always be about instigating change, but rather, a responsive behavior embedded in daily practice” (p. 170). In other words, teachers tend to exercise their agency to provide academic, behavioral, and emotional support directly to students, but less to challenge dominant discourses and initiate school and systemic reforms. These varied agentive actions for inclusive education also align with Naraian and Schlessinger's (2018) conceptualization of “a situated notion of agency” (p. 181). By strategically negotiating instructional tensions between inclusive education discourse and everyday classroom realities, teachers develop “local forms of agency” (p. 186) to practice within classrooms.

However, individual agency for inclusive education seemed to be frail when teacher participants made collective decisions for students with disabilities. As illustrated in Chapter V,

collectively, teacher participants created deficit narratives about a student with emotional and behavioral disorders, attached pathological meanings to the student's behavior and learning, and used exclusionary and punitive disciplinary strategies to remove the student from their learning community. Teacher participants' collective agency was used for exclusionary practices. This finding resonates with the argument by Gourd (2019) and Priestley et al. (2012) that teacher agency is not action that brings about positive outcomes only. Teachers can exercise their agency, via either deliberate action or non-action, for social reproduction. This finding 'also points to the importance of challenging the "established views of teaching as an isolated teacher-classroom activity" (Pantić & Florian, 2015, p. 335) and adopting a relational and collective reading of teachers' professional agency (Edwards, 2015).

Personal Constraints to Teacher Agency for Inclusive Education

Research on teacher agency has demonstrated that perceptions and practices of teacher agency are closely associated with the teacher's identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity (Li & Ruppert, 2021; Pantić & Florian, 2015). In this study, I highlight two personal factors that shaped teacher participants' collective practice of teacher agency: (1) a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, and (2) mixed attitudes towards inclusive education and a deficit view of disability.

A Low Sense of Autonomy in Collaboration

All four teacher participants shared a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, especially

collaborations between Mandarin and English classrooms teachers, and between general and special education teachers. Teacher participants' agentive efforts towards collaboration were confined by the ideology of teaching as a solitary practice rather than collaborative work (Lyons et al., 2016). Ms. Harriet repeatedly mentioned in the interviews that general education teachers taught in their own classrooms and barely visited each other's classroom for collaboration. Special education teachers are often positioned as supporters on the periphery of the teaching community. They are primarily responsible for writing and implementing individualized education programs (IEPs) that are distantly related to general education teachers' curriculum and instructional plans (Ferguson, 1995), asked to monitor, and manage behavior across space and time (Siuty, 2019), or unsure of their roles as teachers of students or teachers of other teachers (Ferguson, 1995). With such a distinct division between general education and special education, teachers had difficulty in collaborating.

The division between Mandarin and English classrooms was distinct as well. Language separation policy in a DLI program has a long history and is seen as a necessary principle in this English monolingual and culturally hegemonic society of the United States (Howard et al., 2003). English classroom teachers were asked to teach academic content with tight instructional time because half of the school days were allocated to Mandarin learning. Mandarin classroom teachers were also aware that if they did not intentionally protect Mandarin learning time allocated, students would easily resort to English that had been privileged inside and beyond

school settings. Many studies on DLI education have shown that language separation is widely used to ensure a predetermined amount (e.g., 50% or 90%) of instructional time for the partner language (Howard & Sugarman, 2006). This view of teaching bilingualism as two monolinguals in one (Grosjean, 2019) discouraged Mandarin and English classroom teachers from co-planning and co-teaching, although co-planning and co-teaching have been proved promoting hybrid, holistic linguistic and cultural practices (Hamman, 2018; Hornberger & Link, 2012). DLI program teachers should take a more fluent, holistic translingual approach to language teaching and learning to break the wall between Mandarin and English classrooms.

The low sense of autonomy in collaboration also reveals the need to develop teachers' skills and willingness to enter constructive conflicts and solve problems. As Naraian and Schelssinger (2018) pointed out, more and more teacher preparation programs promote collaborative teaching between general education teachers and special education teachers. However, the structure of local school systems rarely affords effective collaborative teaching and inevitably renders instructional tensions that pervade the shared professional space. An atmosphere of "niceness" (Castagno, 2019) governs teachers' daily interactions that are void of potentially disruptive or uncomfortable things, especially difficult conversations on ableism, racism, and other systemic oppressions. Such niceness doesn't help creating the connection and deep relationality that could enable teachers' agency for inclusive practices. In addition, a lack of conflicts and dissonances can lead to groupthink and produce silence (Priestley et al., 2016).

Therefore, it is critical to prepare teachers with collaborative and problem-solving skills to negotiate tensions, voice different opinions, and make collective efforts to dismantle exclusion and systemic oppressions.

Mixed Attitudes Towards Inclusion and A Deficit View of Disability

Attitudes towards inclusive education and disability are inevitably intertwined in teachers' attempts to enact inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). This study found that teacher participants shared mixed attitudes towards inclusive education and a deficit view of disability. Although, to some extent, teacher participants' understandings of inclusive education embodied an equity-oriented stance, for the most part, inclusive education itself was poorly understood, with the definition among participants relying heavily on the location of instruction. Without a clear collective vision of inclusive education and a collective approach to disability as a social construction, when working as a team and making collective educational decisions for students with disabilities, teachers tend to adopt a deficit view of disability, locating disability within individual students. This finding concurs with earlier research (Biesta et al., 2015), which suggested that teachers' superficial understandings of inclusive education and a deficit view of children's ability and capability limit the possibilities for action to promote inclusive education. Agentive and genuine inclusion requires "a firm commitment to dismantling the effects of unquestioned notions of normalcy and differences within routine school practices" (Naraian, 2017, p. 6). Teachers' attitudes and views about inclusive education and disability should root in

this firm commitment to identifying and challenging normalizing practices and ideologies, thus, to enable their agentic inclusive practices and maintain an inclusive orientation.

