Communities of Foreign Language Teachers as a Source of Professional Development

By

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Abstract

This dissertation study explored the interactions that constitute involvement in community among university foreign language instructors, including how to build community and how community involvement and community-type interactions contribute to the professional development of such instructors. The objective of the study was to provide a greater understanding of trends, patterns, and benefits of spontaneous community building among language teachers in order to discover ways to better use communities as sites of professional development. While previous research has shown that communities, especially communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), can be sites of learning, and has explored communities among teachers and students in a variety of contexts, there is a scarcity of studies about community among these foreign language instructors.

Within the theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000, 2006; Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1991) and activity theory (Engestrom, 2001; Johnson, 2009), this mixed methods study examined the self-reported involvement of these language instructors in communities of language teachers. Thirty-seven non-tenured/non-tenure track foreign language instructors at a large public university completed an online questionnaire, and 19 participated in follow-up interviews, including the collection of artifacts. The study investigated the types and frequencies of interactions that take place in language instructor communities, how departments or institutions can contribute to the growth of communities, and how instructors' beliefs about communities mediate their teaching practices.

Results revealed three categories of interactions among teachers: interactions about teaching, interactions about scholarship, and social interactions. There were some natural constraints in the reported frequencies of these interactions, some related to the nature of a given

interaction (e.g., in graduate course work and at conferences) and some natural affordances (e.g., shared office space and regular department meetings). Trust, communication and relationships were shown to be key in the building of community. Instructors' attitudes and beliefs about their teacher communities were shown to be connected to their choices to share or not share teaching materials.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Communities are places of learning, and among teachers communities can provide fruitful opportunities for professional development (PD). The support provided through communities of teachers is particularly important for instructors of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), who do not typically have the advantage of an immediately available group of teachers of the same language with whom to collaborate or commiserate, nor do they have robust professionalization opportunities and publications, as teachers of commonly taught languages (CLTs) (French, Spanish, or German) generally do.

My interest in communities among language teachers was sparked when I designed and implemented a professional development program for teachers of twelve LCTLs, each of whom, with one exception, was what LeLoup and Ponterio (1998) would call a "majority of one" – the only teacher of his or her language at the institution. As I gathered feedback from those teachers during the two and a half years that I worked with them, a frequent request was for more unstructured time with each other to interact and exchange ideas. They sought to learn from each other and valued the interactions they had. In partial response to their request, I have chosen to focus this study on exploring the interactions that happen between language teachers, how they feel those interactions help them, and what institutional factors support those interactions. As a result of this study I will make some recommendations about how to increase professional development opportunities for all language instructors, including teachers of LCTLs, through improving their access to communities of language teachers.

While much research has been conducted regarding the role and importance of community in learning, and in second language learning in particular, few studies have focused on the role and importance of community among university foreign language teachers

themselves, although this topic does come up peripherally in a small number of studies. When language instructors talk and work together with their teaching as the focus, their understanding of the topics they discuss can grow, and they can make improvements in their teaching due to these collective efforts (e.g., Cavanaugh & Dawson, 2010; McDonough, 2006). Some formal professional development efforts take advantage of this potential for individual growth through community-type interactions such as regular but informal interactions in shared spaces, informal mentoring via discussions of shared experiences, collaborations, etc., (e.g., Crane, Sadler, Ha, & Ojiambo, 2011; Marbach-Ad, Schaefer, Kumi, Friedman, Thompson, & Doyle, 2012), but professional development for graduate language instructors and other non-tenure-track instructors still falls short of its directive to prepare instructors for their possible future careers as faculty (Allen & Maxim, 2011). When asked to identify what elements of their TA training they preferred, informal discussions with other TAs and with their supervisor ranked higher than many more formal elements (Brandl, 2000), indicating the value they placed on interactions with other teachers.

Of the studies that do touch on teacher communities, most address teacher interactions in some kind of mandated community, such as in a class or for a teacher preparation program. The current state of the research does not, therefore, provide a good sense of what communities among teachers form spontaneously when teachers aren't required to participate, or how those communities form. Another factor revealed in the literature but not resolved is the level of experience of teachers as correlated with their involvement in teacher communities (Bauer, 2010; Brandl, 2000; Hosoda & Aline, 2010; Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010). In addition, the contradictory findings dealing with the co-construction of community by its members versus the benefits of guidance from outside the community provide ample room for exploration. In short, although the

research about language teacher communities is scarce, that which has been carried out provides interesting directions for future research.

While teachers can themselves be a vast professional development resource for each other, we do need a clearer picture of what communities teachers are participating in, and how they are forming. The current study will provide a greater understanding than currently exists of trends and patterns of spontaneous community building among language teachers, with an attempt to provide an equal focus on teachers of commonly taught and less commonly taught languages. I seek to identify departmental or institutional factors as well as types and frequency of interactions that contribute to or detract from the creation and maintenance of communities among non-tenured/non-tenure-track university language instructors. To this end, this mixed methods study examines the self-reported involvement of non-tenured/non-tenure-track language instructors at a large Midwestern research university in communities of language teachers. Through questionnaires, semi-structured follow-up interviews, and artifacts I investigate the following research questions:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. What builds community? What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support? What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?
3. How do teachers' beliefs about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities? What beliefs do teachers have about community among themselves?

The data from this study will allow me to describe the community interactions that these language teachers have with each other on their own or as part of formal professional development efforts, including what facilitates them and what creates barriers. This will provide guidance to departments or institutions who would like to do as Allen and Dupuy (2011) suggested and use collaborations of various forms to create a "mediational space" for teachers to reflect on their teaching and dialogue with other teachers. Knowing factors that contribute to these interactions being successful, as well as the benefits the teachers see these connections providing them in their teaching, will encourage the allocation of valuable institutional and national resources in university language departments, TA training programs, and teacher education programs toward the most effective community-building efforts, providing much-needed professional development opportunities for university language instructors.

In this introductory chapter I will next give a broad definition of some terms that I use throughout, to lay the foundation for the study. I then describe the theoretical framework within which this study is situated. In Chapter 2 I provide a review of relevant literature. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and methods used in this study. In Chapter 4 I outline the results of the study, and then present my further analysis and discussion of the results in Chapter 5. I close the dissertation in Chapter 6, with limitations and recommendations for future research.

Definition of Terms

Discussions of community in academic and business research often use very specific definitions of some relevant terms, including the word "community" itself and the concept of "involvement" in a given community. As the current research is not tied to a certain model of community, and is exploratory, I use broad definitions of "communities" and "involvement,"

which I will outline here. I will also explain my use of various titles for university language teachers.

Community. This study concerns how teachers work together or even talk to each other. For the sake of simplicity, I use the word "community" to describe the wide range of interactions between teachers in which I am interested, and I also include in my definition the idea of collaboration between teachers. My definition of community here is broad enough to encompass the following scenarios:

1. Two Swahili teachers who met at a professional conference and continue to communicate via email after the conference, exchanging ideas and resources;
2. EFL or ESL teachers around the world who log into a shared online space;
3. Four Spanish TAs at a university who went through their Spanish undergraduate degrees together and who are now in the same graduate program, share office space, and attend the same departmental TA training meetings and workshops;
4. The French, Spanish, and German teachers within a school district who see each other at district meetings and exchange ideas regularly via email; and
5. A group of teachers who follow each other and who follow an assortment of language learning centers on Twitter.

While I am aware of several different models of communities, as will be presented in the review of the literature, I chose not to limit myself to any of those definitions for the purposes of this research, feeling that they are too narrowly defined to take in the breadth of interactions that I hope to discover and explore in this study.

Involvement. My definition of "involvement" in communities is also very broad. In online communities there is a concept called "participation inequality" (Nielsen, 2006), which

outlines participation patterns in such spaces. Ninety percent of users in such a community don't participate frequently, and are generally what are referred to as "lurkers"; they login and read postings, but never post themselves. About one percent of overall participants are responsible for most contributions to such a site. In alignment with this concept, even though not all of the communities in the literature cited here are online, I am interested in any level of participation or involvement in an online or face-to-face community. This might range from a lurker in an online community, to an owner or moderator of such a site who posts regularly, even daily. This might also include teachers at the same school who talk to each other daily or teachers who have a yearly lunch at a professional conference.

Language Teachers. In exploring the literature about communities among language teachers, I included studies that dealt with teachers of any language that was being taught as a second or foreign language at the primary, secondary, or post-secondary level. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) who were teaching languages were obviously also included in my definition of language teachers, whether or not these TAs intended to pursue a career in language teaching. I also included studies about pre-service teachers, who were most often undergraduate students and who were not included as participants in my study, with the idea that patterns of interaction among teachers begin to be established during their preparation, and I was interested to see if the literature included evidence of any sort of community being developed.

The terms TA and GSI (graduate student instructor) both appear in the literature, and I use the term TA, since that is the term used at the site of the study, although I recognize that each term might indicate a slightly different position at different institutions. It is also important to understand that TAs/GSIs in language departments generally have different roles than TAs in other disciplines, such as the sciences. Language TAs are usually, although not always, the sole

instructor of their class or section. Although TAs generally work under the supervision of a faculty or staff member (e.g., course coordinator), that faculty or staff member does not teach in the TA's classroom. The syllabus, textbook, exam schedule, etc., are generally determined by the department or language program, but the TA does the teaching him- or herself.

When I refer to language teachers, I mean it as an all-encompassing term for anyone teaching language at the post-secondary level, including TAs, GSIs, other non-tenure-track instructors, and tenure-track faculty. The population I explore in this study is comprised of non-tenured/non-tenure-track language instructors, which includes TAs, who are generally understood to be graduate students, as well as any non-graduate-student instructors such as adjunct faculty or lecturers. To avoid having to list all of those titles constantly, I will use the term non-tenured/non-tenure-track instructor, which I will abbreviate as non-TI, and it should be understood that I include all non-tenured and non-tenure-track language instructors in that designation –TAs, adjunct faculty, lecturers, etc. When there are specific issues or data points that apply only to one of those sub-categories, I use the specific title.

Theoretical framework

This study is positioned within a sociocultural theory (SCT) framework. SCT is a theory of the mind and of learning developed by Lev Vygotsky, and while most of the early research on it focused on the cognitive and first language development of children, further research also addressed second language learning. I will outline the basic tenets of SCT and activity theory, an expansion of SCT, and will then discuss how those two theories frame the present study.

Fundamental to SCT is the understanding that, in addition to biological considerations, the workings of human minds are shaped by the mediational forces of "cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts" (Lantolf, 2006, p. 70), to which humans are exposed since birth. Lantolf

defines artifacts as anything from the physical tools used for labor to books, clocks, and computers. Symbolic, as opposed to physical, artifacts are significant as well, such as "language, numeric systems, diagrams, charts, music, and art" (p. 69). Cultural activities include "play, education, work, legal and medical systems" (p. 69). Concepts are "the understandings that communities construct of the personal, the physical, the social and mental worlds, religion, etc." (p. 69). Concepts can be further differentiated into every day concepts, which are formed through peoples' individual experiences, and scientific concepts, which are the collective knowledge captured in the sciences (Karpov, 2003, p.66, cited in Johnson, 2009, p. 14; Vygotsky, 1962, p. xx).

For SCT, it is the mediational power of these artifacts, activities, and concepts that is significant. Through exposure to and absorption of these cultural influences, the human mind reorganizes the way it understands and interacts with other people and the surrounding world, and thus people become "persons-acting-with-mediational-means" (Lantolf, 2006, p. 69). This is in contrast to a state of being in which one reacts purely according to biological stimuli such as hunger or fatigue. The cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts influence, or mediate, the way humans see and interact with the world around them. Wertsch (1991) emphasized the pervasive presence of mediation when he wrote that "a sociocultural approach to mind begins with the assumption that action is mediated and that it cannot be separated from the milieu in which it is carried out" (p. 18). In some cases, an external influence might initially be required for the mediation to take place, such as the probing questions a teacher educator asks to get teachers to identify the objective of a given classroom activity or otherwise analyze their teaching (e.g., Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Eventually, however, the external mediation is no longer needed,

as the mind internalizes the mediating information or influence (Johnson, 2015), and the teacher learns to identify his/her objectives independently.

The use of mediation in viewing and understanding the world is what allows people to make choices that are different from what their biological processes would suggest. Their culturally altered mental systems empower people to "mediate and thus intentionally control their biologically endowed mental functions" (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987, cited in Lantolf, 2006, p. 70). A very simplistic example would be postponing eating, the natural response to the biological state of being hungry, until the family is all sitting together, in a culture that values seated family dinner time.

The capacity that humans have to mentally regulate their own actions means that they are not stuck repeating previous actions – they can choose to change (Lantolf, 2006). Learning, then, could be characterized as behaving in a way suggested by mediation, even once the mediating element is no longer present. The absence of need of the mediating tool demonstrates that the mediation was internalized and thus the tool itself is no longer needed.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), one of the best known elements of Vygotsky's SCT, is the difference between what one can accomplish on one's own and what one can accomplish with the help of mediation, whether that mediation is provided by a person (peer or expert) or another mediational tool (job aid, textbook, probing questions from another teacher). Since doing something with the help of mediation is one step along the way to doing it without mediation, activity that takes place in the ZPD is the process of learning.

Social interactions, therefore, are or have the potential to be a mediating tool that leads to learning. In fact, Johnson (2009) stated this strongly in her definition of the sociocultural perspective when she explained that "human cognition is formed through engagement in social

activities," and that "consequently, cognitive development is an interactive process, mediated by culture, context, language, and social interaction" (p. 1).

Much of the early research that explored SCT and the ZPD had to do with the cognitive and speech development of small children, particularly as they learned to use the mediational tools of language and speech. Children of increasing ages were found to be more and more capable of accomplishing the same tasks with less and less mediation, demonstrating their increasing internalization of mediating tools (Vygotsky, 1987, cited in Lantolf, 2000, p. 4). Children were also found to be able to accomplish more with a mediating force than they could on their own, even if that mediating force was a peer rather than an expert (e.g., Takahashi, 1998).

The benefits of peer-to-peer mediation are not unique to a given domain, and they are also evident in SCT research in foreign language learning. Studies demonstrate that language students can accomplish tasks together that they were not able to accomplish on their own, even if both of them have the same base level of knowledge (i.e., neither is an expert), and that L2 learning can take place through these peer-to-peer mediations (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Peer-to-peer mediation for increased accomplishment has a place in the learning of language teachers as well as that of language students. Language teachers are learners as well, and not just lifelong learners of the language they teach, but learners of teaching (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Once the learning angle of teaching is considered, it seems obvious to consider also how teachers' social interactions contribute to their growth as teachers, which we call their professional development. Like their students, and like all learners, teachers can accomplish more with the mediating influence of a peer or an expert than they can on their own; the social aspects of learning in the ZPD are not limited to formal learning environments

nor to those who are formally identified as students. In fact, Lave's (1996) research on apprenticeship showed that teaching is not a prerequisite for learning, but that learning takes place through "intricately context-embedded…situated activity" (p. 155). The learning that teachers do, of how to teach, is this kind of learning – learning that takes place through "socially situated activity" (p. 155).

Social interactions focused on the shared domain—in this case, language teaching—can provide the mediational space needed for learning, and are therefore a valuable source of professional development. Johnson (2009) provides examples of how teachers learned to improve their teaching through the use of these mediational spaces that exist in their conversations with other teachers. It is through having the time and space to reflect on their teaching that teachers learn. Some of this reflection can happen through self-reflection, but as Johnson's examples demonstrate, the dialogic element of meditational space is key. Vygotsky's (1962) writings concur with Johnson's example in his discussion of the relationship between thought and speech. Vygotsky argued that thought isn't known until it is spoken. This emphasizes the importance of teachers interacting with each other, making their thoughts about teaching known to themselves by speaking them to others.

Teacher professional development, or in other words, learning to teach, is a learning process, and mediation plays a role in the learning of teachers, as it does in all learning. The process, then, of language teachers learning to improve their teaching has to include social activities and interactions. It is in these activities that a mediational space is created, in which teachers learn from each other how to be better teachers, how to choose to make changes in their teaching and not simply repeat what they have done before. Discussions of teacher PD, therefore, need to include the provision of time, space, and support for these activities and interactions,

since they provide the mediation that contributes to learning. SCT theory values interactions between people as sources of learning because it sees these interactions as mediating tools. Interactions between teachers in the domain of language teaching have value in that they can lead to teachers becoming better teachers.

Thus, as has been explained above, SCT recognizes that learning can take place through the mediation provided in social interactions. Framing the current study in SCT, therefore, allows me to focus on the interactions that teachers have with other teachers, recognizing the value these interactions have in their professional development. Johnson and Golombek (2016) and Johnson (2015) also stressed the importance and power of examining the interactions that take place within L2 teacher education, although they emphasize the value of an expert in those interactions.

An offshoot of SCT, and one that particularly relates to the mediated actions of individuals within a community context, is activity theory. Activity theory, like SCT, acknowledges that individual behavior is mediated, but rather than stopping analysis at the level of the individual, it looks at how the entire context within which the individual operates—encompassing community, culture, and external influences—impacts the individual's choices and the outcomes of the individual's actions.

The human activity system, shown in Figure 1, depicts various elements that impact individuals and their choices, and the interplay between those elements.