Contextual Constraints to Teacher Agency for Inclusive Education

Teacher agency in this study is conceptualized as a “temporally embedded process of social engagement” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963), or in Biesta and Tedder’s (2007) words, a “quality of the engagement of actors with temporal-relational contexts-for-action” (p. 146). Inquiry on teacher agency practice should always situate in the context that includes material, cultural, and structural conditions of teachers’ classroom teaching and larger education environments. In this study, I highlight three types of contextual conditions: (1) Time and resources strained school condition, (2) a school culture of elite bilingualism, and (3) accountability explicit academic and behavior policies.

Time and Resources Strained School Condition

Naraian (2017) pointed out that “teaching for inclusion entails balancing the limitations of time and placement with an emphasis on high-quality practice” (p. 8). Similar to findings by Kangas (2018) and Fortune (2011), Mandarin classroom teachers in this study were forced to sacrifice Mandarin instruction time to prioritize specialized instruction time stipulated in IEPs for the compliance of special education laws and prioritize English language instruction to prepare students for standardized tests that are administered in English. English classroom teachers sacrificed culturally and linguistically practices in the face of high-stakes accountability and

standardization. Similarly, the special education teacher kept struggling with scheduling specialized support, services, and accommodations for students with disabilities, which are often “quantified, measured, managed, consumed, organized, distributed, planned for, via socially normed temporal structures such as school year, school day and class periods to accomplish education outcomes” (Naraian, 2017, p. 45). This finding speaks to Naraian’s (2014) comment that teachers often believe that “*general education* time could not be readily reconciled with *special education* time” (p. 11, italic in original).

In addition, all teacher participants struggled with the unavailability of human and material resources to provide individualized support while navigating multiple schooling discourses, curricular expectations, and instructional priorities. Charter schools have the autonomy in decisions involving personnel, curriculum, governance, and finances (Waitoller & Maggin, 2020). However, similar to many other Mandarin-English DLI schools, School of Hope had difficulty recruiting and retaining certified bilingual staff. Mandarin classroom teachers are often hired with no teaching certificate or experience in U.S. classroom instruction (Liu, 2010). English classroom teachers, special education teachers, and other service providers are not required to be bilingual or receive training in second language acquisition and culturally sustaining pedagogies (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Lopes-Murphy, 2020). Echoing findings by Howard et al., (2003) and Lee and Wright (2014), Mandarin classroom teachers in this study found themselves creating their own curriculum and materials for Mandarin teaching and

learning, especially ones for upper grades. In summary, DLI program teachers, especially Mandarin classroom teachers, received limited to no support in time and resources to provide enriched bilingual teaching to all students, especially DLLs with disabilities. This finding complements Naraian's (2014) finding that time and material conditions were widely identified by teachers as critical constraints on their efforts to practice inclusion.

A School Culture of Elite Bilingualism

As demonstrated in Chapter V, this Mandarin DLI school was marketed to and by white, middle-class families and framed as a place of success and meritocracy by highlighting standardized testing outcomes of white students and a few high-achieving Asian students. As many other DLI programs, the school commoditized bilingualism as a medium for cognitive development and employment opportunities (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores & García, 2017). Superficial aspects of diverse cultures were used to create a self-portrait of a school community that is international, diverse, and inclusive. For example, the school had faces of minoritized students represented on school promotional brochures, school media, and school websites. English was privileged inside and outside of the school where English-speaking students used English widely with peers and teachers even during times dedicated to practicing Mandarin. Although the school used the 50/50 model to equally assign instructional time to English and Mandarin, "in a context of English hegemony, equal time to languages hardly translates into educational fairness for language group" (Delavan et al., 2021, p. 28). Furthermore, as reflected

in IEP goals discussed during IEP meetings, students' academic learning and disability-related needs are prioritized over biliteracy and bicultural competence, reducing students to acultural beings (Annamma et al., 2013).

This finding also points to the importance of critical reflexivity on structure norms in enabling teachers' collective efforts for equitable and inclusive DLI education for DLLs with disabilities, or more specifically, DLLs who are minoritized when their disability intersects with their race, ethnicity, class, and other social identities. Chávez-Moreno (2021) argues, "because of the tension created from education being a public good situated in a racist capitalist society, there is a pressing need for researchers and practitioners to understand the issues DL faces in providing an equitable education to Latinxs" (p. 1108). Teachers should actively reflect on the dominant discourse of bilingualism as a white, middle-class, nondisabled, English-speaking privilege, and thus work with administrators, families, and other stakeholders to identify collective agentive practices for inclusive DL education.