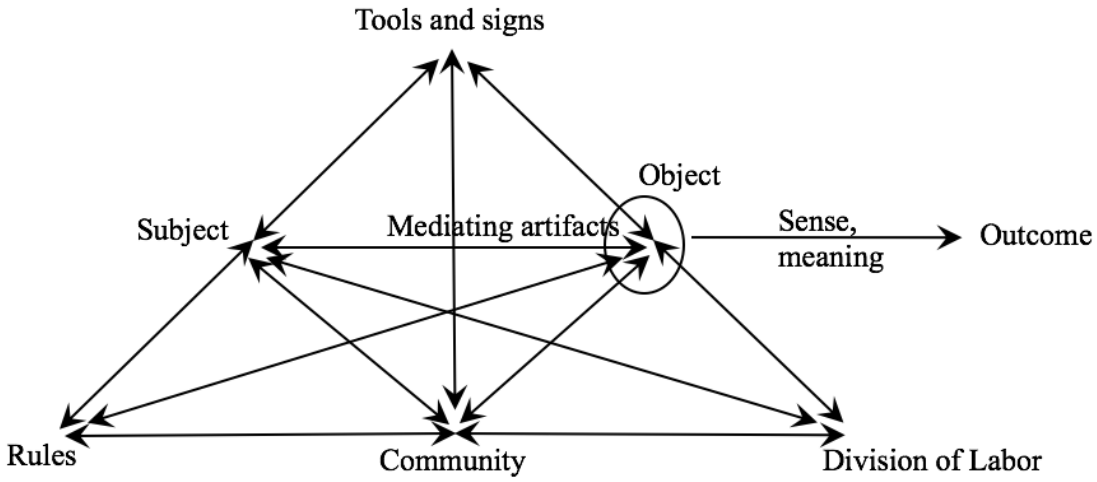

Figure 1. Human activity system (Engestrom 1987, cited in Engestrom, 2001, p. 135)

Sociocultural theory focuses on the top section of this triangle (Engestrom, 2001), the impact that a mediating artifact has between a stimulus and the response. Activity theory brings to the forefront the complexity of the additional forces intervening between the individual in question (subject), their directed action or goal (object), and the eventual outcome.

Understanding what is meant by the various elements of the activity system is key to grasping the complexity of the system as a whole. The subject is the individual of focus, the one whose activities are being analyzed. The object is that person's goal, objective, or "'problem space' at which these activities are directed," (Johnson, 2009, p. 78), and the outcome is mediated by artifacts. The system as described so far can be discussed in terms of SCT, but further elements expand it beyond the interaction with that sole individual. The object might be shared by a community, and the actions of all members of the community, including the subject, are influenced by certain rules, whether implicit or explicit. Communities include roles and power, impacting which individuals do what actions, or in other words, the division of labor.

As with SCT, the connection to my research is clear. As non-TI language teachers (subjects) work to be effective teachers (object), they are influenced by their interactions with other teachers (mediating force). All these teachers, however, can be said to operate within any

or all of several overlapping communities—the other teachers of their language in their department, their department as a whole, their institution, the national or worldwide set of teachers of the same language, etc. Each of these communities has rules and roles (division of labor)—what is expected and not expected of non-TI language teachers, how they are to interact with each other, norms and internal cultures that influence teachers' perceptions of the choices they can make, and that even influence their perception of what makes a good teacher (object). Analyzing how all these elements interact in relation to the choices and activities of teachers can provide insight into how teachers enact their professional development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I review previous research about communities among language teachers, with a focus on how those communities can be sites of professional development (PD). I first review literature about three different models or concepts of communities, with an emphasis on communities of practice (CoP). I then summarize research that demonstrates that communities are places of learning, including among language teachers. I then shift my focus to the state of the field of professional development of university language teachers, highlighting some recent calls for change. Then I briefly comment on how community interactions can address the calls for change in the PD of university language instructors.

Communities

Models of communities. Different conceptualizations and models of communities are rooted in learning as a social activity. Each of these models can add to our overall understanding of how communities form, grow, and most importantly for this study, contribute to the learning of their members. I focus largely on communities of practice for this study, but also briefly introduce two others. I then outline evidence that learning takes places among communities of language teachers.

Community of practice. The idea of communities of practice (CoPs) being places of learning comes from the work of Lave and Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). CoPs are defined as "groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, n.d.). The three key elements of that definition are:

1. A shared domain of interest
2. A defined community

3. A shared practice

The domain is the topic, problem, skill area, or passion that brings the individuals together; it is the common content in their lives that is the focus of their interactions (e.g., midwifery, mountain biking, or language teaching). The community comes into being as a set of individuals engage with each other regularly, even if infrequently, to share ideas and expertise, to discuss their interactions with the domain. The shared practice of the community is found in how the community-based knowledge is enacted in members' behavior and choices in the domain. As Wenger explains,

> nurses who meet regularly for lunch in a hospital cafeteria may not realize that their lunch discussions are one of their main sources of knowledge about how to care for patients. […] They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice. (n.d.)

The shared practice of a CoP (the shared actions, information, and knowledge that exist within the group) impacts how members act in the domain.

Communities of practice can be formal or informal, large or small, and are not always deliberately organized as communities or recognized as such. CoPs can exist in all kinds of organizations—companies, churches, neighborhoods, or clubs—but not all groups within such organizations are communities of practice.

Members of a CoP are socialized into the community through their interactions with and observations of other members. New members of a CoP go through a period of "legitimate peripheral participation," during which they learn how the shared practice is lived by other members of the community. As they are each integrated into the CoP, their participation might

become more “core” instead of “peripheral,” although individuals can choose to remain only peripheral participants.

The learning that takes place in such communities is key to the growth of the members, but learning does not have to be among the explicit aims of the group, nor do the members of a group even have to realize that learning is taking place for the group to be a CoP. However, in institutions or organizations that seek to create and support communities of practice, creating and disseminating expertise is generally the explicit goal (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Community of inquiry. Community of inquiry (CoI) is founded, as many models of community are, on the work of Vygotsky, and also on the concept that learning “is fundamentally a communal activity, carried on within a shared culture” (Seixas, 1993, p. 310). Within CoI, it is the focus on inquiry that leads to knowledge (p. 312). A main application for CoI is a framework for creating online communities (e.g., Arnold & Ducate, 2006). The CoI framework consists of three “elements of an educational experience”—social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, p. 88). It is in the interaction of these elements where learning occurs.

Professional learning communities. Defined by Leiberman and Miller (2008) as “ongoing groups of teachers who meet regularly for the purpose of increasing their own learning and that of their students” (p. 2), the concept of a professional learning community “is much more vague and malleable than the term communities of practice” (Molle, 2010, p. 33). Professional learning communities (PLCs) are relevant for this study because they are “primarily concerned with increasing the available opportunities for educators to collectively reflect on and change their practice in ways that support student learning” (p. 32). They are recognized as one source of teacher professional development.

Growth of communities. The literature about the development of CoPs in particular reveals some consensus about what contributes to and what inhibits their growth. Factors that contribute to the growth of CoPs include the relationships within the community. CoPs are built, or spontaneously develop, around pre-existing relationships between individuals (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary, 2008; Wenger et al., 2002). In fact, a sign that a CoP is starting to thrive is that relationships are developing among the members (Hoadley & Kilner, 2005; Wenger et al., 2002), Part of what makes these relationships effective in teacher education contexts is the knowledge a teacher educator needs to have of the pedagogical history as well as the cognitive and emotional development of the teachers with whom they work in what Johnson and Golombek (2016) identify as the "various communities of practice" that exist in a teacher professional development context (Johnson, 2015). Another success factor is the existence of common goals, or a common purpose (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary; Hoadley & Kilner; Scimeca et al., 2009). Wenger et al. even suggested that the common goal or shared purpose might shift through the life of the community, since communities themselves evolve as their membership changes and needs fluctuate. Communication was cited as another key factor for the development of CoPs (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary; Hoadley & Kilner; Scimeca et al.; Wenger et al.). Communication builds trust between members (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary), and one-to-one or one-to-many communication should be possible and supported (Scimeca et al.). In addition, having both public and private spaces allows for the type of communication through which individual relationships between members can develop, even as public events allow for group participation (Wenger et al.). A fourth success factor is a sense of belonging (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary; Scimeca et al.), although Wenger et al. asserted that differing levels of belonging or participating should be allowed and provided for. Not all members will want to or be able to be hyper-

involved in the community all the time, but they should be allowed to participate as much or as little as they want or as meets their needs. A fifth factor contributing to the growth of CoPs is that they provide members with access to interesting and relevant content (Hoadley & Kilner). Wenger et al. specified that content should include differing viewpoints, so that members don't get too fixated on their own perspective, and to encourage the infusion of new ideas and potential for growth.

Two additional important points about CoPs factor into their growth and development. First, it is important that ownership exists within of the community, rather than being imposed on a community from the outside, and second, that individuals and organizations recognize the value of the community. Internal leadership helps the group stay focused on their own goals, rather than having goals imposed on them. When institutions and individuals recognize the value that a community of practice can provide, they are more willing to contribute resources (most frequently, time) to the creation and maintenance of these communities. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) have each individually made careers out of managing knowledge and learning by cultivating communities of practice in a wide variety of contexts. The types of value that they have observed CoPs contributing include:

1. "Members get help with immediate problems," and therefore spend "less time hunting for information or solutions" (p. 15).
2. Members "devise better solutions and make better decisions [by including the perspectives of their peers]" (p. 15).
3. Members take more risks because they have the community to back them up (p. 15).
4. Members "coordinate efforts and find synergies across organizational boundaries" (p. 15).

5. Members "[develop] an ongoing practice that will serve the organization's long-term strategy" (p. 15).
6. "Members develop professionally; they keep abreast of new developments in their field" (p. 15).
7. CoPs "create value by connecting the personal development and professional identities of practitioners to the strategy of the organization" (p. 17).

Communities as sites of learning. However they are defined, communities are places where learning can and does take place, and we have seen professional development-type learning take place among teachers in general when they interact in communities. Although research that directly addresses communities among language teachers, and particularly among university language teachers, is relatively scarce, existing research indicates that learning does take place among teachers of various subjects at various levels as they engage with each other in communities. I will present here what previous research teaches us about interactions that are happening between teachers that signal their involvement in communities of peers, the benefits to teachers of being involved in these communities, and how teacher communities are created. Many but not all of these studies address language instructors; the rest address teachers of other content.

Research that addressed communities among teachers included studies about:

1. University TAs (e.g., Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Brandl, 2000; Marbach-Ad, Schaefer, Kumi, Friedman, Thompson, & Doyle, 2002; McDonough, 2006);
2. Secondary school teachers (e.g., Dooly, 2008; Little, 2002; Wilson & Berne, 1999);
3. Primary school teachers (e.g., Clarke, 2009; Dooly; Hosoda & Aline, 2010);
4. Pre-service teachers (e.g., Arnold & Ducate; Clarke; Dooly; Hosoda & Aline; Kessler

& Bikowski, 2010);

5. In-service teachers (e.g., Dooly; Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010);
6. University faculty (e.g., Cox 2004); and
7. The teaching of the following languages: French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Japanese, EFL/ESL/EAP; and from these departments: Asian, Germanics, Romance (Spanish Division), Scandinavian, Slavic. (The study described in Scimeca et al., 2009, took place among six European Union countries and didn't list the languages being taught.)

Some studies addressed communities that were based on a heavy use of technology. Studies looked at online communities (e.g., Arnold & Ducate; Clarke; Dooly; Kessler & Bikowski; Pino-Silva & Mayora) and also face-to-face communities (e.g., Brandl; Hosoda & Aline; Marbach-Ad et al., McDonough).

Types of interactions. I will first look at the space in which the interactions in teacher communities took place. Second, I discuss whether the interactions were among groups of teachers or between individual teachers. Third, I report on whether participation in the community was required or voluntary.

The space. Online interactions between teachers took place in discussion boards focused on a particular topic or topics (Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Clarke, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010), and via a web portal and email (Dooly, 2008). Face-to-face interactions between teachers included informal discussions with peers or with a TA supervisor (Brandl, 2000), observations of TAs teaching (Brandl), shadowing and team-teaching with other classroom teachers (Hosoda & Aline, 2010), a graduate course on action research (McDonough,

2006), regular organizational meetings (Little, 2002), and a structured year-long program (Cox, 2004).

Group versus one-on-one interactions. In most of the articles reviewed, teachers were reported to interact with each other in group settings, as opposed to one-on-one. It seemed that in McDonough's (2006) graduate seminar the collaborative interactions also took place mainly in the group setting of class discussions, and certainly regular meetings involved more than two people (Little, 2002), as did a year-long PD program (Cox, 2004). One-on-one interactions between teachers took the form of informal conversations (Brandl, 2000), email and web portal exchanges (Dooly, 2008), and time in each other's classrooms, either observing (Brandl) or shadowing and team teaching (Hosoda & Aline, 2010).

Requirement. In most cases participation in the community was required of teachers, as opposed to being completely voluntary. Participation was a course requirement (Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Clarke, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; McDonough, 2006), or a requirement of a professional development program (classroom observations were required in Brandl, 2000; Marbach-Ad et al., 2012) or just part of life in a department (Little, 2002). In Brandl, however, participation in informal conversations with peers and a supervisor were not required, nor was participation required in two online communities for EFL teachers (Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010). In several cases, it was not clear if participation in the program in question was required, but in each case once a teacher had committed to the program, continuation and participation was expected (a teacher trainee internship in Hosoda & Aline, 2010; a telecollaboration project in Dooly, 2008; a professional development program in Cox, 2004).

Benefits to teachers. Reported benefits to language teachers from participation in a teacher community included that (a) learning took place, (b) a sense of community developed,

(c) participants gained a new understanding and appreciation of collaboration, (d) teachers were able to get new ideas from each other, and (e) teachers improved their teaching.

Learning. Much of the learning that took place in the communities in the articles reviewed was, naturally, related to the purpose and goals of the particular community. For example, in the online discussion board shared by language teaching methods classes at two universities, the discussion topics were about pedagogy, and the teachers at both universities found that their "students progressed in their cognitive understanding of the pedagogical topics" through their discussions (Arnold & Ducate, 2006, p. 42). Similarly, in a graduate seminar on action research, TAs learned how to use action research to explore what was happening in their classrooms and to find ways to improve their teaching. They reportedly "gained a broader understanding of research" (McDonough, 2006, p. 33). In fact, as evidence of this learning, TAs reported that 13 months after the graduate seminar they were still using the skills and techniques that they had learned in that class in their teaching (p. 43). Dooly (2008), on the other hand, related a different type of learning among teachers. Teachers in schools in six European Union countries collaborated to plan telecollaboration projects for the students in their languages classes. The learning that took place among the teachers in this meta-collaboration had to do with the process and details of managing these types of student and class projects. Teachers learned that planning projects telecollaboratively required the same type of collaboration among teachers that they were expecting of their students (p. 68), and they learned the importance of mutual commitment, attention to detail, and clear communication among team members. In a different study, pre-service EFL teachers assisting in elementary schools in Japan first mimicked the assessments and directives of the fulltime teachers, and then began to both take the initiative and develop their own styles of these basic classroom interactions, demonstrating their acquisition of

classroom practices and their evolving identities as teachers (Hosoda & Aline, 2010). Another type of learning that took place among teachers in communities was of the target language (TL) itself. Pino-Silva and Mayora (2010) reported that their participation in two online communities for ESL and EFL teachers provided them the opportunity to maintain their level of English proficiency. Teacher learning also happened via dialogue and what the authors call "responsive mediation" between an expert teacher educator and a teacher while watching and discussing video of the teacher's class during a teacher education program (Johnson and Golombek, 2016). The teacher was able to express the deficiency she saw in her own performance, and with the support and guidance of the teacher educator, identify how future performance could better match the pedagogical knowledge she was gaining through the teacher education program.

Sense of community. A sense of community was itself another benefit to teachers, as they provided each other with "bolstering and support" (Clarke, 2009, p. 2336). Group cohesion happened among pre-service teachers (Arnold & Ducate, 2006, p. 52), and some demonstrated their sense of community by using the community space, in this case a wiki, for their own purposes (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010, p. 51). Taking part in an online discussion forum allowed geographically distant teachers to feel connected to each other and to their field (Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010). These social and emotional benefits included a "sense of belonging" with those who "share common problems and rewards" (p. 268) and led to the feeling that "creating cohesion...is...comforting and encouraging" (p. 268).

Appreciation of collaboration. Through collaboration, language teachers also gained an appreciation of the benefits and potential of collaborating and being involved in teacher communities. For example, even though each student in the graduate seminar on action research conducted his or her own action research project, they regularly discussed the details of their

projects with the other students in the seminar, and this experience of sharing ideas and collaborating led them to "[gain] an appreciation for peer collaboration" itself (McDonough, 2006, p. 40). They reported that they had much more positive views about peer collaboration in research at the end of the study (p. 40), and that they "learned to value [the] collaborative activities" of "[seeking] out peer support, advice, and feedback throughout the research process" (p. 41). Evidence of the value they placed on this collaboration was found in the way they invited others not in their class to participate in their action research projects, and also in how they expanded their research and work past the end of the semester. They "recognized the potential for their action research projects to initiate larger-scale reform" (p. 42), thus empowering themselves to make broader changes and to participate in an ever-widening community. In another case, increased understanding of the collaboration process also resulted from teachers working together to plan collaboration projects for their students (Dooly, 2008). Their own collaboration experiences provided teachers with tools that they would need to teach their students how to effectively collaborate. Another study provided evidence of the value that pre-service teachers placed on their community and collaboration in how they took ownership of the collaborative wiki they were creating for their class assignment, and used it for their own purposes (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010). A corollary to an appreciation of collaboration is an appreciation for the community at large, including a willingness to engage in civic responsibilities in the campus community (Cox, 2004).

Exchange of ideas. Community involvement provided teachers with opportunities to exchange ideas with each other, either face-to-face or online. TAs at a university "obtained new ideas, felt inspired, viewed different styles, and experienced how other TAs teach an activity" when they observed other TAs teaching (Brandl, 2000, p. 362). When they themselves were

observed as part of their TA training program, TAs felt that having an expert outsider's perspective "helped them reflect on their teaching" (p. 364). Online discussion forums for ESL/EFL teachers provided a "measure of current knowledge" for teachers. They had the opportunity to "check to what extent [their] understanding of key issues [was] a la par [sic] with what others in the field may think" (Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010, p. 268). These teachers also valued the chance to "exchange ideas with other people who had different perspectives" and to "get insights into" the field outside their own country (p. 268).

Improvements in teaching. Since learning is often defined as a sustained change in behavior, a final benefit for discussion here is the actual changes in their teaching made by language teachers as a result of their participation in a teacher community. TAs who collaborated with their classmates and others in action research projects "implemented new L2 teaching practices" based on the results of their action research projects (McDonough, 2006, p. 41). They "improve[d] their L2 teaching practices" as a result of self-reflection, classroom observations of selves, peers, and supervising faculty, and student and peer feedback (p. 41). Specifically, one instructor and her students "believed that her innovations had resulted in more effective grammar instruction" (p. 42). Pre-service EFL teachers assisting in elementary classrooms in Japan also made changes in their classroom practices based on their involvement in the classrooms of fulltime teachers (Hosoda & Aline, 2010). In this case, the changes related to the ways in which the pre-service teachers provided verbal and nonverbal assessments of students' efforts and in the ways that they gave directions to students for classroom activities. Since the pre-service teachers' process of changing these interactional patterns involved first mimicking the utterances or actions of the fulltime teachers and then eventually striking out on their own, Hosoda and Aline pointed out that these changes were part of these teachers' socialization into an imagined

community of classroom teachers. As their sense of teacher identity developed and they saw themselves more and more as valid teachers, they provided evidence of this sense of belonging by acting as they saw and felt that valid teachers act, thus creating a cycle of strengthening their status as members of the imagined community of teachers. Improvements in teaching ideally always results in increased student learning, and this was indeed the case in Cox's (2004) study.

Creation of communities. In looking at how communities among teachers developed or were created, I found two potentially contradictory results: 1) that community is co-constructed by the members of the community, and 2) that outside guidance is beneficial to help a community develop. I will present each of these ideas here, and will discuss the implications of their contradictory nature.

Community is co-constructed. Using my broad definition of community, language teachers create community when they reach out to each other for advice or collaboration and when they seek or provide support to each other. The power of this co-construction of community is also seen when such support or collaboration is withdrawn, resulting in decreased motivation to participate.

Language teachers create community when they take the initiative to reach out to each other for advice or collaboration. In a survey of TAs about the benefits of various elements of TA training, TAs indicated that when they had questions regarding their teaching, they approached other TAs or their supervising faculty members (Brandl, 2000). There was some evidence indicating that TAs made very conscious choices of whom to approach with these questions, based on their own level of experience and the background of the person they planned to approach. In a graduate seminar about action research, some of the students in the class, who were language TAs at the time, sought to involve TAs and faculty in their action research

projects who were not participating in the graduate seminar (McDonough, 2006). They used their action research projects as a reason to collaborate with others, and in two cases were able to enact improvements in their language programs as a result of their research results and collaboration efforts (p. 42). These TAs' initiative in expanding their research activities beyond the bounds of their graduate seminar was especially significant due to their comments early in the semester about the general lack of collaboration that they had experienced in their departments prior to that (p. 40); their choices and actions made a difference.

Explicit statements of agreement or support also contribute to a sense of community. In a required but unassessed online discussion forum for pre-service EFL teachers in the last year of their undergraduate program, a sense of community was created by comments such as "I appreciate your comments" and "I totally agree with you sister" (Clarke, 2009, p. 2336). The use of inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "us" also created a sense of group identity and connection (p. 2337). That these pre-service teachers saw themselves as a cohesive community was also evidenced in the fact that they discussed the educational agenda they hoped to enact once they became school teachers (p. 2341).

In contrast to these community-building acts, a sense of community can also be diminished or destroyed by actions of community members. Pino-Silva & Mayora (2010), in their discussion of their participation in two online discussion forums for EFL/ESL teachers, noted that a cessation of responses to their efforts to engage in one of the communities was a demotivating force. They wrote that "not receiving responses from other participants is not only a source of conflict but also a motive leading to a gradual reduction in collaboration and involvement" (p. 269). In an even more direct statement on this point, one of the authors wrote: "I stopped posting...the day my own posts were partially or entirely ignored by other

participants" (p. 269). If a lack of responses reduces participation, then we can see that communities can be co-destroyed as well as co-constructed, emphasizing the power of community members in the creation and existence of a community.

Guidance is beneficial. It was evident from many of the articles reviewed that just the requirement to participate and the existence of a space for collaboration didn't guarantee that effective learning would happen or that any connections would be created between teachers (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). For many of the benefits of being involved in a community to come to fruition, the community needed guidance and structure.

Teachers involved in a collaborative process to plan telecollaboration projects for their students learned an important lesson about such projects. Through their own successes and struggles they came to understand that putting people together and just assuming that effective collaboration will take place is not an effective strategy. Whether working with language students or language teachers, having a plan in place to ensure success is essential (Dooly, 2008). In exploring the cognitive presence of teaching methods students in an online discussion board, Arnold and Ducate (2006) found that although the students were able to achieve "the advanced stage of cognitive presence on their own, although on a limited scale," their achievement of a higher-order process was facilitated by "a well-formulated task" (p. 57). They suggested that this higher-order process of cognitive processing might be reached more frequently with promptings from the teacher to encourage more "feedback and input from other students" (p. 58), emphasizing the important role that teacher guidance plays in student achievement. Kessler and Bikowski (2010), who looked at collaborative creation of a wiki during an online course for pre-service language teachers, found a similar result. Synthesis, another higher order process, only occurred in about 7% of "meaning-related changes" on the wiki, and they felt that "the limited

degree of synthesis may have resulted from the informal and open-ended nature of the assignment. Synthesis may require a more controlled environment with greater teacher involvement and direction" (p. 53). Among other things, the style of the moderator in an online discussion forum "might set in place a collaborative atmosphere," another indication of the value of guidance within a community (Pino-Silva & Mayora, 2010, p. 267). In action research in particular, there is a need for a balance between guidance and autonomy, there being an "inherent conflict between the democratic nature of action research and institutional requirements that teachers participate in action research projects (Moreira et al., 1999; Rainey, 2000)" (McDonough, 2006, p. 45), and this can be seen as analogous to the need for a similar balance in the creation and maintenance of teacher communities. Enough guidance is needed to allow benefit to all participants, including to spur them to higher order learning processes, but too much guidance might not allow the flexibility for the community members to really make the community their own, which is a powerful element of community building (Kessler & Bikowski, p. 51). As mentioned previously, Johnson and Golombek (2016) also showed the important role of a teacher educator in helping learning to take place during reflective activities among teachers-in-training. Dialogue with the teacher educator, who had carefully planned pedagogical objectives, allowed a teacher to increase her own understanding of how to apply her new pedagogical knowledge in her practice.

Professional development of university language teachers

An overarching theme that arises in the literature about professional development (PD) for university language teachers is that development itself is a long, even life-long, process (Allen & Dupuy, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016), and there needs to be a commensurate long-term commitment to it in language departments. The most common method

of training graduate TAs, as described by Allen and Maxim (2011), "has consisted of a pre-service/early in-service pedagogy seminar on techniques for lower-level language instruction complemented by teaching language courses under the supervision of the Language Program Director" (p. xviii). As Austin (2002) pointed out, however,

> as socialization or a preparatory experience for the faculty career, the graduate experience is the crucial point in time to determine whether or not students are exposed to the types of skills and expectations likely to confront them on the job. (p. 96)

The professional development of graduate students should therefore address the variety of roles that faculty fulfill and how and if graduate school experiences prepare graduate students for these. It should also include the gradual and incremental socialization of graduate student into those roles and into the communities of their current and future faculty colleagues. The model described by Allen and Maxim is therefore "profoundly inadequate" (p. xviii) due to its short-sighted view of the needs of developing teachers and potential future faculty.

General and specific calls for change draw attention to these perceived shortcomings in the status quo (e.g., Geisler, Kramsch, McGinnis, Patrikis, Pratt, Ryding, & Saussy, 2007). I will present here calls for change in the PD of university language teachers that arise in the literature, as well as suggestions from scholars who have attempted to address these calls for change. I will close this section with a brief comment on how the present study also contributes to meeting these calls for change.

Calls for change. Calls for change in the preparation of university language teachers stress the importance of recognizing that although these teachers typically start their university teaching careers as graduate students, they often end them as faculty. Professional development efforts, therefore, need to "[embrace] FL graduate students' long term needs as teachers and

scholars" (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010, p. 388). Recognition of the need for this shift in focus from short-term to long-term PD can be seen even at a macro level in publications in the field. For example, two of the four stated goals of the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators (AAUSC, n.d.) relate to development programs for and research about the preparation and supervision of teaching assistants, specifically language teaching assistants, and the titles of some AAUSC volumes from the past 20 years indicate attention to these goals, and a shift in focus within these topics that aligns with the recent calls for change. This shift is evident from the 1992 volume entitled "Development and Supervision of Teaching Assistants in Foreign Languages" (Walz), to the 2000 volume about "Mentoring Foreign Language TAs, Lecturers, and Adjunct Faculty" (Rifkin), to the more recent volume, "Educating the Future Foreign Language Professoriate for the 21st Century" (Allen & Maxim, 2011). In these titles there is a shift in the action – from developing and supervising, to mentoring, to educating – as well as a shift in understanding of the focus group, from a more narrow focus on teaching assistants alone to a recognition that their learning is important not just for their current role, but their future one(s) as well. This shift is indicative of the aforementioned recent emphasis in the literature on making sure that graduate TAs are being prepared not just for their duties as instructors in beginning level language classes, but for all the facets of their future roles as professors. This shift also takes into consideration the fact that graduate students are not the only non-tenure-track language instructors in need of professional development; adjuncts and lecturers can also profit from professional development opportunities and are also part of the potential "future foreign language professoriate."

One reason for this long-term focus is simply that teachers have different needs at different points in their careers (Bauer, 2010; Crane et al., 2011), and therefore need different

types of PD support. For example, Bauer found that less experienced teachers wanted more guidance in classroom management and administration than did more experienced teachers (p. 2).

The main reason that this particular call for a more long-term focus in PD came up again and again, however, is that current PD efforts focus on preparing graduate teaching assistants to be successful as TAs, but do not prepare them to be successful as faculty. TAs, as well as other non-TIs, need first to be introduced and exposed to the different roles they might have as faculty, second, to be provided opportunities to gain experience and expertise in those various roles, and third, to interact with other faculty as colleagues in these roles. Faculty serve as teachers, researchers, and curriculum designers, but under the dominant model described above, the only expertise TAs are being offered through their formal course work and their teaching opportunities is in teaching lower-level language classes (Allen & Maxim, 2011; Byrnes, 2001). They are not being prepared, for example, to teach the upper-division content courses (literature, culture, history, etc.) that are so frequently considered the "real" content of language departments (Pfeiffer, 2008, p. 298). This deficiency is a disadvantage to TAs and other non-TIs when they seek jobs as tenure-track faculty—they are expected to demonstrate skills in teaching advanced FL courses and in "[designing] syllabi or course materials for courses in literature, culture, or advanced language (e.g., composition or language for specific purposes)" (Allen, 2009, p. 90), but they were not given the opportunity to develop those skills during their graduate careers (Allen; Crane et al., 2011).

Multiple scholars have suggested therefore that additional PD support was needed for TAs in order to address an overall "inattention to graduate student teacher development" (Allen & Maxim, 2011, p. xvii). The Modern Language Association (MLA) published a report in 2007

that issued a general call for institutions to "enhance and reward graduate student training in languages and in language teaching" (Geisler et al., p.242). Change is called for to repair the "weakness in the present state of the 'methods course' and the sparse offerings that extend beyond it" (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987, p. 293) and to provide support "throughout a graduate student's teaching" (Kern, 2011, p. 10). "'One-shot' professional development does not work. Teachers need to be supported" in their teaching even after an initial preparation period (Doering, Veletsianos, Scharber, & Miller, 2009, p. 335). Extended and on-going PD that requires a good amount of time seems to be more beneficial than short-term efforts (Bauer, 2010, p. 2). Professional development opportunities provided for TAs should also be strategically planned, with specific learning objectives. "Learning to teach should not be a process of 'discovery learning' or 'learning by doing,' but rather learning that is intentional, deliberate, and goal-directed by expert teacher educators who are skilled at moving teachers toward more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices and greater levels of professional expertise" (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 3-4).

Collaborations were suggested as a way to provide TAs (and other non-TIs) with exposure to the roles of faculty and experience filling them. The 2007 MLA report called specifically for more interdisciplinary team-taught courses, mixed language and literature courses, and inter- as well as intradepartmental collaborations (Geisler, et al., 2007, p. 237), and suggested that collaborations such as these involve both tenure-track and non-tenure-track language instructors, the latter of which includes TAs (p. 240). Kern (2011) was encouraging cross-departmental sharing when he stated that "the more pedagogical practices can be shared and discussed across departments the richer graduate students' teaching preparation will be" (p. 12). Team-teaching collaborations allow faculty to provide scaffolding and "structured

mediational spaces" (Johnson, 2015, p. 519) for TAs as they work closely together to design and teach courses (Byrnes, 2001; Johnson). Through this collaboration process, TAs see a variety of perspectives and teaching styles (Kern), and become part of the community of scholars with whom they will continue to work as they become faculty themselves.

In addition to team-teaching, mentoring was called for as another form of collaboration. Allen and Negueruela-Azarola (2010), in their extensive and detailed summary of research that had been done on university language teacher professional development, cited several scholars who called for TA-faculty mentoring, and also TA-TA mentoring. In addition to providing immediate assistance and support, TA-TA mentoring can help prepare TAs for the mentoring role they will have as faculty. Mentoring should allow "teachers at *all* levels of experience and expertise to respect, challenge, and support one another as they collectively seek to reach standards of excellence in their work" (Johnson, 2009, p. 99, emphasis added). Kern (2011) recommended that apprenticeship with a mentor teacher provide "focused, critical observation of experienced teachers in a variety of classroom settings, and combine this with post-teaching analysis and discussion" (p. 10). Mentoring is part of a call for "relational pedagogy," which emphasizes relationships, including social relationships (Kern, p. 13), and creates space for instructors to be reflective about their teaching. Mentoring by an expert, through a mentoring program or teacher education, can provide the additional knowledge needed to help a teacher increase their expertise (Johnson, 2015). As Johnson and Golombek (2016) put it, "'expertise' has a great deal of experiential knowledge in it, but it is organized around and transformed through 'expert' knowledge" (p. 6).

Responses to calls for change. These calls for change are not so recent that there have not been efforts to meet them. Responses to the calls for change have shown the power of the

above recommendations and, of course, have resulted in additional suggestions. Research centered on a graduate pedagogy seminar based on literacy as a framing concept crystallized the importance of a "mediational space" in which TAs can dialogue with other TAs and faculty (Allen & Dupuy, 2011, p. 188). The authors proposed that this space could be partially provided by

> collaborative opportunities to develop expertise related to teaching both language and literary-cultural content, e.g., cocreating and coteaching literature and culture studies course with a faculty member, developing instructional materials for advanced undergraduate courses and receiving feedback on the materials from peers and/or a faculty member, and incorporating literary-cultural content…in lower-level language courses. (Allen & Dupuy, p. 188-189)

Although the collaborative group in another study (Crane et al., 2011) was not created as part of a formal graduate course, it was intended to address the same need—for PD beyond the initial methods course—and was based on Exploratory Practice, in which teachers strove to deepen their understanding of "puzzles" in their teaching (Crane et al., p. 110). Despite the non-credit-bearing nature of the resulting group of faculty and TAs, the researchers reported that the practice did, at least for the lifespan of the group, provide "an important space for them to discuss topics" (Crane et al., p. 122), aligning with the previously mentioned need for mediational space for discussion and reflection (Allen & Dupuy, 2011). Both faculty and graduate students reported that they gained from the collaboration, and graduate students specifically pointed out that they gained an appreciation of the value of that type of collaborative group, particularly with faculty (Crane et al., p. 121).

Collaboration was also found to be useful in a study in which faculty and graduate students worked together to create instructional materials for "an open access, Web-based platform for intermediate-level Spanish study" (Rossomondo, 2011, p. 129) and in a study involving collaboration between two universities (Lord & Lomicka, 2004). The materials creation study was addressing two needs, first, for "opportunities [for graduate students] to collaborate with lecturers, faculty, and each other" (Rossomondo, p. 128), as called for in the 2007 MLA report (Geisler et al., 2007), and second, for PD that prepares TAs to be faculty by preparing them to teach more than only lower-level language courses. Thus collaboration for PD was a stated goal, and about half the participants (9 out of 17) felt the project did increase the amount of collaboration that happened (Rossomondo, p. 140). They cited increased collaboration in creating materials and implementing the new curriculum – the acts of the project itself. Thus having a specific teaching-related project to work on created a need and an opportunity for collaboration. While the resulting collaborations were beneficial, participants did indicate that more collaboration would be needed for the program to really work as intended (Rossomondo, p. 140). The dual-university study was presented as a model for a collaborating course for teaching with technology, and results indicated that

> the collaborative design of the course allowed the professors and students at both universities to benefit from the interaction with a larger community with differing interests, backgrounds, experiences and languages. Receiving input from two professors, rather than one, enabled students to gain different perspectives, resulting from each teacher's own style and experiences with technology. (Lord & Lomicka, p. 408)

Kern (2011) also called for more opportunities for grad TAs to be exposed to a variety of teaching styles/pedagogies via, for example, relationships with faculty and facilitated

professional discourse, citing this expansion of perspective as a major benefit of mentoring relationships, teaching opportunities in other departments, and sharing ideas across departments and campuses. An additional way to share and gain perspective was presented in a study in which teachers were invited to take a more active role in their own PD by presenting in a PD seminar (Lee, 2011). As the facilitators hoped, the PD seminar did help build collaborative culture through "professional sharing in a learning community" (Lee, p. 34), which the teachers found relevant and inspiring.