Accountability Explicit Academic and Behavior Policies

Inclusion cannot be achieved without considering who is excluded and left behind. Findings from this study reveal that policies and practices were in place to erase and exclude DLLs with disabilities. As a charter school, School of Hope was renewed for students' accountability performance rather than their engagement in culture, language, and difference. To maintain their reputation for high academic achievement, the school was selective in enrollment,

enrolling academically high achieving students. Many studies have demonstrated a similar phenomenon. For instance, Fortune (2011) has found out that some DLI programs, under the high pressure of standardized tests, unofficially screened students for a certain level of English language proficiency prior to admission or discouraged parents of students with disabilities from enrolling their children in DLI programs. Students with disabilities were less likely to enter the bilingual space because of their disability status.

The school also used restrictive classroom code of conduct and highly regulated and exclusionary disciplinary practices, such as in- or out-of-school suspension, to remove students from the learning community and reduce their opportunities to learn. Many studies have shown that minoritized students, including students with disabilities, are more likely to receive office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions from school than their white nondisabled peers (Skiba et al., 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Students with disabilities and other social identity markers (e.g., race, language) have “experienced oppression with great consequence for who accesses learning, whose abilities are recognized and valued, and who participates in decision making in schools” (Waitoller & Thorius, 2016, p. 367). Therefore, for DLLs with disabilities enrolled in the focal school, policies existed to remove them from bilingual space.

These findings call for critical examination of who gets left out in language education policies and who gets to decide. As demonstrated in Chapter V, the focal school, whether intentionally or not, was silent about needs of students with disabilities. Special education and

related services were barely mentioned in school language instruction policy, school websites, family handbooks, school social media, or school governance council meetings. As a result, students with disabilities became invisible at the focal school, their sociolinguistic identities were dismissed, and their access to culturally rich and linguistically responsive learning was denied. This finding echoes Cioè-Peña's (2021b) critique that DLI programs are often constructed as "gifted and talented programs by upholding the perception that there is a specific or ideal bilingual education candidate" (p. 461). Furthermore, Dorner (2011) also pointed out that white English-monolingual families dominated the public debate about the planning and development of DLI programs while voice of heritage language speaking families was absent and neglected. Similarly, the focal school was governed by a council of parents, staff, and community members, the majority of whom were white and English monolingual. And none of them had children with disabilities enrolled at the school. This governance council had autonomy in determining policies related to the day-to-day operations of the school, such as budget allocations, annual enrollment, curriculum, instruction and assessment, school policies and procedure, and fundraising. Therefore, minoritized families and families of students with disabilities were not involved in designing school policies. Ruled under such accountability driven policies, teacher participants collectively enacted their agency for exclusionary practices, especially towards DLLs with disabilities.

Implication for Teacher Education and Professional Development

The ecological framework of teacher agency for inclusive education positions teacher agency within the contingencies of social, cultural, and material contexts where teachers mobilize their identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity to interact with the context (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Li & Ruppert, 2021). This study found that teacher participants were unfamiliar with the term of teacher agency and had a low sense of agency in terms of participating in decision making at school and district levels and resisting top-down policies. They tended to exercise agency within their individual classroom settings by providing academic, behavioral, and emotional support directly to students. One implication of this finding for teacher education and professional development is helping teachers become aware of their power in initiating systemic changes. Their role is more than teaching in their siloed classrooms and attending to the academic and emotional needs of students. Therefore, teacher education and professional development should assist teachers in seeing themselves as agents of change, using their voice and professionalism to strategically operationalize inclusive education in their everyday work as well as reconstruct the school system under which they live, work, and learn.

Cultivating a sense of agency is not enough. Intentional engagement with systemic inequity and injustice can leave educators, especially educators of color, feeling isolated, insecure, and ignored, thus exhausted and defeated (Gorski & Chen, 2015). Therefore, education and professional development should adequately and continuously equip and empower teachers

with necessary guidance and support in collaboration, leadership, and critical reflexivity.

This study found that teacher participants had a low sense of autonomy in collaboration, which discouraged teachers from actively promoting inclusive school culture. Therefore, teacher education and professional development should help teachers shift their understanding of teaching as a solitary practice to collaborative work with other teachers, families, educational assistants, and administrators. Collaborative skills, such as co-teaching and co-planning between general educators and special educators, and between English classroom teachers and partner language teachers, should be taught and modeled in teacher education courses. Problem solving skills should also be taught, so that when problems and conflicts arise, teachers are willing and capable to acknowledge problems and corroborate the contention to develop, implement, and share innovative strategies suited to their school contexts.

The practice of agency for inclusive education should also be maintained and empowered by strong leadership shared among teachers and other school community members. Teacher education and professional development should help preparing school leadership for inclusive education across all levels of the education system, including general education teachers, special education teachers, school leaders, linguistic resource teachers, and other professional personnel. All teachers can and should exert control over their everyday work and exercise professional judgment and discretion (Priestley et al., 2016). Leadership for inclusive education needs a clear purpose on taking up inclusive education movement as a complex and ongoing political project

to challenge and change deep-rooted assumptions and conventions that justify segregation, rejection, and devaluation of students in any dimensions of diversity (Ferguson, 1995). As Priestley et al., (2016) pointed out, the concept of teacher agency should be distinguished from the concept of teacher leadership. They argued that teachers do not have to become leaders, such as department chairs, professional learning community leads, or grade-level leaders, to enact agency. Teaching leadership consciousness and capacities to all teachers and school staff can support collective and individual responses to issues of inclusion and equity, therefore, to expand their self-perceived professional identity and overcome isolation in their workplace (Pantić, 2017).