The concept of a collaborative culture is an important one, and is a key reason to start instructors' involvement in collaborations while they are still graduate students. Georgetown University's German department did a major restructuring and reconceptualizing of their learning goals and curriculum in accordance with these calls for change, and in a description of that effort, Heidi Byrnes (2001) reported that one element that allowed the reform to be carried out was that there was a history of collaboration within the department. This can be taken as a charge – to begin early in their careers to create a history of collaboration with graduate student language instructors, so that when they are faculty it is already an established pattern that can benefit themselves as faculty, the TAs with whom they work, and their departments and universities.

Implicit in all the studies cited in this section, although ancillary in most, is a sense of teachers working together and learning together to improve their teaching. Involvement in communities of language teachers (non-TIs and faculty) allows graduate students and other non-TIs to bridge the gap between being in their current roles and being faculty, as they participate together in practices and roles that can be common to both types of positions. The review of research conducted by Allen and Negueruela-Azarola (2010) does not include any research about

how communities of language teachers contribute to professional development, which, while it does not indicate a complete lack of research on this topic, at least signals that there is not an extensive quantity of research about this, a gap which the current project seeks to aid in filling. The research results outlined above indicate recognition of the power of different forms of community in collaboration and group learning. I posit, as Little (2002) states, that "the dynamics of professional community will be evident in any interaction, and…it is in the ordinary, mundane exchanges among teachers—in what happens and what does not—that professional community is forged and opportunities to learn are created or foreclosed" (p. 920). The present study takes that semi-tangential topic and make it central, focusing specifically on how broadly-defined communities contribute to and provide opportunities for the professional development of university language teachers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I will present the research questions, study design, participants, data collection, and methods of data analysis of this mixed methods study. The objective of the research was to capture a snapshot of non-tenured/non-tenure-track language instructors' (non-TIs') involvement in communities of language teachers. Questionnaires, semi-structured follow-up interviews, and artifacts allowed me to investigate the types and frequency of interactions that constitute involvement in these communities, how these communities develop and are maintained, what impact the participating teachers feel that the communities have on them and their teaching, and what departments can do to encourage the creation and growth of these communities. The quantitative data collected in the questionnaire allowed me to catalog interactions and frequencies, while the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and in the interviews provided for rich data about the reasons and outcomes of these interactions. This study included a pilot study; I begin this chapter by briefly describing the pilot study and how it informed the full study. I then share the research questions, and describe the research setting and participants. I outline the data collection and data analysis, and end the chapter with a brief discussion of methodological limitations of the study.

Pilot Study

In order to test the feasibility of this study, I tested the instruments and procedures in a pilot study.[1] Data for this pilot study consisted of responses to an online questionnaire and follow-up interviews with a subset of the questionnaire respondents. I will briefly describe the

[1] Before beginning data collection I sought and received IRB approval for the study. The Institutional Review Board protocol was entitled Communities among language teachers 2013-0415.

participants in the study, recruitment and data collection, and how the pilot study informed the full dissertation study.

The research questions that guided the pilot study were:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. Do teachers feel that they are part of supportive communities?
3. How do communities of language teachers develop?
4. How do language teachers believe that participation in communities impacts them as teachers?
5. What role does technology play in the creation or maintenance of teacher communities?

Recruitment and data collection. Faculty and staff in the Spanish and Portuguese department forwarded an email from me to Spanish language instructors, inviting them to participate in my study. The email included a brief description of the purpose of the study, my contact information, and a link to the online questionnaire. I also distributed paper flyers to the TAs' department mailboxes. The flyers contained the same information as the email. The text of the email and the flyer are included here as Appendix A. I was not copied on the emails that were sent out, so I cannot be sure how many instructors received the emails, but according to the information I have, the email and flyers were distributed to approximately 80 instructors.

The online questionnaire consisted of three sections with a total of 50 items. (The complete questionnaire used in the pilot study is included as Appendix B). The "Background information" section asked for basic demographic information and information about respondents' current and past teaching experience. The "Education and career" section asked about current studies and

future career goals. The third and longest section, entitled “Involvement in teacher ‘communities’ or ‘networks,’” asked about the frequency of certain types of interactions with other languages teachers, and included several open-ended questions.

For the follow-up interviews, I wanted to interview instructors with a range of levels of involvement in teacher communities. Thus, to select respondents for interviews after they had completed the online questionnaire, I first ranked the respondents according to their total reported interaction frequency counts. To get these totals I added together all the frequency counts for each respondent across all the questions. Then I listed in the respondents in order from highest total frequency to lowest total frequency, and chose one instructor in each range (low, middle, high) to invite to participate in an interview, making sure that at least one of them indicated the use of technology in creating or maintaining teacher communities, since one of the research questions addressed technology use. (The total frequency count used here had no meaning by itself, but simply allowed me to rank the participants among themselves in terms of how much they reported that they participated in various types of community interactions.) I invited this subset of three instructors to participate in interviews. Only two of the three invited instructors were able to participate in an interview. (It was the instructor in the high range of community involvement who was not able to participate.)

In the interviews I asked the participants to comment or expand on their responses to the questionnaire, and I also asked more in-depth questions about their community-type interactions with other language teachers. The interview protocol used in the pilot study is included here as Appendix C. I interviewed each participant once, and each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes and was audio-recorded. The interviews were conducted about a month and a half after the completion of the online questionnaires due to the time it took to do an initial analysis of the

survey data, determine who to interview, and schedule and conduct the interviews. I used the audio files to create partial transcripts of the interviews for data analysis.

Participants. Participants for my pilot study were recruited from among non-tenured/non-tenure-track Spanish instructors at a large public university. I chose this pool of participants for several reasons. There were a lot of Spanish instructors and so I could recruit in just one department and reach enough participants for the pilot study. In addition, I did not want to limit the LCTL part of my pool of potential participants for the full study. Since I wanted a good number of teachers of less commonly taught languages as participants in the full study, and since I did not think it would be appropriate to ask them to participate in both the pilot study and the full dissertation study, and there being comparatively fewer LCTL teachers than Spanish teachers, I determined to do the pilot study with Spanish instructors in order to preserve potential LCTL participants for the full study.

Eight instructors completed the online questionnaire. (Given the estimate of 80 instructors as the pool of possible respondents, that is a 10% response rate.) Their reported ages ranged from 24 to 45 years old, with an average reported age of 33.5 years. Six respondents indicated that they were female and two that they were male. They all stated that they were doctoral students, citing studies in 5 different graduate degree programs: Second Language Acquisition (two respondents), Spanish (one, did not specify linguistics or literature), Spanish Linguistics (two), and literature from different Spanish-speaking regions (three). They reported that they had from 3 to 14 years of teaching experience (with a mean of 8.6 years); two of them indicated that they had taught at both the university level and K-12; two specified that all their teaching experience was at the university level. Seven of them reported that their current job title was “Teaching Assistant;” one indicated a lecturer position. Seven gave their hometown as within the

Midwestern United States; one reported a large city in Spain. Six reported that their native language was English; one reported English and Spanish, and one reported Spanish, German, and Portuguese. All of them indicated that language teaching was part of their long-term career goals.

Two teaching assistants (TAs) participated in the follow-up interviews as well as completing the online questionnaire. Both of them were female, from the Midwestern United States, and native speakers of English. Both reported 8 years of teaching experience, and one specified that she had taught elementary school and at the university level. I invited a third TA to participate in an interview, but we were not able to schedule the interview due to her tight schedule at the end of the semester.

Contributions to the dissertation study. The pilot study was extremely valuable in helping me to fine-tune my research questions, my recruitment and data collection plans, and my questionnaire and interview protocols.

Changes in research questions. As I did initial analysis of the data I realized that while the pilot study did elicit some interesting answers to my original research questions, there were other research questions which would allow my research to better contribute to our overall knowledge and understanding about communities among language teachers, and which were also more interesting to me. As noted above, my original research questions were:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. Do teachers feel that they are part of supportive communities?
3. How do communities of language teachers develop?
4. How do language teachers believe that participation in communities impacts them as teachers?

5. What role does technology play in the creation or maintenance of teacher communities?

Following the pilot study, the following research questions were developed. Questions marked with one asterisk (*) are questions to which changes were made after the pilot study. Questions marked with two asterisks (**) were not part of the pilot study, but were developed after the pilot study for the full study. (Note that question number four could not have been addressed during the pilot study, since I did not include any LCTL teachers in the pilot participant pool.)

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. *Which types of interactions help teachers to feel the most connected to other language teachers?
    a. *What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support?
    b. *What keeps teachers from participating in a given activity or community?
    c. *What role does technology play in creating or maintaining connections between language teachers?
3. *How do teachers' beliefs about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities?
4. **What differences are there between how connected less commonly taught language teachers feel and how connected commonly taught language teachers feel?
5. **What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?
6. **What do departments do, or what conditions exist in departments, that create barriers to communities developing among teachers?

Changes in recruitment. From the pilot I learned that I started the recruitment and data collection for the pilot too late in the semester; as noted above, one TA was not able to participate in an interview due to her very busy schedule at the end of the semester. Due to this, I planned to adjust the timeline for the full study in hopes of increasing participation.

The pilot study also led me to be more extensive in my recruitment efforts for the full study, not only recruiting in more than one department, which I was already planning to do, but also using more methods of recruitment. In addition to using mass emails and flyers to recruit participants, I also planned to seek permission to attend departmental staff/TA meetings to invite instructors in person to participate in my study.

Changes in questionnaire and interview questions. After analysis of the pilot data, I edited the questionnaire and interview questions to gather data more closely aligned with my updated research questions. I also edited some questions to get more targeted responses. (Please see Appendix D for the updated questionnaire and Appendix E for the updated interview protocol, with new and edited items marked.) I also decided to include portions of the "Definitions of terms" section in Chapter 1 in the text at the beginning of the questionnaire to remind participants that I was interested in all types of interactions between language teachers, not just interactions that are specifically related to teaching.

Changes in data collection. In order to encourage more participation, I decided for the full study to offer a paper version of the questionnaire in addition to the online version. The purpose of this was twofold: first, so that the additional and immediate availability of the questionnaire would invite further responses, and second, so that potential participants would be able to look through the entire questionnaire first to gauge their own level of interest and to see how short it was, and this, I hoped, would encourage more to respond.

Based on the pilot study I also decided for the full study to take more factors into consideration when selecting interview participants from among those who completed the questionnaire. In the pilot I based the choice solely on their frequency of community involvement, but it turned out that the selected interviewees were very similar in other ways, and it would be better to have a more diverse set of interviewees in terms of other factors. Therefore, for the full study I decided to include other factors in that decision, which I will describe below when discussing data collection for the full study.

To allow for triangulation of results from the questionnaire and interviews, I also planned a new type of data collection for the full study. As part of the interviews I decided to ask participants to provide artifacts, a process I will describe in more detail when discussing data collection for the full study.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study and that are addressed in the results and discussion chapters went through three iterations between (a) the pilot study, (b) the full study, and (c) the results and analysis chapters here. The second set, which came out of the pilot study and guided data collection for the full study were:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. Which types of interactions help teachers to feel the most connected to other language teachers?
    a. What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support?
    b. What keeps teachers from participating in a given activity or community?
    c. What role does technology play in creating or maintaining connections

between language teachers?

3. How do teachers' beliefs about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities?
4. What differences are there between how connected less commonly taught language teachers feel and how connected commonly taught language teachers feel
5. What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?
6. What do departments do, or what conditions exist in departments, that create barriers to communities developing among teachers?

As I did initial data analysis following the full study data collection, it became clear that the answers to research questions two and five overlapped with each other, and that making distinctions in my data between the answers to those two questions was not a meaningful exercise. It also turned out that most of the barriers to community (question six) were simply the opposite of what facilitated or built community (questions two and five), so I decided to eliminate question six and address relevant barriers in the answer to questions two and five. I added a sub-question to question three because I realized that in order to address how teachers' beliefs mediated their activities I would have to also address their beliefs. The data in response to question four looked to be very thought-provoking, but as it ended up being the least connected of all the research questions to the core issue of what builds community, I chose to leave that for future publications. Thus, the final research questions addressed in the results and analysis chapters here are:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?

2. What builds community? What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support? What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?
3. How do teachers' beliefs about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities? What beliefs do teachers have about community among themselves?

Research Setting and Study Participants

I recruited participants from among non-tenured/non-tenure-track language instructors at a large public university. This research-1 institution had approximately 43,000 students, including undergraduate and graduate students. Over 40 languages were taught during the academic year, and there were also multiple summer language programs, including traditional classes and also immersion programs. Due to my interest in and desire to serve teachers of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), I recruited in departments that teach LCTLs as well as from departments that teach the commonly taught languages (French, Spanish, and German). Please see Appendix F for the list of the departments in which I recruited participants for the study. As mentioned previously, for the pilot study I recruited only from among Spanish instructors, so as to not limit the pool of potential LCTL participants for the full study. While I did recruit again from among Spanish instructors for the full study, none of my pilot participants participated in the full study.

I chose to focus on non-tenured/non-tenure-track instructors (non-TIs) and not to include tenure-track language faculty as participants for several reasons. One reason is simply that I am more interested in the non-tenured/non-tenure-track population, due to my interest in language

teacher communities being sparked by my work with such teachers. These instructors are often on year-to-year or semester-to-semester contracts, and do not have the job security that is inherent in a tenured or tenure-track position. I wanted to see what patterns of interactions and communities they establish during this part of their careers, including where and how they sought support and professional development for jobs that they might not have in the near future, and that in some cases were not in line with their career goals. Some non-TIs are graduate students, and some are not. Of those that are graduate students, some pursue degrees in the literature of the target language, and some pursue degrees more peripherally related to the TL (e.g., Second Language Acquisition, Classics, Scandinavian Studies). Of those who are not graduate students, some are employed full-time by the language department and some are employed part time. Of those that are employed part time, some have additional employment, and some don't. Some have degrees in areas related to language teaching and learning, and some don't.

Heidi Byrnes (2001) postulated that one factor that contributed to a successful departmental reform was a history of collaboration among the faculty. A focus in a given department on facilitating collaboration and community-building among the non-TI population will allow the earliest start to a future history of collaboration that can impact this generation of non-TIs and potentially all who work with them now and if and when they become faculty. For those who are graduate students and pursuing careers as faculty, assessing community interactions at this stage in their careers can allow a better understanding of what collaborations their student experiences (undergraduate or graduate) provide, and that has implications for curricular design in those programs as well.

My interest in the non-TI population also stems from the fact that what I found in the literature was about the PD of this population, and about the need to better prepare non-TIs for all the roles they might have as tenure-track faculty in the future. Thus I am studying this population with a forward-looking focus, aiming for what we can learn about how to support non-TIs in their present teaching roles while at the same time equipping them for future faculty/teaching roles. It is also possible that including tenure-track/tenured faculty would have introduced a heavy set of complications to the study. The implications and pressures of their tenure status and process would have introduced an entirely different set of variables that would likely have distracted from the topic at hand. Communities among tenure-track/tenured faculty would be an interesting topic for future research, as I will discuss in Chapter 6.

In addition, since I am particularly interested in LCTL instructors, I anticipated that with so few tenure-track/tenured faculty in those languages, it might be too easy to identify an individual faculty member if one chose to participate, and anonymity and confidentiality would be difficult to preserve. That was a concern with my current population as well, but by including all non-tenured/non-tenure-track instructors of the LCTLs in my recruitment efforts, I hoped to have enough LCTL participants to make it more difficult to identify any individual instructor.

Thirty-seven instructors completed the online questionnaire. They reported their ages to be in a range from 23 to 57 years old, with an average reported age of 32.8 years. Twenty-five respondents indicated that they were female and twelve that they were male. Twenty-eight stated that they were doctoral students, two said they were Masters students, and three indicated that they had PhDs. They reported that they had from .75 to 26 years of teaching experience (with a mean of 8.3 years). Twenty-six of them reported that they were teaching assistants (including

four who were head TAs), four indicated a lecturer position, two were faculty assistants[2], and one each were faculty associate and adjunct. All but two of them answered "yes" to the question about whether language teaching was part of their long-term career goals, but in the follow-up open-ended several of those who said "yes" expressed concern about the job market and future job security. Sixteen reported that they taught LCTLs, and twenty-one that they taught commonly taught languages. All three commonly taught languages (French, German, and Spanish) were represented. LCTLs taught included Arabic, Dutch, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, and Russian. (There were teachers of six other LCTLs as well, but those languages were taught by so few instructors at the university that I won't name the languages in order to protect the anonymity of my participants.) A few of my participants had taught more than one language, and although I did not recruit among teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), a few of my participants had also taught ESL in addition to a foreign language.

Nineteen participated in the follow-up interviews as well as completing the online questionnaire. (I invited a twentieth participant to be interviewed, but I never received a response.) Eight interview participants taught LCTLs, and eleven taught commonly taught languages. Interview participants included one lecturer, one adjunct, one faculty assistant, one faculty associate, ten TAs, three head TAs, and two that listed "other" as their job title. Languages taught included Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and two LCTLs that I will not name to protect the identities of my participants. Table 1 provides pseudonyms and other information about the participants.

[2] The titles of faculty assistant and faculty associate are perhaps unique to this institution. This title can encompass those who are lecturers but can also include others who teach classes but also have additional responsibilities.

Table 1

Participant Information

Pseudonym	L/CTL	Current job title	Degree Pursuing	Language teaching part of long-term career goals	Interview
Anna	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Ashley	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Atlas	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Charlie	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Deedee	LCTL	Head Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Drusilla	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Elaine	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Elsa	CTL	Other: University Fellow	PhD	No	Yes
Ezra	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Fae	LCTL	Lecturer	PhD	Yes	No
Francesca	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Frank	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Franz	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Fulano	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	Masters	Yes	Yes
Gabriel	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Ginger	CTL	Faculty Associate[3]	(Has PhD)	Yes	Yes

[3] As mentioned previously, the titles of faculty assistant and faculty associate are perhaps unique to this institution. This title can encompass those who are lecturers but can also include others who teach classes but also have additional responsibilities.