This study also found that teacher participants shared a mixed attitude towards inclusive education and a deficit view of disability; as a result, teachers tended to collectively enact exclusionary practices. One strategy to disrupt this inclination is help teachers develop critical reflexivity of internalized structural norms such as ableism and racism, and thus develop a collectively shared commitment to inclusion with an equity-oriented stance. The importance of reflexivity in improving teacher performance competency has long been recorded in teacher education literature (Etscheidt et al., 2012). Through reflexivity, teachers reflect on reasons and consequences of their practices (Smyth, 1989), analyze belief and values that impact their actions (Newell, 1996), and deliberately develop professional competency and more in-depth and sophisticated reflection over time (Pultorak, 1996). Practicing reflexivity is considered a

manifestation of teacher agency, allowing teachers to create alternative visions of their teaching experience, student learning, and school environment (Li & Rupp, 2021). Leal and Crookes also (2018) suggested that teachers should develop an awareness of the contradictions between their sense of purpose and the educational and social structures in which their work is situated. Understandings of individual purposes (e.g., attitudes and values) are central to navigating internalized structure norms and dismantling mainstream and hegemonic discourses (Kohli et al., 2019).

To develop critical reflexivity and awareness, teacher education and professional development should incorporate disability study, intersectional perspectives, and critical theories to all required courses and fieldwork activities (Ashby, 2012; Oyer, 2011). Reflection skills must be consciously, explicitly, and systematically identified, developed, discussed, and scaffolded (Etscheidt et al., 2012). This transformative reflection can be monological or dialogical interaction where teachers “define and clarify their beliefs, attitudes, and goals, evaluate social circumstances and define projects based on their main concerns” (Caetano, 2015, p. 62). With such a deep level of reasoning, the teacher could further develop their transformative agency for inclusive education.

Implication for Dual Language Education

This study found three contextual constraints to teacher participants’ exercise of teacher agency for inclusive education. The material, cultural, and structural environments of schools

and the larger DLI education policy contexts should be investigated and revised to facilitate teachers' development and exercise of agency for inclusive education. In theory, DLI education is promoted as an alternative to the traditional bilingual education model, aiming to challenge English monolingualism and promote the view of minoritized languages as linguistic resources rather than linguistic deficits (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). In reality, DLI education disproportionately serves children from privileged families, especially white, middle-class, nondisabled, and English-speaking families (Cioè-Peña, 2021b; Flores & García, 2017). The economic goals, cognitive development benefits, and academic competitions are now the mainstream, which perpetuate racial hierarchies, ableism, monolingualism, and other systemic oppressions. To upset and dismantle the culture of bilingualism as white, middle-class, nondisabled, English-speaking privilege, current DLI policies and practices should be critically examined to envision new possibilities of equitable and inclusive centered DLI programs.

For instance, schools and districts should consider whom their DLI marketing targets. From an interest convergence perspective, marginalized communities can benefit from better resourced and staffed DLI programs by having white students (Morales & Maravilla, 2019). However, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) explicitly pointed out that the interest convergence inherent in DLI programs may ultimately garner capital and status quo for the dominant group while minimizing similar benefit for minoritized communities. DLI immersion programs like the Chinese-English DLI school in this study provide a case in point. By tailoring their advertising to

white, middle-class families, the school failed to reach Chinese heritage families and other minoritized families who were ill-informed of benefits of attending DLI programs. Therefore, school and district should intentionally work with minoritized communities to come up with advertising strategies.

Furthermore, education policy to bridge the gap between special education and language education is needed (Ricento & Wright, 2008). What counts as bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural education for students with disabilities? How are relationships between different languages reflected in policy documents? How to build the gap between special education and language education policies? How to collaborate with universities, community members, teachers, and funding agencies to create culturally rich and linguistically responsive curriculum, teaching materials, and activities for students of all diverse learning needs? How to take advantage of the structure and available resources to support in-service teachers' collective agency in institutional changes? All these questions should be answered by involving all stakeholders (students, teachers, families, and other higher levels) to fulfill their promise of the outcome of bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural competence for all.

Limitations and Recommendations for Research

There were certainly limitations in designing and carrying out this research. One limitation is the restrictions I had in involving families and students in the study. I began participant recruitment in January 2021, when schools did not allow visitors or family volunteers

in school buildings and community gatherings were mostly canceled. Building relationships with families and thus getting their consent to participate or have their child participate became challenging. I did collect general information about families from teacher participants and school websites, and some first-person perspectives from a publicly available website build by and for the school family community. However, families of students with disabilities and minoritized families were not represented in those data sources. I could not collect students' stories to understand what inclusion and bilingualism meant to them and what agentic inclusive practices they valued when learning in a DLI school. Therefore, future studies should include students' and families' counter-narratives and lived experiences about navigating DLI school systems to construct a robust and holistic understanding of language, bilingualism, and inclusive education.

Second, as the only Chinese-English DLI charter school in the state, the focal school encountered their own unique challenges. Focal teacher participants' experience could be very different from teachers of Chinese-English DLI programs in communities with more Chinese heritage families, or even teachers in the neighborhood Spanish-English two-way immersion programs. Therefore, comparative case studies are necessary to further inquire teachers' agentic inclusive practices when working with different student population, families, and school communities.