Helga	CTL	Other: instructor at a different university	PhD	Yes	No
Isabel	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Jackson	CTL	Adjunct	(Has PhD)	Yes	Yes
Janet	CTL	Head Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Joan	LCTL	Lecturer		Yes	Yes
Julia	LCTL	Other: Project Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Juliet	LCTL	Faculty Assistant		No	Yes
Jun	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	Masters	Yes	No
Lauren	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Lili	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Maggie	CTL	Head Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Marty	CTL	Lecturer		Yes	No
Mary	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Miguel	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Mina	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	No
Rain	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Rita	CTL	Head Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Sam	LCTL	Faculty Assistant		Yes	No
Saransi	LCTL	Lecturer	(Has PhD)	No	No
Tessa	LCTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes
Ulla	CTL	Teaching Assistant	PhD	Yes	Yes

Recruitment

Recruitment for the questionnaire was done via flyers, emails, and in-person TA/staff meeting visits. The flyers were placed in the department mailboxes of non-TIs either by myself or by department staff. Department faculty or staff in the targeted departments (see Appendix F) forwarded my recruitment email to all non-TIs. The email included a brief description of the purpose of the study, my contact information, and a link to the online questionnaire. The flyers contained the same information as the mass email. I was not copied on most of the emails that were sent out, so I cannot be sure how many instructors received the emails. About a week after the initial recruitment emails went out, I sent another email requesting permission to attend TA, staff, or department meetings to recruit in person. I was able to attend and recruit in person in five CTL meetings and two LCTL meetings, and one person said there was no room on the meeting agenda for me, but requested flyers and said that she would announce my study herself in the meeting. I also distributed paper copies of the questionnaire in some TA or department meetings, and in those cases had secure locations where participants could drop off completed questionnaires for me to collect later. I also left flyers in a public place during a relevant graduate student symposium. The text of all recruitment materials is included in Appendix G.

Once I had closed the online questionnaire and selected participants to be interviewed, I invited them to be interviewed via email. To select respondents for interviews after they had completed the online questionnaire, I first ranked the respondents according to their total reported frequency counts. To get these totals I added together all the frequency counts for each respondent across all the questionnaire questions. Then I listed in the respondents in order from highest total frequency to lowest total frequency, and compared them across other characteristics and experiences, to get as broad a representation as possible. I considered LCTL versus CLT,

whether language teaching was a career goal, job title, use of technology, years of teaching experience, gender, age, their native language and whether they were teaching it or another language, use of shared office, whether they said they felt connected to other language teachers, their job appointment percentage, whether they had taught language in a setting other than to undergraduates, and the amount of teacher training they had had. As indicated above, I invited twenty participants to be interviewed, and nineteen agreed. (I never heard back from the twentieth.)

Data Collection and Instruments

Data was collected via online and paper questionnaires and semi-structured follow-up interviews. The interviews also included the collection of artifacts. Data collection occurred between March and May of 2014.

Questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of three sections with a total of 119 items, increased from 50 items in the version used for the pilot. (The complete questionnaire is included as Appendix D). The "Background information" section asked for basic demographic information, and information about respondents' current and past teaching experience. The "Education and career" section asked about current studies and future career goals. The third and longest section, entitled "Involvement in teacher 'communities' or 'networks,'" asked about the frequency of certain types of interactions with other languages teachers, and included several open-ended questions.

Interviews. In the interviews I asked the participants to comment or expand on their responses to the questionnaire, and I also asked more in-depth questions about their communities with other language teachers. The interview protocol is included as Appendix E. I interviewed

each participant once, with one exception,[4] and each interview lasted 47-80 minutes and was audio-recorded. As in the pilot, I audio recorded the interviews, and used the audio files to create transcripts for data analysis.

Artifacts. In the emails in which I invited respondents to participate in the interviews I also asked them to provide me with artifacts. Participants were asked to send me the artifacts prior to their interview or to bring them to the interview. If they thought of additional relevant artifacts after the interview, they were invited to provide them to me after the interview as well. I asked for two artifacts. First, I requested that they provide me with their teaching philosophy statement, if they had one. I made this artifact optional, since I did not want a potential participant to decline participating due to not having a teaching philosophy statement that they were willing to share with me. Second, I also asked participants to provide something that reflected for them personally the influence of community on their teaching. The original purpose of requesting the artifacts was to triangulate the other data sources, but I also found that the artifacts served well to break the ice and get the participants talking about their teacher communities, as well as providing insights into their definitions of and beliefs about their communities. The requirement to provide the artifact(s) meant that participants came to the interview having already pondered about their teacher community. De Leon and Cohen (2005) refer to these types of artifacts as object probes, and use them "to generate verbal responses" in interviews (p. 201). I will discuss how I used the artifacts in my analysis in the following section.

[4] There was one participant that I interviewed twice. I had made a mistake in my use of the recording equipment, and so only had a recording of half of the interview. The participant was kind enough to let me re-interview him. I had 98 minutes of audio from him, between the two interviews.

Data analysis

I treated data analysis as an iterative process, in that I revisited the various sources of data multiple times as I sorted and organized it, identified and refined themes through coding, and then determined how to best represent it (Creswell, 2007). As described above, the data that was analyzed consisted of the responses to quantitative (multiple choice) and qualitative (open-ended) items on the questionnaire, the transcripts of semi-structured interviews, and the participant-provided artifacts.

The analysis of the questionnaire data began with entering responses from paper questionnaires into the survey tool, extracting all data from the survey tool into a spreadsheet, removing participant names from the spreadsheet, and calculating frequency counts from the quantitative questions. I also used an initial analysis of the questionnaire data to decide which participants to invite for interviews, as described above. Once those steps were completed, I looked at basic descriptive statistics for the frequency questions. I looked for patterns among those responses, and sought explanations for those patterns in the qualitative data. That quantitative data provided the backdrop against which I analyzed the open-ended questions on the questionnaire, the interview data, and the artifacts. When either the quantitative or the qualitative data for a given participant was not clear on a particular issue, I referred to the other for clarification.

The analysis of the qualitative data, which consisted of the open-ended questions on the questionnaire, the interview data, and the artifacts, started with transcribing the interviews. I used the following basic transcription conventions (see Appendix H for a transcript sample):

1. Short interjections (yeah, uh huh, etc.) by the other speaker were put inside double parentheses;

2. Filler words (um, you know, etc.) were loosely transcribed;
3. Laughs, sighs, or other nonlinguistic occurrences were put between double parentheses;
4. Commas indicated pauses in the flow of speech, and ellipses indicated longer, notable pauses;
5. False starts or interruptions were indicated by hyphens (to- tomato);
6. Incomprehensible words or phrases (or text that I cut or clarified for brevity when quoting) were put inside square brackets.[5]

Following transcription, I read through the transcripts to code them, largely using descriptive or topic coding (Saldana, 2009). I chose two transcripts to code first to test my coding process, with the idea that I would reevaluate my procedure after coding them. On this initial coding pass I read both transcripts once for each research question (six times total). I quickly discovered that it was actually counter-productive to code this way, as I found that I felt I had to ignore certain utterances because they related to a different research question than the one I was coding for at that moment. It was during this initial coding process that I conflated the research questions as described above. On later coding passes I used MaxQDA, a qualitative analysis software, to collate and organize codes and memos. In addition to coding the interview transcripts, I also extracted and coded the open-ended questions from the questionnaire using similar methods.

After the initial prototype coding pass, I read each transcript multiple times, refining my codes and themes, and writing memos to clarify use the use or definition of codes and themes. In coding I both used pre-existing codes, looking specifically for data that answered my research

[5] When including quotes in the dissertation, I often edited out false starts, filler words, and pauses for readability.

questions or that aligned with parts of the activity theory triangle, and also looked for themes that arose. After an initial coding pass on all qualitative data, I sorted, combined, and refined my codes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I sorted the codes two different ways during this refining process. First, I sorted them according to which codes seemed to be answering which research question. Second, I sorted them according to which element of the activity theory triangle they seemed to align with or explicate. Once the main themes for each research question had been identified (e.g., "trust"), then I did further analysis of the data coded with that theme to identify sub-themes (e.g., "trusting individuals").

The analysis of the artifacts was integrated with the analysis of the interviews. The artifacts were introduced and discussed as part of the interviews, so participant comments about them were captured in the transcripts. I did not do any separate analysis of the artifacts as a group. Artifacts included emails in which teaching materials were shared, a classroom activity that the participant co-created with another instructor, a photograph of a shared TA office, a folder from a professional conference, and a participant's keychain, containing keys to TA office and other teaching-related spaces and keychains from a former institution and the current institution.

In the next chapter I will present how the data collected in this study answered the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Summary of Study

As described earlier, this research examined the communities and community-type interactions among language instructors, seeking a snapshot of the interactions that take place, their frequency, and how departments can facilitate community development and involvement for the sake of professional development. This mixed methods study used questionnaires, semi-structured follow-up interviews, and artifacts to investigate the types of interactions that constitute involvement in communities, how they develop, how they are maintained, and what impact the participating teachers feel that the communities have on them and on their teaching.

Participants were non-tenured / non-tenure track foreign language instructors at a large public university. Due to my interest in teachers of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), I recruited from departments that taught LCTLs as well as from departments that teach commonly taught languages (CTLs), and was careful to select approximately equal numbers of participants from both groups for the follow-up interviews.

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?
2. What builds community? What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support? What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?
3. How do teachers' beliefs about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities? What beliefs do teachers have about

community among themselves?

In this chapter I present the results of the data collection. I present the results by answering each research question based on an amalgamation of data from all data sources: questionnaire, interview, and artifacts. Thus I do not generally distinguish between what was reported in the questionnaire versus what was reported in the interviews versus what was from an artifact. Occasionally I will indicate that a quote was from one or the other by writing that a participant wrote versus said something, but I do not otherwise distinguish between sources, considering them all equally valid and important. As described in the previous chapter, the analysis of the artifacts was integrated with the analysis of the interviews, since participant comments about the artifacts were captured in the transcripts. In order to protect the anonymity of my participants, when quoting or citing them I sometimes refrain from naming their target language, locations they mention, or other information that could reveal their identity, and in some cases I don't provide the pseudonym of the participant who expressed a certain point.

Research question 1: What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?

The first research question sought to elucidate the types of interactions language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently they engage in those interactions. The sources of data that addressed this question were multiple choice questions on the survey (with open-ended follow-up questions), general open-ended questions on the survey, semi-structured interviews, and participant-provided teacher community artifacts. (As there were 2 types of open-ended questions on the survey and their results are used differently, I distinguish between them here as follows. Open-ended questions that asked participants to explain or clarify their responses to the preceding sets of multiple choice

questions I refer to as open-ended follow-up questions. Stand-alone open-ended questions that are not connected to multiple choice questions are referred to as general open-ended questions.)

In order to understand the survey results shared below, it is necessary to understand the frequency rating scale that participants were asked to use. Participants were asked to select, from a list of provided values, the frequency with which they participated in certain types of interactions. The frequency options they had to choose from were:

1. More than once a day
2. Daily
3. 2-3 times a week
4. Once a week
5. 2-3 times a month
6. Once a month
7. 1-3 times a semester
8. Once a year
9. Never

The interactions that participants in this study reported having with other language teachers fell into three general categories: interactions about teaching, interactions about their scholarship, and social interactions. I will describe the interactions that fell into each of these three categories, and will share the self-reported frequencies of these types of interactions as revealed in the surveys and the interviews.

Interactions about teaching. Interactions about teaching included pre-service and in-service trainings, workshops, and teaching methods courses, regularly scheduled meetings during

the semester, specific tasks assigned by the head TA, course coordinator, or the department, and conversations in shared office spaces.

Pre-service and in-service training. Participants reported engaging in a variety of forms of pre-service and in-service training. Out of 37 survey respondents, 34 (92%) reported participation in "TA orientation (or equivalent pre-service),"[6] and 29 (78%) reported interacting with other language teachers "in trainings." (See Figure 2 below for the reported frequencies of these "in trainings" interactions.) Based on responses to follow-up questions in the survey and the interviews, it appears that this pre-service training took two forms. The first was a series of workshops offered by the college for all new teaching assistants. The audience for this college-wide training included teaching assistants from a wide range of disciplines, from the humanities to the sciences. Drusilla reported that "the first semester that we teach, we have to complete the [college-wide] TA training." Julia commented that the college-wide training was "just too big" to be of use to make connections with other language instructors outside one's own language group. The second reported pre-service was provided for all foreign language teaching assistants by a university language center. Julia said that she did make connections with instructors of other languages during this training. Both sets of pre-service reportedly included micro-teaching, in which participating instructors prepared and taught a short segment of a lesson and received feedback from experienced instructors. In some cases, they later taught a second lesson segment, using the feedback from the first time to adjust their teaching. Some participants mentioned assisting with pre-service training once they became experienced instructors, either by making presentations or by providing feedback during micro-teaching.

[6] Quotation marks around short phrases when discussing the results indicate that those phrases are exact text from the items on the questionnaire.

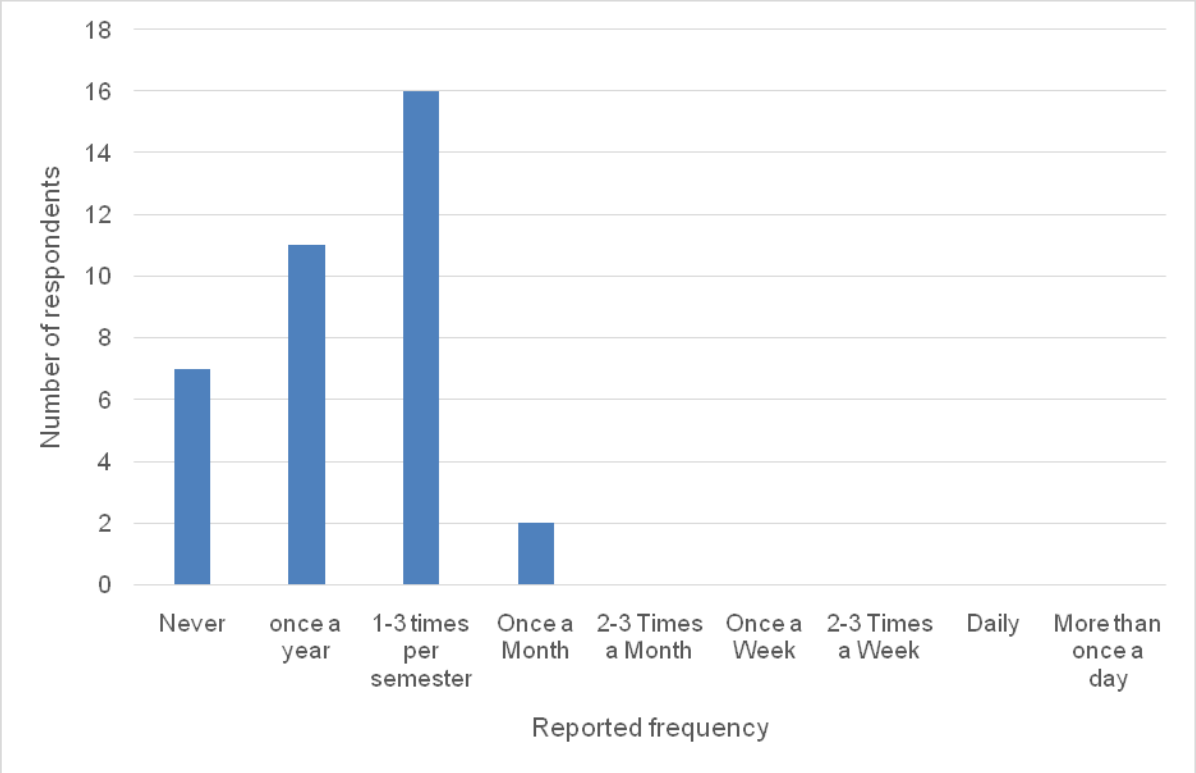

Figure 2. Reported frequencies of interacting with other language teachers "in trainings."

Language pedagogy course. Another form of pre-/in-service trainings during which teachers interacted with each other was a language pedagogy course. Thirty-three out of 37 survey respondents (89%) and 17 out of 19 interview participants (89%) reported having taken a pedagogy course as part of their teacher preparation. None were enrolled in one at the time of this study, however, since, as one reported, "the pedagogy course was only once in our course of classes, so it's not something ongoing." Two participants reported having taken a pedagogy course at another university, prior to coming to the university that is the site of this study, and another reported being involved in the teaching of the pedagogy course. Being enrolled in the pedagogy course reportedly brought about other out-of-class interactions. Lauren said, "I had the required pedagogy course last semester, and there was lots of interaction every week." Rand explained some of the interactions that took place as part of the course: "That was a good class, because you are in constant contact with your colleagues, and to see ideas, and also, you present

lesson plans and stuff, and you evaluate, you go to classes to observe, that's good." Franz said, "Visiting each other's classes was one of the requirements of the course, as were attending professional development events." Out-of-class interactions, as well as those during class time, provided opportunities for instructors to talk to and work with each other.

Workshops or brownbags. Other forms of in-service training or professional development included workshops or brownbags on various topics, sometimes offered by one of the language departments and sometimes by other entities on campus. Out of 37 survey respondents, 28 (76%) indicated that workshops were a form of instructor training in which they participated. In addition, when a general open-ended survey question asked participants to write in one or more structured language teacher communities in which they participated, sixteen responses from thirteen people reported participation in workshops or brownbags of one sort or another, such as "my department's pedagogy workshop," "technology workshops on campus," or "SLA brown bag." (See Figure 3 for the frequencies of that brownbag or workshop participation.) Participants reported in the open-ended question that workshops or brownbags were put on by their departments, the university language center, and a technology support group. Topics included use of technology in the classroom, "SLA stuff," teaching authentic texts, multiculturalism in the classroom, and others. In some departments, language instructors or someone in the role of a TA mentor planned and presented the workshops.

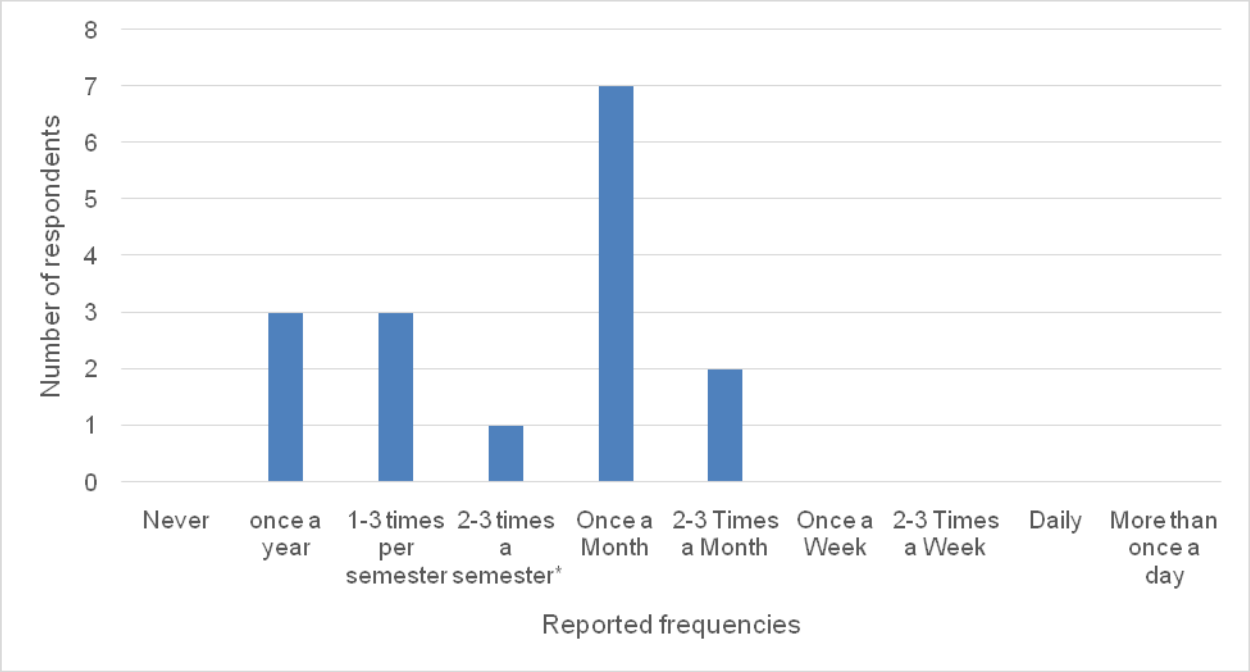

Figure 3. Reported frequencies of interacting with other language teachers in brownbags or workshops. Some participants wrote in brownbags or workshops when asked for "structured language teacher communities or networks" in which they participated, and these are the frequencies they reported for those interactions.
*One participant wrote in the frequency of "2-3 times a semester" rather than selecting a frequency that the item provided.

Regularly scheduled meetings. Participants also reported interacting with other language teachers in regularly scheduled meetings, some on the department level with all department faculty, staff, and graduate students, and some on the course level, with other instructors and sometimes a course coordinator, in cases where one existed. In the survey, 30 out of 37 respondents (81%) reported past or present participation in "TA meetings (with department or level or course)," and 32 out of 37 (86%) reported participating "in department meetings." (See Figure 4 for specific frequencies of department meeting interactions.) Participants mentioned that the department meetings were mostly administrative and not focused on teaching. Joan said of department meetings: "We have a meeting once a month, but it's for practical business, and the TAs are invited to that, as well as the academic staff and faculty, but it's not about teaching." Course-level meetings were reported as happening more frequently, and were much smaller, as

they were only for the instructors involved in teaching a particular level of a course, and their supervisor, in some cases where one existed. These meetings were reported as also being largely administrative, giving instructors a chance to coordinate upcoming exams, among other things. Rita explained that in those meetings, "we tend to focus more on house-keeping stuff, like, when do we do the midterm, we need to plan the midterm together, the final, but it's more…it's almost more administrative than about teaching." Tessa confirmed that exam preparation was part of those meetings, and said, "they're a mix of administrative and training/professional development, so for the most part they're a lot of administrative things." Drusilla's comment was that they are "usually more around policy." In a general open-ended question on the survey, Julia cited meetings as ways for her to "keep in touch" with TAs and with faculty.

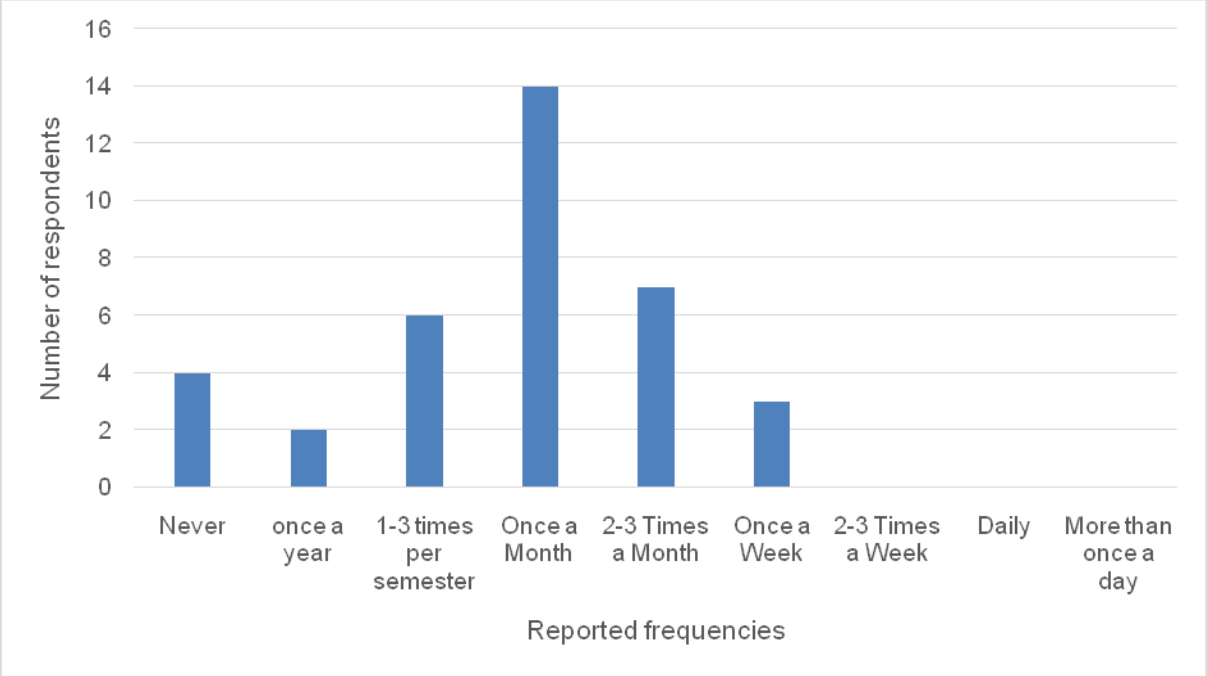

Figure 4. Reported frequencies of interacting with other language teachers "in department meetings."

Shared offices. In addition to these more formal and scheduled interactions about their teaching, participants also reported interacting with each other in their shared offices. The responses to several survey questions, as well as the interviews, provided insights into these

interactions. In response to a general open-ended request in the survey for information about shared offices, 35 out of 37 survey respondents (95%) provided information about shared offices, and 31 of those reported that they do share an office (84%). Thirty out of 37 respondents (81%) reported interacting in shared office space with some frequency (see Figure 5 for specific frequencies). Another survey item asked how frequently participants turn to TAs in their shared office for support in their teaching, and 30 out of 37 respondents (81%) reported that they do this with some frequency (see Figure 6 for detailed frequencies). In terms of what they talk about in their shared offices, one general open-ended survey question asked participants to identify formal or informal ways in which they share their teaching expertise, and of the 35 responses, 9 mentioned conversations in shared offices as a way to do this. Miguel reported that,

> I share my office with a number of [TL][7] TAs. The person next to me is a native speaker of [the TL] who teaches two hours before I do. After his course is over, I regularly have time to catch up with him on where we are at in the syllabus and what we will assign as homework or cover in class. This is usually very productive and we share a lot of ideas and materials.

Franz wrote, "Sometimes issues are simply brought up in the office and talked about casually." Tessa reported that, "I often run ideas past office mates or other TA friends not in my office." Other participants spoke of the emotional support provided by TAs in shared offices. For example, Anna wrote,

> For the past three years, my officemates have been amazing. It's really important for me to be able to ask for their advice or opinion about teaching or get help finding an answer

[7] Recall that I sometimes do not name the target language if doing so might risk the anonymity of the participant.

> to some of the HARD questions my students ask. The great ambiance in our office definitely makes it easier to get through a bad teaching day; everyone's very open, we can vent our frustrations, and uncensored snark is welcome.

Another survey respondent, Lili, said that, "We also laugh a lot between TAs in our shared office, which helps decrease stress (even if this is a short-lived effect)." And Lauren stated, "If it weren't for my friends, especially my office-mates, I would probably be in a good deal of trouble from a mental/emotional and physical health standpoint." As Tessa acknowledged above, sometimes similar interactions happen with those in a shared office and those not in a shared office. Ezra expanded on this when he said, "In the hallway, there is a line of [TL] TA offices […]. Even though we are not sharing offices, we are constantly going from one to another when doors are open." The physical proximity seemed to lend itself to on-going conversations and frequent interactions, and supportive or productive conversations were not limited to those within shared offices.

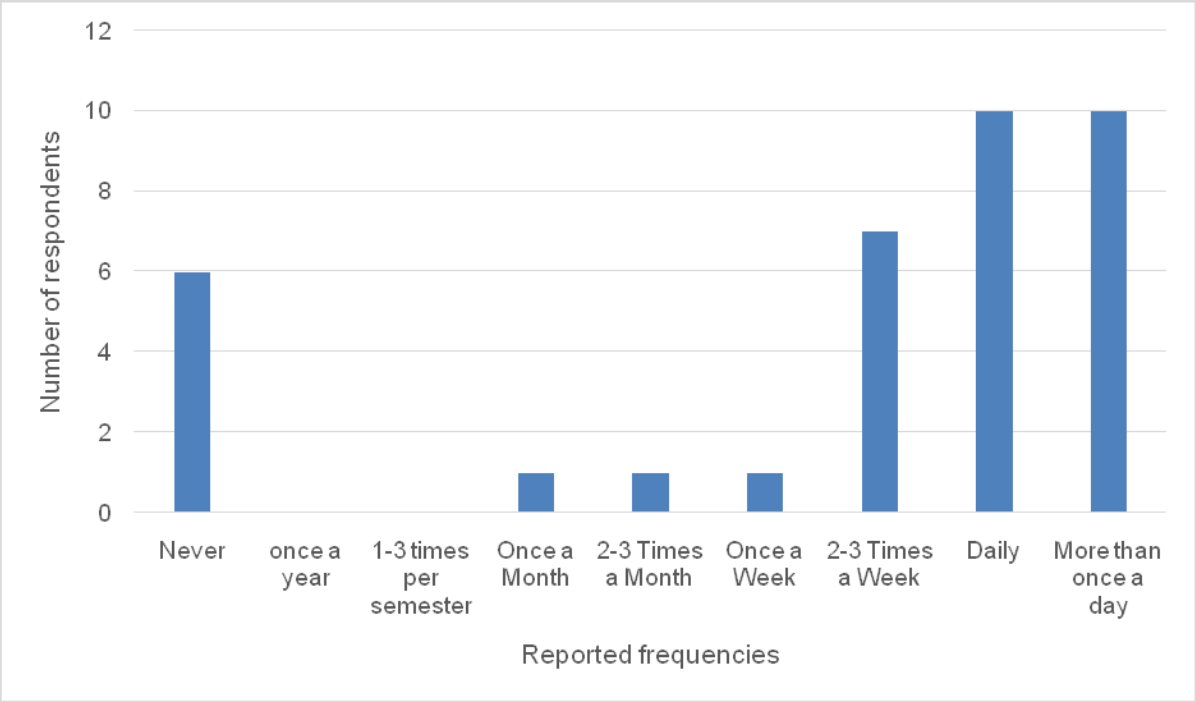

Figure 5. Reported frequencies of interacting with other language teachers "in shared office space."

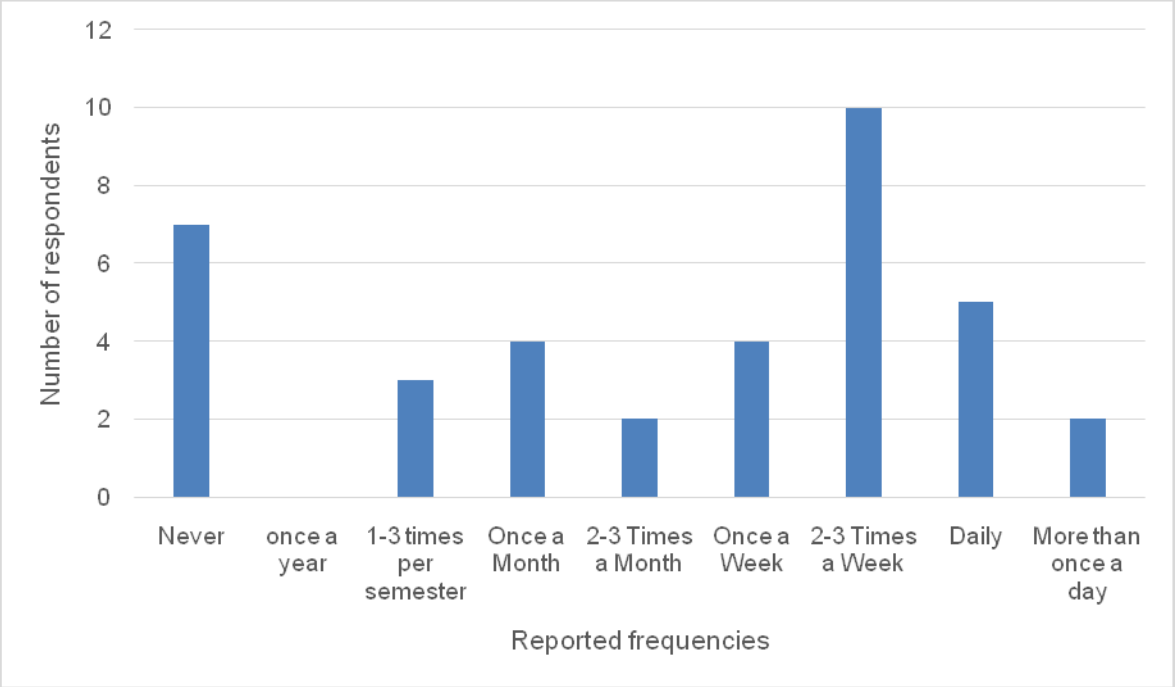

Figure 6. Reported frequencies of participants turning to TAs in their shared office for support in their teaching.

Specific assignments. Some instructors had specific assignments in their departments or language groups that were related to their teaching assignments, and those were another source of teacher-teacher interactions.

Observations. In addition to being required to do classroom observations as part of a pedagogy course, as Rand mentioned in a quote above, some instructors reported being required by the course coordinator or the department to observe other teachers' classrooms, or to arrange for others, faculty or TAs, to observe their teaching. This varied by language program, but some required an observation each semester, either by a faculty member or a TA. (See Table 2 for reported participation in various types of observations. Participants responded to a question in the survey about what types of teacher training or professional development they had participated in. Table 2 shows the number out of 37 respondents who participated in each of these types of training, and what percentage of the total number of participants that was. See Figures 7 and 8 for reported frequencies of participants observing others and being observed

themselves.) In some cases, the observation included a follow-up conversation about the class session. Several participants commented on how the observations benefitted them as teachers, including helping them feel connected to others. Frank wrote, “I only feel connected to faculty language teachers when I get observed once a semester and they critique my teaching.” Miguel wrote, “I think TAs should regularly sit in on each other’s lessons, once a semester would be adequate. [My TL program] does this for new TAs, but I think experienced TAs could benefit as well.” Ginger shared a benefit that she found in observing others: “Some of my best teaching ideas have come from TAs—from casual conversations, [or] observing classes.” Tessa specified that the interaction between teachers that went along with an observation did not happen during the class, but afterwards in the follow-up conversation.

Table 2

Reported participation in various alignments of observations

Type of observation	Respondents	% of total
Observing TA (you observed their teaching)	33	89%
Observations of your teaching by supervisor	30	81%
Observations of your teaching by another TA	29	78%
Observations of your teaching by other faculty	19	51%
Observing faculty (you observed their teaching)	18	49%

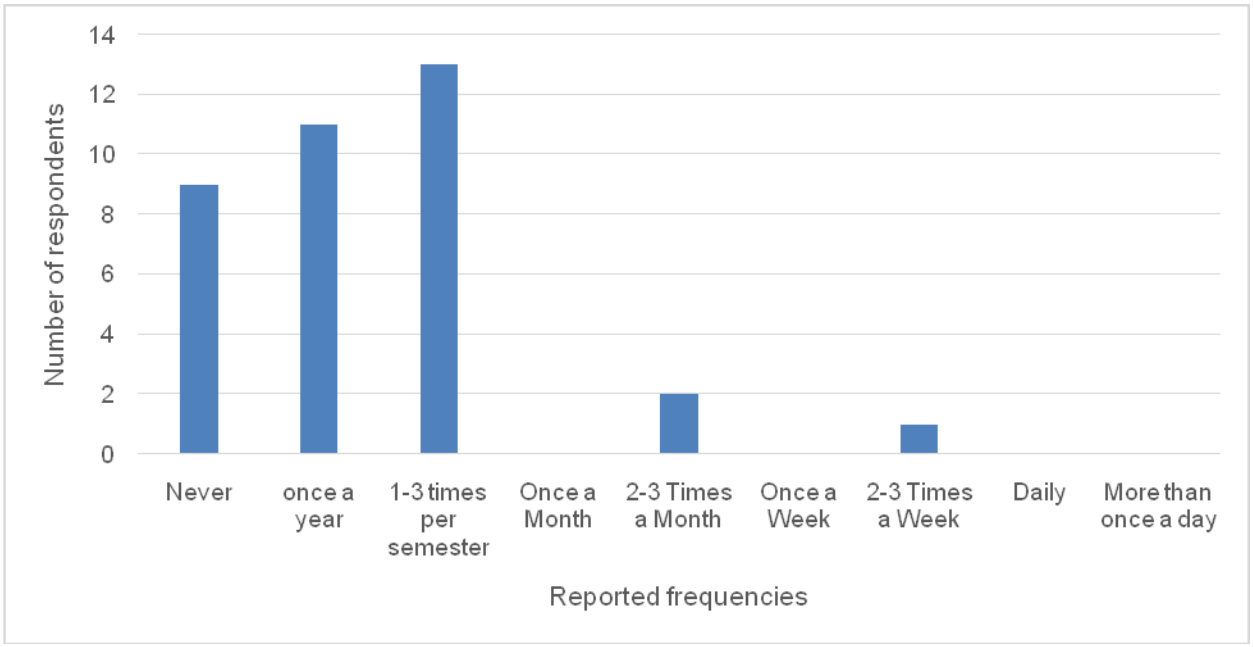

Figure 7. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "when I observe their teaching."