Last but not the least, as an ethnographically informed study, four-month fieldwork might not be long enough to detect changes in teachers' perceived and enacted agency for inclusive

education. Therefore, there is a need for longitudinal studies with on-going commitment with the community. In addition, I intentionally used questionnaire as an interview artifact to ignite follow-up questions rather than use questionnaire results as an individual data source, because I was more interested in reasons behind each scaled answer in the questionnaire. Future studies can use participatory action research by involving teachers in designing a questionnaire to explore teachers' sensemaking of teacher agency and its relation to inclusive practices. Mixed-method studies described in Pantić (2017b) and Pantić et al. (2022) are good examples to learn from.

Conclusion

Current societal turmoil that ranges from racism to the global pandemic calls for entirely new depth and breadth of both conceptual understanding and activist involvement. Teacher agency is one concept through which to enact change and hope. Through individual initiatives and actions, or by collective efforts of initiating and maintaining institutional changes, teachers can and must re-territorialize the spaces of schools and classrooms to allow new ways of thinking about difference that goes beyond normal–abnormal.

However, teachers are not the sole actors in making transformative changes. In this study, teacher participants implemented varied inclusive practices within their own classrooms but felt powerless in participating in schoolwide decision making to create an inclusive learning community. Furthermore, mediated by their limited sense of autonomy in collaboration, mixed attitudes towards inclusion and a deficit view of disability, and conditioned by the school culture

of elite bilingualism and accountability explicit policies, teacher participants' collective decisions and actions were inclined towards exclusionary practices. As influential as the context can be, teachers are not fundamentally determined but have the agency to strategically resist, expand, challenge, and transform self and the environment (Foucault, 1972). Therefore, DLI program teachers need support and training to reposition self as agents of change, develop transformative reflexivity to unlearn internalized structural norms, cultivate a collective vision of inclusive DLI education, and work collaboratively and strategically to challenge and dismantle white, middle-class, nondisabled, and English-speaking values centered DLI policies.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval



Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB 2/22/2021

Submission ID number: [2021-0168](#)
Title: Everyday agency for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: Stories of two-way immersion program teachers
Principal Investigator: Andrea Lynn Ruppap
Point-of-contact: Lingyu Li
IRB Staff Reviewer: [Laura Conger](#)

A designated ED/SBS IRB member conducted an expedited review of the above-referenced initial application. The study was approved by the IRB member. The study qualified for expedited review pursuant to 45 CFR 46.110 and, if applicable, 21 CFR 56.110 and 38 CFR 16.110 in that the study presents no more than minimal risk involves:

Category 5: Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)

Category 6: Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes

Category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

As part of its review, the IRB determined this study does not require continuing review either under federal regulations or institutional policy, or both. Please note, however, that although this study is not required to undergo continuing review, you must still submit the following to the IRB:

1. Changes of protocol prior to their implementation (unless the change is necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to subjects)
2. Addition of new study personnel
3. Funding updates
4. Reportable events (unanticipated problems, noncompliance, new information) in accordance with institutional policy
5. Closure report

In addition, please be aware that the type of funding that supports a study or whether the study falls under FDA regulations can affect whether continuing review may be required in future.

To access the materials approved by the IRB, including any stamped consent forms, recruitment materials and the approved protocol, if applicable, please log in to your ARROW account and view the documents tab in the submission's workspace.

If the IRB required informed consent, please use only copies of the approved consent forms or information sheets to obtain informed consent; give all participants a copy of the consent document.

If you requested a HIPAA waiver of authorization, altered authorization and/or partial authorization, please log in to your ARROW account and view the history tab in the submission's workspace for approval details.

You have identified the following financial sources to support the research activities in this IRB application:

None.

If this information is incorrect, please submit a change to modify your application as appropriate.

Prior to starting research activities, please review the Investigator Responsibilities guidance (<https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group99/shared/BSIR>) which includes a description of IRB requirements for submitting personnel changes, changes of protocol and reportable events.

If you have general questions, please contact the Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB at 608-263-2320. For questions related to this submission, contact the assigned staff reviewer.

Appendix B: Teacher Questionnaire

Q1. We are inviting you to participate in this online questionnaire portion of this study titled *Everyday agency for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: Stories of two-way immersion program teachers*. The study aims to understand language immersion program teachers' agentic work when working with emergent bilinguals with disabilities. The total time anticipated to complete this questionnaire is about 30 minutes. It includes demographics and information on you as a two-way immersion language program teacher. After completing and submitting the page, you will be taken into the questionnaire. Thank you in advance for joining us in this study.

IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE, PLEASE CLICK YES TO ENTER THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Questionnaire asks a series of questions in the following two areas:

A. Demographics and School Context

B. Inclusive Education Professionalism

- a) **Identity:** Teachers' perception of their professional roles, moral roles, and motivations
- b) **Purpose:** Attitudes and perceptions toward teaching, learning, ability, and language; Understanding of inclusion, social justice, and equity
- c) **Competence:** Knowledge of inclusive education pedagogy and translanguaging pedagogy
- d) **Autonomy:** Individual and collective efficacy, decision-making power, and active collaboration with other actors including colleagues, administrators, other professionals, and parents
- e) **Reflexivity:** Reflection on own action, ideology, and social contexts

PART A. DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCHOOL CONTEXT

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
3. How many years have you worked as a teacher?
4. How many years have you taught at the current school?
6. Indicate the type of teaching position you have.
 - Special education
 - General education, please indicate subjects you teach
 - Specials, please indicate, please indicate subjects you teach
 - Career and technical education
 - Foreign language
 - Other, please indicate
7. Are you currently working with students with special needs?
 - Yes

- No
8. Are you currently working in an inclusive setting?
- Yes
- No
9. What grade level do you teach?
10. How many students are in your classroom or on your caseload?
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- 9-11
- 12-15
- >15
12. Have you worked at other schools prior to the current school? If yes, how many?
13. What certifications do you possess? Mark (X) all that apply.
- Special Education
- Elementary Education
- Middle
- Secondary
- English as Second Language
- Other (Specify):
13. What is the highest degree you hold?
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Advanced graduate degree or diploma beyond a master's degree
- PhD or EdD
- Other (Specify):
- 14: Did any of your teacher preparation courses address dual language instruction?
- Yes
- No

PART B. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROFESSIONALISM

a) Identity

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your classroom and school contexts?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I see myself as an activist for social justice and inclusion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I act as school system developers and decision makers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I actively establish connections with professionals (e.g. occupational and speech therapy) to support my teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively negotiate with leaders at various levels to support my teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work to promote equal status in collaborative teaching partnership between general and special education teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am clear about my instructional role and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have insatiable desire for more knowledge and training related to my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've never considered doing a different job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please use three words/phrases to describe yourself as an educator					

b) Purpose

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your classroom and school contexts?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe all students with disabilities should be educated in general classrooms to the fullest extent possible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe all students with disabilities can be educated in general classrooms to the fullest extent possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe inclusion within in the general education classroom will have a positive impact on the social and emotional development of students with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe inclusion within in the general education classroom will have a positive impact on the academic growth of students with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe students with disabilities can learn a second language at no additional cost.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think students' home language is a valuable resource to a second language learning in general education classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think full inclusion increase all students' learning opportunities,	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to change the amount of time I spend on preparation to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am open to change my teaching methods to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to learn new teaching pedagogy for inclusive practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frame disability as a social construction and, while not denying physiological aspects of impaired bodily functions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see the value of enhancing individual performance, but focus more on how to change environmental limitations (including teaching methodologies, forms of assessment, and classroom arrangements) that are placed on students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would welcome the opportunity to team teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with disabilities in general classrooms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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c) Competence

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your classroom and school contexts?

Darken one circle on each line	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can create mutual supporting space for all students, with and without disabilities to foster a sense of belonging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can work collaboratively with other teachers or school professionals to teach emergent bilinguals with disabilities in the general education classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can work effectively with parents to help emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can design flexible coursework and assessment for all students by using Universal Designed Learning (UDL) philosophy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can use Individualized Education Program (IEP) to address the learning needs of emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can increase all students' interest in learning a second language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can arrange group discussion and collaborative learning to help emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can effectively adapt materials to the core curriculum to include emergent bilinguals with disabilities in the general education classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can help emergent bilinguals with disabilities employ appropriate behaviors in the general education classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can provide equal access to all in-class and extra-curricular activities for all students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

d) Autonomy

1. Please indicate how much **control/confidence** you have in including emergent bilinguals with disabilities in the general education classroom over the following area.

Darken one circle on each line	A Great Deal	Quite a Bit	Some-what	Very Little	Not at All
Use a variety of assessment strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide the kind of instruction I want to provide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decide instructional materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting content, topics, and other skills to be taught	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get enough rehabilitation and assistive equipment for me to support the learning of students with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help your students value learning and language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assist families in helping their children do well in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote positive social interactions among students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promote students' social-emotional skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote a positive classroom culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop effective behavior plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement effective behavior plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your classroom and school contexts?

Darken one circle on each line	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school encourages teachers to design diverse, flexible approaches to assess the performance of emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sufficient time and staff development have been provided for educators to collaborate effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The administration has created a work climate in which staff is supported as they assist one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My administrators protect the time I have for instruction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My administrators include me in disciplinary decisions for my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My administrators understand my instructional responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have adequate time scheduled to develop my paraprofessionals/education assistants' knowledge and skill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

e) Reflexivity

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your classroom and school contexts?

Darken one circle on each line	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can utilize the feedback from teacher colleagues in developing my teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly reflect on my ethical decision-making on what to teach to emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly reflect on my ethical decision-making on where to teach emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly reflect on my ethical decision-making on how to teach emergent bilinguals with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly reflect on my practices and classroom environments in seeking to accommodate all learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly endeavor in the structures and cultures of my school and seek ways for social transformation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

Teacher Interview Protocol

Introduction

*Thank you very much for participating in this interview portion of this study titled *Everyday agency for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: Stories of two-way immersion program teachers*. As a part of my doctoral work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I am conducting research to understand language immersion program teachers' agentic work when working with emergent bilinguals with dis/abilities. You have been invited to a series of three interviews, speaking about (1) your lived experiences related to your personal life and schooling experiences, (2) your current teaching experience such as your professional roles, individual and collective inclusive practices, and school environment, and (3) reflections on the meaning of your experiences. Each interview will last 60 to 120 minutes. Today I have some questions to ask you, but ultimately, this will be an opportunity for you to share your story and experience as a teacher. During the interview, please do not directly identify another person. You can use identifiers such as "co-worker, classmate, friend" or first names only.*

I am responsible to an Institutional Review Board to conduct ethical research. This means that I will not identify you or provide details by which others may identify you in any research that I share. To facilitate my notetaking, I would like to record our interview. Only approved researchers and transcription personnel associated with my project will have access to this recording. When the interview is transcribed, any identifying information will be removed or replaced with pseudonyms. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask now or at any time in the future.