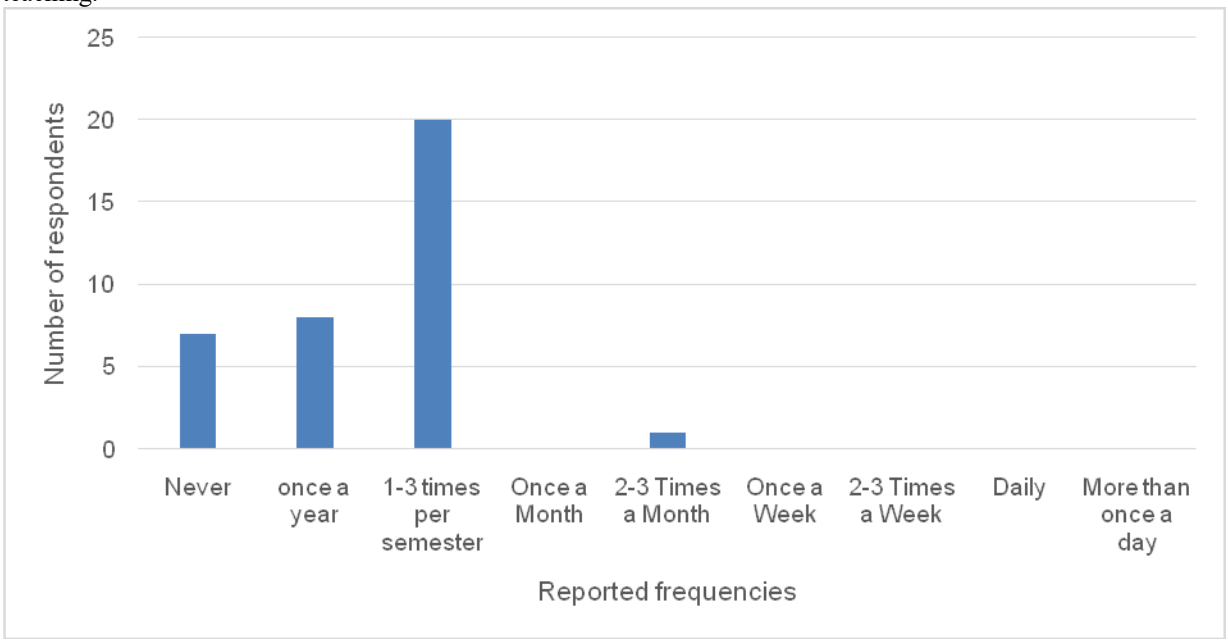

Figure 8. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "when they observe my teaching."

Creating quizzes and tests. In addition to classroom observations, another assignment given in more than one department was for instructors to work together to create quizzes and tests. Data indicate that this assignment generated lots of interactions between instructors as they

negotiated test items, content, and format. Figures 9 and 10 show reported frequencies of participants co-creating different types of materials with faculty or TAs. While these reported frequencies could potentially include materials besides assessments, due to the wording of the item in the survey, they still provide us a picture of the frequencies of these types of interactions.

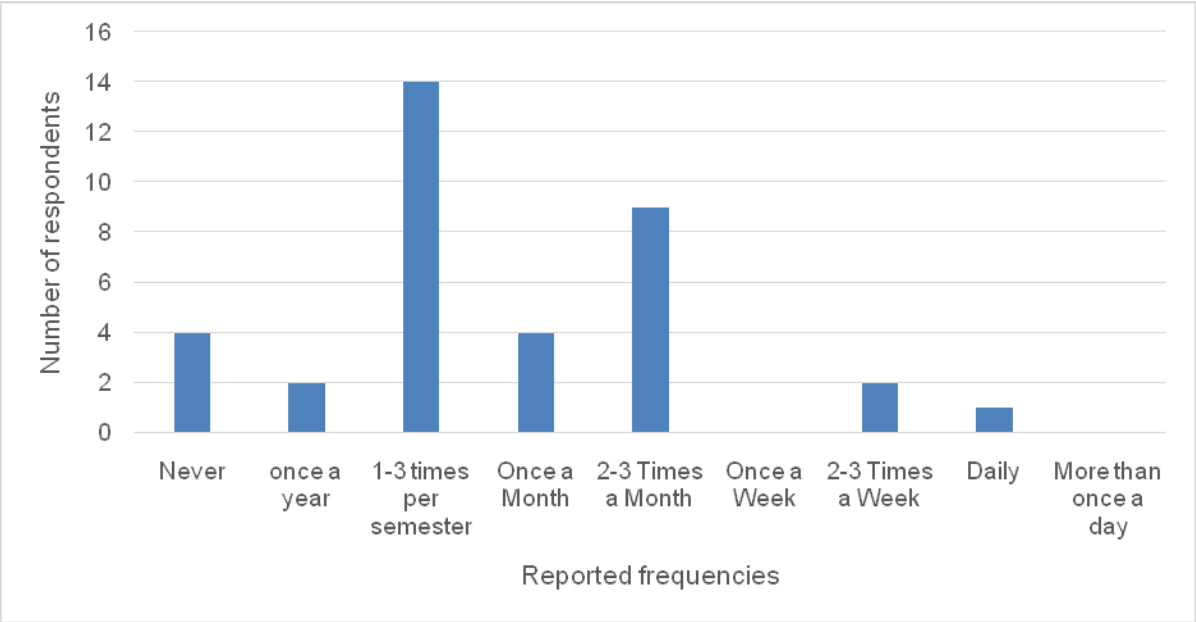

Figure 9. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers in "co-creating materials, quizzes, exams with another TA."

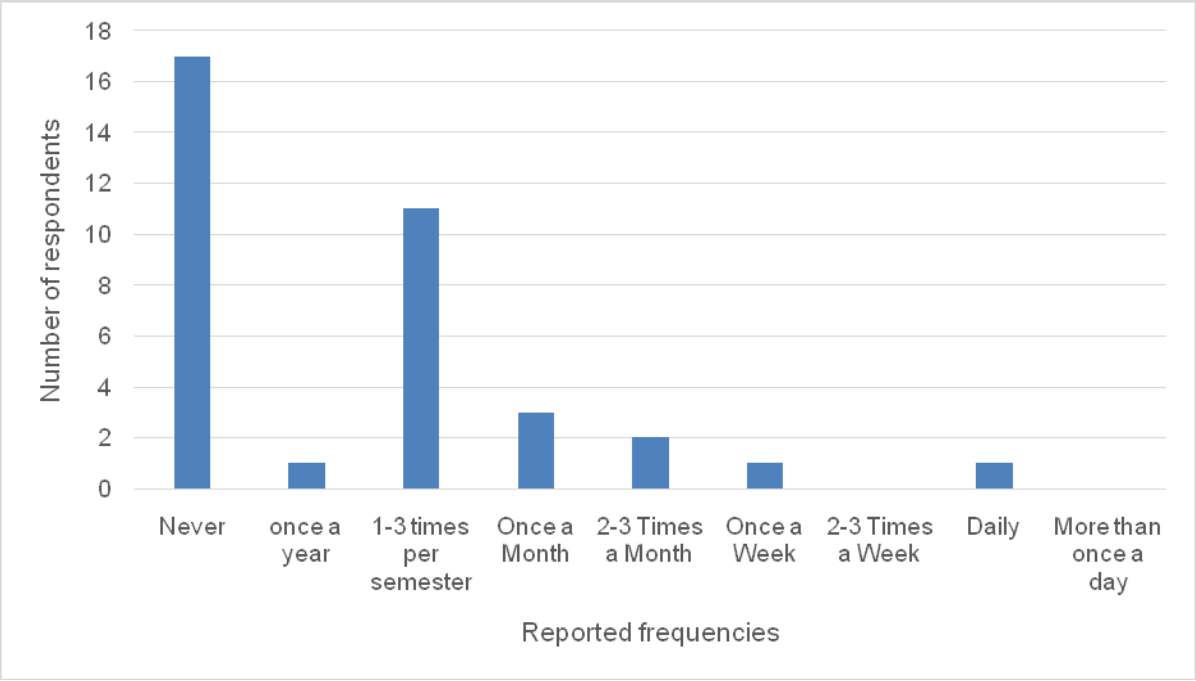

Figure 10. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers in "co-creating materials, quizzes, exams with faculty."

In departments or language programs where this was the norm, there was generally an established system of instructors writing drafts of quizzes or sections of quizzes, which were then reviewed by other TAs, the head TA, and/or course coordinator. Tessa reported that in her language group, "the head TA and the language coordinator together just write all the exams themselves." In Fulano's program, "you have a suggested format [for quizzes], but you can vary wildly from that." Maggie explained that,

> when we write quizzes, for example, the way that I've always done it with my groups, and I think is pretty common, is that TAs will take turns being in charge of the different quizzes, and they're in charge of writing it, and then the TA group gives feedback and then, I've always liked to do it so that the author has a sense of ownership over it, that they're the one to email it to the coordinator, so then they're in direct connection with her then, and she gives feedback and they make adjustments and then they distribute it again to the rest of the TA group.

Ginger reported that, "[the head TAs] coordinate getting the quizzes and the tests drafts done." Whatever the exact system, the task of creating assessments together did seem to lead to interactions between teachers. Not all interactions around this task were pleasant, however. For example, one participant reported that he was "maybe a little too picky" when giving feedback on quiz drafts, and it led to some frustration:

> Inexperienced TAs often create exercises that don't meet the standards set by previous quiz writers. For me, it's frustrating to pussyfoot around the content of a quiz. People often take feedback far too personally because a lot of effort goes into writing a quiz, but in a professional environment, TAs need to remove their emotion from that equation. I

> really did try to be diplomatic and not overly critical. The problem could have been avoided with better communication. I had high expectations, and I was perceived as being bossy, but none of this was discussed face-to-face between peers, and that's probably my fault.

We see here that positive and negative interactions can both happen within a community, and negotiating them both is part of being a member of a community.

Hosting a "language table." A third task that graduate teaching assistants in some language programs had was to host what many programs called a "language table." These were regular events that allowed those studying a language to get together and speak the language. Some language programs had them at specific locations on or off campus at similar times each week. Fulano's program's language table, for example, took place in the basement of a local bar. Ulla said, "we have a coffee hour once a week and every TA is sort of expected to host that at least once, usually twice." In Julia's department, the language table is part of the discussion in department meetings:

> I'm sort of the coordinator for the language table, so we were talking about ways to try to improve student attendance, 'cause it has previously been really well attended by both native speakers of [the LCTL TL] and non-native, and so we collaborate on sort of how to deal with that.

Elsa's explanation of each TA's responsibility was as follows:

> it's an unwritten rule that you host, or co-host, at least once a semester, and it's an unwritten rule that you go, so that's not quite, like, mandated, but it's kind of like…the people who go know who don't go, and so then you're just like, ok, so I've hosted twice

this semester, and I know that this person hasn't hosted in 3 years, […] so what is up with that.

Sharing materials on LessonShare. The last specific task that led to teacher-teacher interactions that I'll mention here is one that will be discussed in more depth in the results of research question three below, and that is the sharing of teaching materials via LessonShare, a locally-created materials-sharing website. At least one language program required its instructors to post materials to that site on a regular basis. Miguel said, "LessonShare is in our contract, that we have to contribute […] one thing per chapter." Several others in the same language program mentioned this requirement, and LessonShare was also mentioned by Drusilla and Tessa, who are from two different departments and for whom it was not required. In Drusilla's language program, a TA took the initiative to introduce LessonShare to the other instructors. This TA planned an initial uploading session for the TAs as a group, and Drusilla said that they plan to introduce new instructors to it, so it seems that it is becoming part of the community and leading to interactions in those ways.

Interactions about scholarship. The second category of interactions among teachers was those about their scholarship. I included this as a separate category from interactions about teaching because in the interviews it became clear that at least some of the participants made a distinction in what they recounted to me between interactions about teaching and interactions related to scholarship. At the beginning of each interview I told each participant that I was interested in any interactions they had with other teachers, whether or not those interactions were specifically about teaching. Despite that disclaimer, however, partway through her interview Elsa said, "we support each other in research, too, which hasn't been the focus of our discussion today, but that is definitely something that, we also have a community associated with that, too."

This made it clear to me that participants might be withholding comments about interactions with other teachers related to their scholarship because they didn't think they were relevant to my research, even though I would have considered them relevant. For some participants, language teaching was the direction they wanted their careers to go, so there was a close connection between their teaching and their scholarship. For others, however, the connection was not so close, and there was sometimes a struggle for non-TIs to find a good balance between a focus on research and a focus on teaching. The struggle to find this balance will be discussed in detail in the results of research question two.

The interactions about scholarship fell into two subcategories: graduate courses and conferences.

Graduate courses. Participants reported interacting with other language teachers in their graduate course work on a relatively low frequency. Out of 37 respondents, 20 (54%) reported some frequency, while 15 gave "never" as the frequency of this interaction type, and 2 left the relevant survey item blank. The detailed frequencies of interacting in graduate courses are reported in Figure 11. The low frequency was explained in follow-up comments from several participants such as: "Please note that I have completed…all of my…graduate course work," "I'm not in courses anymore," and "I am not taking classes now." For example, Gabriel wrote, "I did interact with the other language teachers when we were in courses together, but I'm a dissertator now so I'm not in classes with them anymore." Julia reported that during her coursework, "I always had courses in which the other students were either all [TL] TAs or all SLA students or all language TAs." Elsa cited graduate courses as one way that she got to know others when she wrote: "I feel more connected with other 'grads' than to 'other language teachers.' I know language teachers from other departments because I met them in courses,

through the [campus-wide teaching assistant organization] or by working on collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects." Helga wrote of the impact that graduate coursework had on the frequency of her interactions with other teachers: "I am not taking classes now. I did used to interact with other language teachers more during my course work." As mentioned above with the classroom observations required in the pedagogy classes and as Elsa pointed out above, assignments given in courses could also lead to increased interaction.

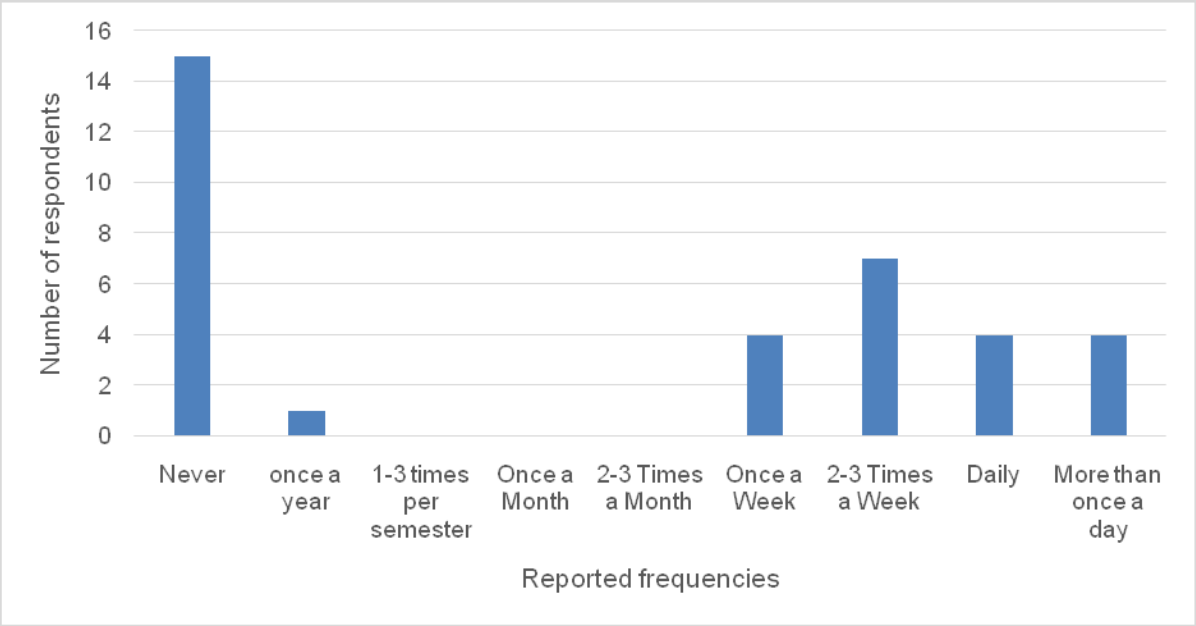

Figure 11. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "in my graduate courses."