Interview #1: General life history

1. Can you describe yourself?
 - a. When and where were you born?
 - b. How does your family or your friends describe you?
2. Can you describe your K-12 schooling experience?
3. Prior to becoming a teacher, what was your experience with disability and special education?
4. Tell me the story of how you became a teacher?
 - a. How do you see yourself as a teacher? Or how would you describe yourself as a teacher?
 - b. Who or what has influenced how you feel about teaching?
 - c. How have the previous jobs you had influenced how you teach?
 - d. What were your reasons to choose this school?
5. Describe your post-secondary education
 - a. What teacher education preparing program did you attend?
 - b. How do you feel about your experience?
 - c. Do you think the program well prepared you for your current job?
 - d. Is there anything that you wish would have been a part of your preparation that wasn't?
6. What is your greatest accomplishment or source of pride in your life?

*This concludes our interview. Do you have any comments or questions you would like to add?
Thank you for your time.*

Interview #2: Teaching practices in current school community

1. Describe your current position at this school?
 - a. How do you feel about your current professional role and responsibilities?
2. If you want to explain our school to someone who had no clue about it, what would you say?
3. Can you describe your current working environment, such as collegial relationships, school culture, and school policies?
4. Are there any policies that you know that might affect your teaching?
 - a. Are there any explicit or implicit rules in terms of language use in your class?
 - b. How do you feel about the allocation of different subjects and times for English and Chinese in terms of students' learning and language development?
5. What do you see as the most important aspect of your professional role? What are you most proud of?
6. What is going well regarding teaching emergent bilinguals with disabilities in your school?
 - a. Describe one example of a situation in which you felt particularly successful in meeting the needs of emergent bilinguals with disabilities
 - b. What kind of linguistic, visual, and digital resources or material do you think were successful in teaching or engagement, and in what ways?
7. What are the challenges you have encountered so far in teaching emergent bilinguals with disabilities?
 - a. Can you describe one memorable experience?
 - b. If you could design the ideal language immersion program for your students with disabilities, what would it entail and why?
 - c. What kinds of resource and support (administrative, school, professional development, etc.) do you think is necessary to teach in a Chinese dual language immersion school?
8. What are the opportunities for your participation in decision-making related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
9. What are the opportunities for collaborations in order to provide inclusive education services?
 - a. With colleagues
 - b. With administrators
 - c. With parents
10. What kind of professional development activities do you participate in?
 - a. How do you feel about these PD activities?
 - b. What other PD activities do you want to attend?

*This concludes our interview. Do you have any comments or questions you would like to add?
Thank you for your time.*

Interview #3: Envisions of the future and reflections on meaning

1. How would you define teacher agency?
2. [Talk with the teacher about moments (based on field observations) in which the teacher showed agency both inside and outside the classroom.] Do you think you demonstrated agency in these moments?

- a. Can you think of other moments that you practiced agency?
- b. Would you do differently? If so, how?
3. What do you think inclusion means to emergent bilinguals with disabilities?
 - a. Here is one definition of inclusive education – “inclusive education is a continuous struggle toward (a) the redistribution of quality opportunities to learn and participate in educational programs, (b) the recognition and value of differences as reflected in content, pedagogy, and assessment tools, and (c) the opportunities for marginalized groups to represent themselves in decision-making processes that advance and define claims of exclusion and the respective solutions that affect their children’s educational futures. (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013, p. 36) – How do you relate this definition to your own teaching?
4. Can you describe how your role as a teacher might be different from the teachers you encountered in the past? How about your colleagues?
5. What motivates you to remain in the profession of teaching?
 - a. If there comes a time when you decide to move out of teaching, what career do you think you will pursue?
6. What do you think should be changed about education system or teaching in general?
7. What kind of future do you envision for your students?

*This concludes our interview. Do you have any comments or questions you would like to add?
Thank you for your time.*

Administrator and School Staff Interview Protocols

Introduction

*Thank you very much for participating in this interview portion of this study titled *Everyday agency for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: Stories of two-way immersion program teachers*. As a part of my doctoral work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I am conducting research to understand language immersion program teachers' agentic work when working with emergent bilinguals with dis/abilities. You have been invited to speak about perceptions of and your experiences in a two-way immersion program/school. The interview will last 45 to 60 minutes. During the interview, please do not directly identify another person. You can use identifiers such as "co-worker, classmate, friend" or first names only.*

I am responsible to an Institutional Review Board to conduct ethical research. This means that I will not identify you or provide details by which others may identify you in any research that I share. To facilitate my notetaking, I would like to record our interview. Only approved researchers and transcription personnel associated with my project will have access to this recording. When the interview is transcribed, any identifying information will be removed or replaced with pseudonyms. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask now or at any time in the future.

1. Can you describe your career trajectory?
2. How would you describe our school to someone who has no clue about it? (e.g., history, curriculum focus, and student background)
3. How do you think our school's support for students with disabilities?
 - a. In what ways do you consider your school to be inclusive?
4. What are some of the successes our school has achieved as a language immersion program?
 - a. What do you think are the major factors for why your school attracts these students and parents?
5. What are some of the greatest challenges you face as a language program administrator/staff?
 - a. How do you feel about the allocation of different subjects, classrooms and times for English and Chinese in terms of students' learning outcomes and language development?
6. How do you think about staff quality and professional development opportunities for the staff?
 - a. What kinds of training or experiences did you have that have prepared you to work in this particular school?
7. What do you think should be changed about education system or teaching in general?/What are your thoughts or recommendations to develop Chinese dual language programs to enhance learning and language development?
8. **[Administrator Only]** How do you think about the immersion program structure (e.g., policy, funding, accountability mechanism, etc.) to achieve the goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural competence while meeting grade-level academic expectations?
9. **[Administrator Only]** What are your goals and aspirations for the students at our school?

This concludes our interview. Do you have any comments or questions you would like to add? Thank you for your time.

Appendix D: Classroom Observation Protocol

Date: _____ Time period: _____
 Classroom code: _____ Garde: _____
 Number of students: _____
 Number of students with disabilities: _____
 Type of support/services: _____
 Adults in the room: _____

Week 1: Focus on Setting (document other observations that stand out as well)

1. Setting (Table arrangements, notes on white/chalk boards, anchor charts, etc.)
 - a. Physical arrangement of learning environment, etc.
 - b. Where is the lesson being given?
 - c. How is the physical environment set up to facilitate learning activities?

Week 2: Focus on People and Relationships: Adults and students in the physical setting (document other observations that stand out as well)

- a. Name (if known) of adults and their actions in the setting, How and how many people enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site, Where people enter and exit, how long they stay, who they are (ethnicity, age, gender), whether they are alone or accompanied
- b. People who stand out, Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others, These people's characteristics, what differentiates them from others, whether people consult them, or they approach other people, whether they seem to be strangers or well-known by others present. Note that these individuals could be good people to approach for an information interview or to serve as key informants.
- c. Who is the teacher?
- d. Who is present in the classroom?
- e. How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions, what people's behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession

Week 3: Focus on Verbal Behavior and Interactions (document other observations that stand out as well)

- a. Who speaks to whom and for how long, who initiates interaction, languages or dialects spoke, tone of voice, gender, age, ethnicity, subject?
- b. Are students conversing with each other? About the reading activity or off-task?
- c. In what language do the teachers talk to the students?
- d. In what language does the teacher provide instruction?
- e. In what language are the students interacting with each other?
- f. In what language do the students talk to the teachers?

Week 4-12: Focus on Events (document other observations that stand out as well)

- a. Teaching practices, learning activities, independent activities, materials used, etc.
- b. What are the students doing when the teacher is giving reading instruction?
- c. What is the teacher doing? Redirecting, teaching, observing, taking notes?

- d. How many students are receiving reading instruction from the teacher?
- e. Are the lesson objectives communicated to the students (orally or written)? What are they?
- f. What instructional practices are used to teach the lesson objectives?
- g. What instructional materials are used to teach the lesson objectives?
- h. What questions do the students ask the teacher?
- i. Are the students engaged? (answering questions, making eye contact with the teacher, interacting with the materials in an appropriate way)
- j. What do the student participants do when the teacher is working with other students?
- k. In what language are the independent student activities?
- l. Does the student always respond in the language in which the teacher asks the question?

Observation:	Memo:
Reflection:	

Appendix E: Summary of Data Sources and Focuses

Kind of data	Data source	Focus
Questionnaire entry (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandarin classroom teacher • English classroom teacher • Special education teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic information • Perceived identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity regarding teaching dual language learners (DLLs) with dis/abilities
Teacher interview transcripts (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandarin classroom teacher • English classroom teacher • Special education teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life history • Perceived and enacted agency for inclusive education • Perceived identity, purpose, competence, autonomy, and reflexivity regarding teaching dual language learners (DLLs) with dis/abilities • School and district culture and policies
Staff interview transcripts (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confucius classroom teacher • Special education assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life history • School and district culture and policies • Delivery of special education services • Language instruction
Principal interview transcript (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life history • School and district culture and policies • Delivery of special education services • Language instruction
Fieldnotes (37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observation • Staff meeting • School observation and informal chats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of special education services • Language instruction • School and district culture and policies • Classroom culture and rules
Photos of artifacts (41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching materials • Classroom and school artifacts (e.g., posters, hallway photos, classroom photos) • Student work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of special education services • Language instruction • School and district culture and policies • Classroom culture and rules
Documents (231)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report cards • Lesson plans • Curriculum map • Meeting minutes • Documents describing school/district special education service delivery models • Documents describing school/district dual language immersion programs • Individualized education program (IEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of special education services • Language instruction • School and district culture and policies • Classroom culture and rules • School and district material and resource condition
Memo (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytic memo journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on and questions of the observation, interview, or document analysis • Reflect on how data answers research questions • Note recurring codes and initial hunches of data analysis

Appendix F: Interview Transcription Symbols

.	end of intonation unit
?	fall-rise intonation end of intonation
(.) or ,	a time gap of 0.5 seconds or less
(2.0)	a time gap of more than 0.5 seconds
(())	a description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity, for example ((laugh))
<u>under</u>	underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis, increased amplitude, or careful articulation of a segment
[]	the words within the square brackets indicate the transcriber's own words for the omitted information by the speaker; pseudonym of a person or place mentioned by the interviewee
(translation)	the words within a single bracket are translations