Conferences. Conferences were another source of interaction with other teachers that fell into the scholarship category. When asked how frequently they interacted with other teachers at conferences, 25 out of 37 participants (68%) reported some frequency, while 9 respondents (24%) said "never." (Figure 12 contains the detailed frequency report.) The availability of travel and registration funds and the once-a-year frequency of most conferences could account for these low frequencies.

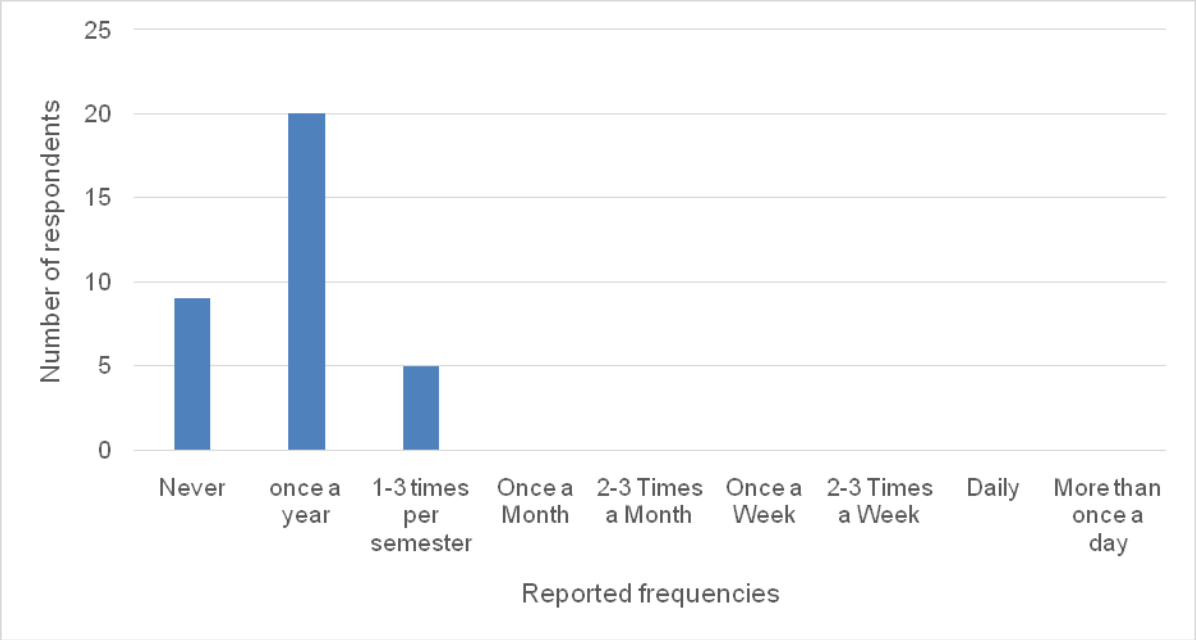

Figure 12. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "at conferences."

Participant comments revealed that even though conference attendance might not have been a frequent occurrence, participants did have meaningful interactions there. Sam wrote,

> I have attended conferences with other teachers of less commonly taught languages and I have enjoyed those interactions. It provides the opportunity to network with others who are confronted with the task of teaching a language that lacks formal and comprehensive teaching materials.

Juliet told of a conversation about the nature and future of teaching and learning that she had with another language teacher at a conference, which "profoundly influenced" her. While the conference in general was useful in that it "gave [her] exposure to other language instructors," she said that "there was one woman there that I really connected with a lot, so that was – pretty…awesome experience that influenced my teaching." Tessa also made new acquaintances in a conference-like setting: "I did, like a workshop, in [a country where the TL is spoken] one year, and I'm still pretty friendly with a bunch of people that did that." Ulla attended a

conference that was not specifically related to her scholarship or to her target language, but she reported:

> I felt like I found my professional family, so to say, I even came home and told my advisor, like, yeah, I know where I belong in the world now, so […] beyond this institution, I have a community outside of that as well, so I think that when I graduate that I'll still have at least these people if not also my [TL] department people.

She anticipated that her connection to this community would continue: "we even have a Facebook group where people just share resources, [so] even though I don't see those people very often, their conference is only biannual, unfortunately, I still do interact with them pretty regularly."

In addition to making new acquaintances, attending conferences provided opportunities to stay connected with old colleagues. Elsa said,

> we just had a conference […] and I saw [a former fellow graduate student colleague] there for the first time in person, I saw him in January in [the airport], randomly, but then, um…first time I've seen him, […] where I was expecting to see him, for a while.

Presenting at conferences with others also provided some opportunities for interaction, although not as much as just attending. In response to an item about how often they presented at a conference with a TA, 27 out of 37 respondents (73%) reported "never," and 9 (24%) reported some frequency. When asked how frequently they presented at a conference with faculty, 32 of 37 respondents (86%) said "never," and 4 (11%) reported some frequency. (Figures 13 and 14 respectively contain the detailed frequency reports for those interactions.)

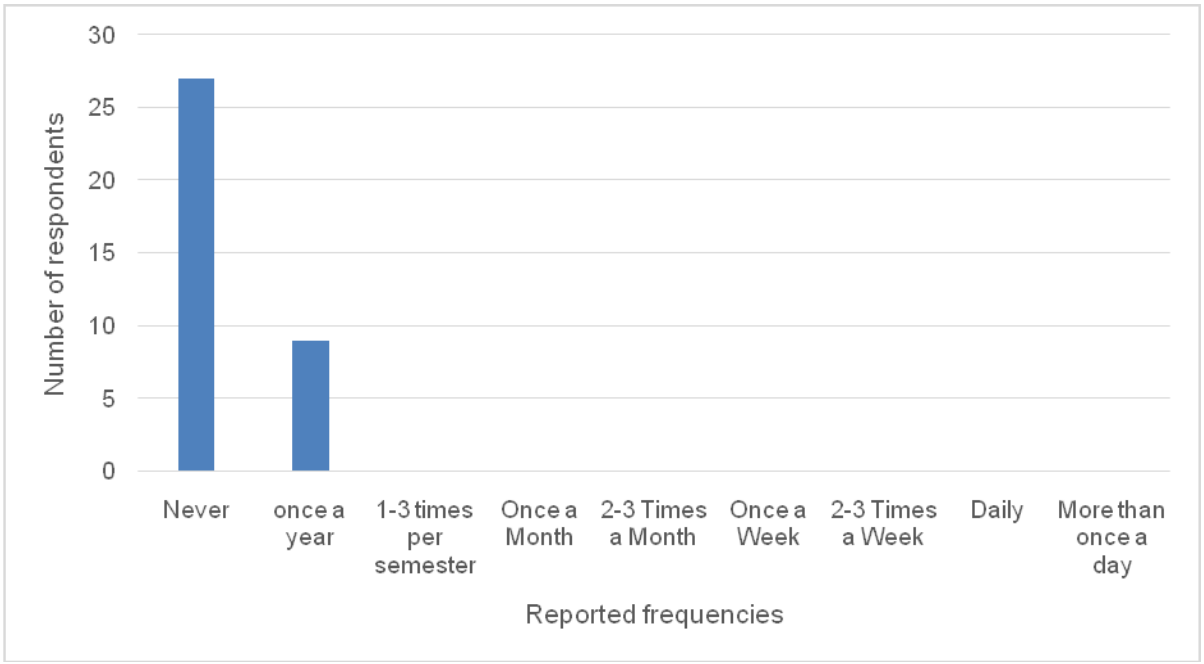

Figure 13. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers in "presenting at a conference with another TA."

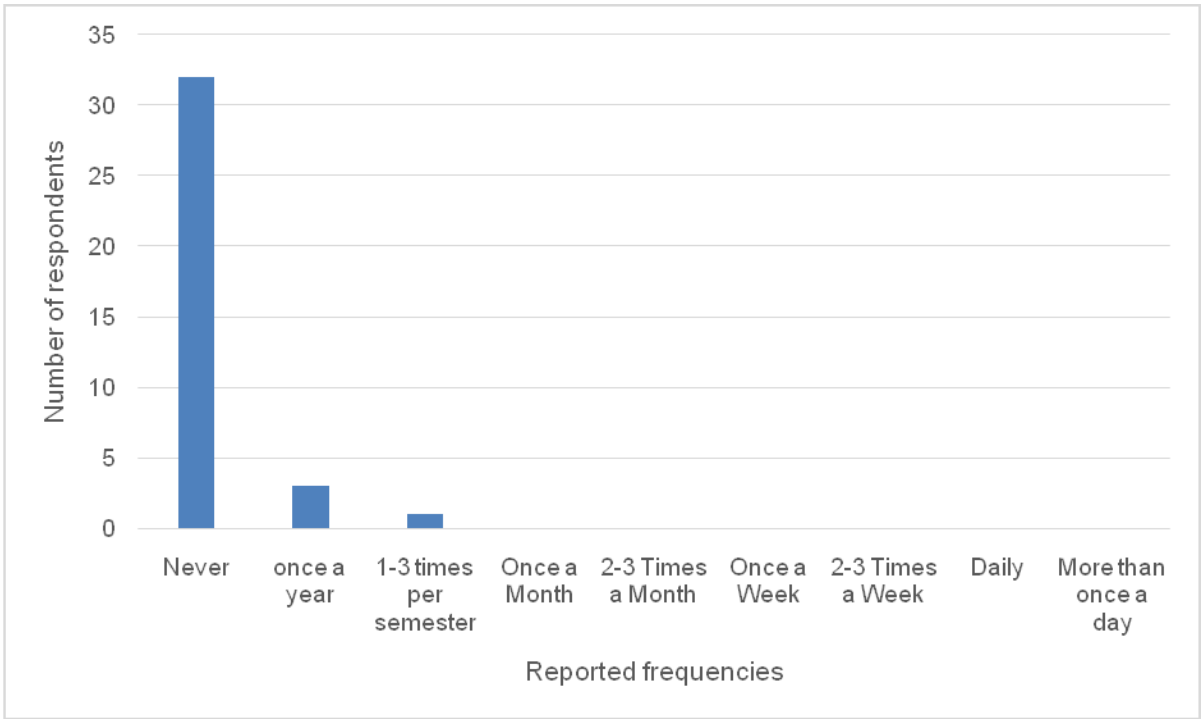

Figure 14. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers in "presenting at a conference with faculty."

In addition to nation- or world-wide conferences and events, local department colloquia also provided opportunities to interact and to be part of a community. One participant's department, which contained two language programs, reportedly had colloquia every semester. She said,

> [the topics are] always […] these things that are either very general, both, you know, topics that anyone can comment on, and usually there are about four or five people that take part, a mix of professors and grad students, they [give] a presentation about five to ten minutes, and then there's discussion afterwards, and everyone's encouraged to attend and discuss what's being said, and […] I think that's a really good way of thinking about, like, 'cause that way, you know, we see our, we come together as a whole department, we see that even though this person's working on medieval [language] and this person's working on modern [another language], they still have some common ground between them.

Social interactions. Social interactions were the third category of interactions that the data indicated participants had with other language teachers. Some were department-planned social events, such as potlucks at the beginning or end of the semester, and others were not department-planned.

Department-planned social events. The five participants that I will quote below are all from different departments, and all reported these types of social events in their departments. Tessa said,

> we do have these beginning of the year, and maybe end of the year activities, where the whole department comes together, we have like a potluck at the beginning of the year, just to kind of, encourage, I don't know, camaraderie, and, friendliness.

Julia reported that in her department, "we're gonna have an end of the year, potluck, picnic." She mentioned some of the difficulties of attending, due to the timing and location of the event, and suggested that

> I think departments, if they want to bring TAs and faculty together across languages need to be a little bit more creative in thinking about the timing of events, and the organization of events to make them easy to attend.

In Juliet's department, social events sometimes followed closely on the heels of workshops: "we have the monthly workshops, after the workshops, sometimes people bring food, so we'll have a potluck." Ashley told of the department-sponsored social events that bookended the academic year:

> the department […] once a year, they have a big picnic, like in the fall, so they invite all professors and students, and it's like a potluck, so people bring stuff, I guess that facilitates, you know, getting to know people, because it's nice just to be outside […] the work environment and see [other] people, and at the end of the year we have, um, I don't remember [what] they call it, but we just basically go to [the student union] and we order pitchers of beer, and same thing, the department invites us and we can get to talk to other people, so I guess, [we] organize informal things, like that.

Drusilla mentioned potlucks among other events: "we have lots of lectures, and things like that, [and] potlucks, things like that, receptions."

Non-department-planned social events. Even with these department-sponsored events, most interactions in this category were not department-facilitated at all, but purely social. Participants reported chatting in their shared offices or on the way to class, riding the bus to and from campus together, getting lunch, or dinner, or coffee together, and attending celebrations of

each other's life events. Several items in the survey asked about the frequency of various types of interaction, all of which fall into this social category. Figures 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 contain the reported frequencies of these interactions.

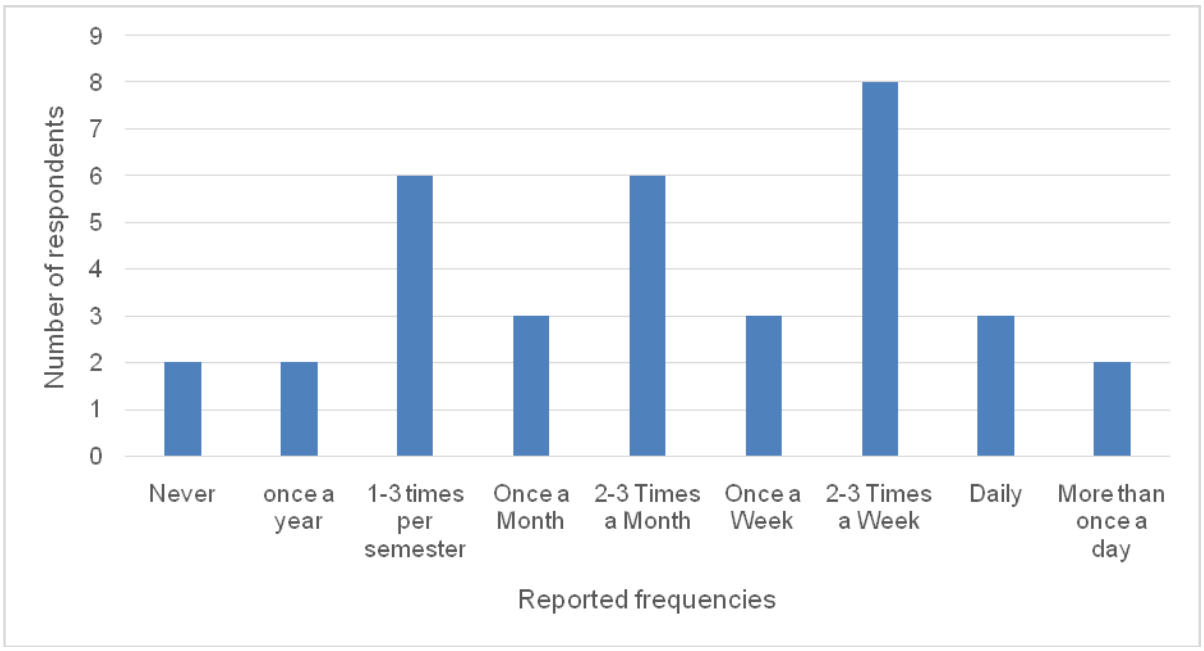

Figure 15. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "in social situations."

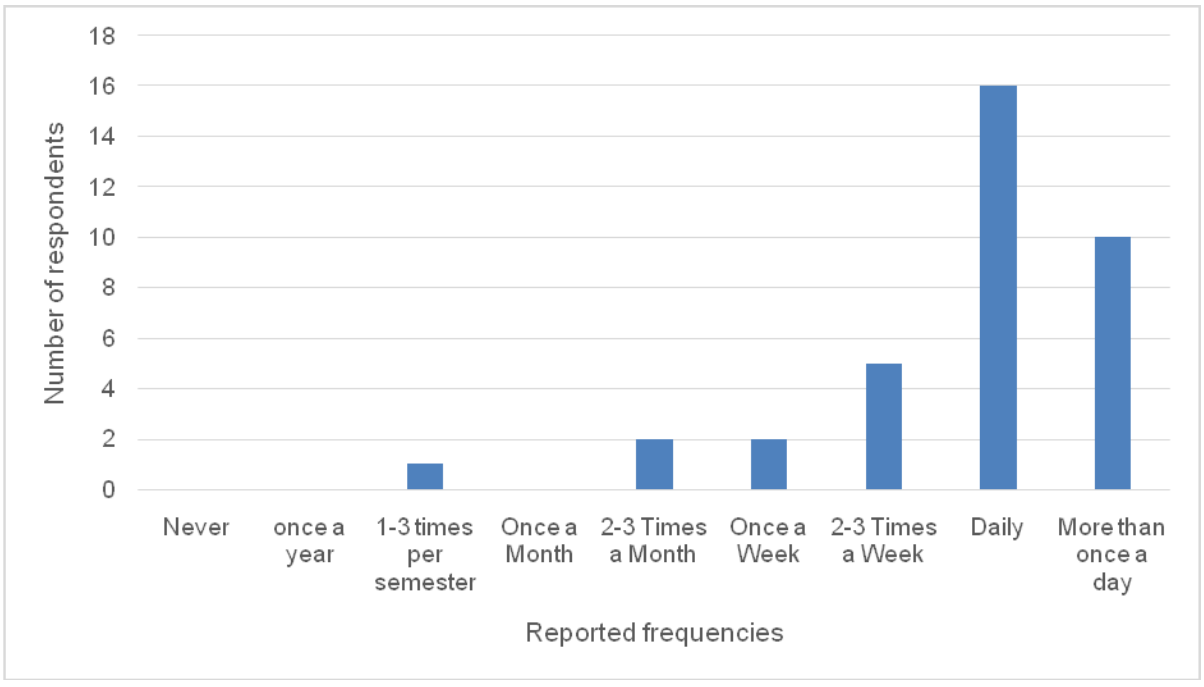

Figure 16. Reported frequencies of participants interacting with other language teachers "in casual conversations."

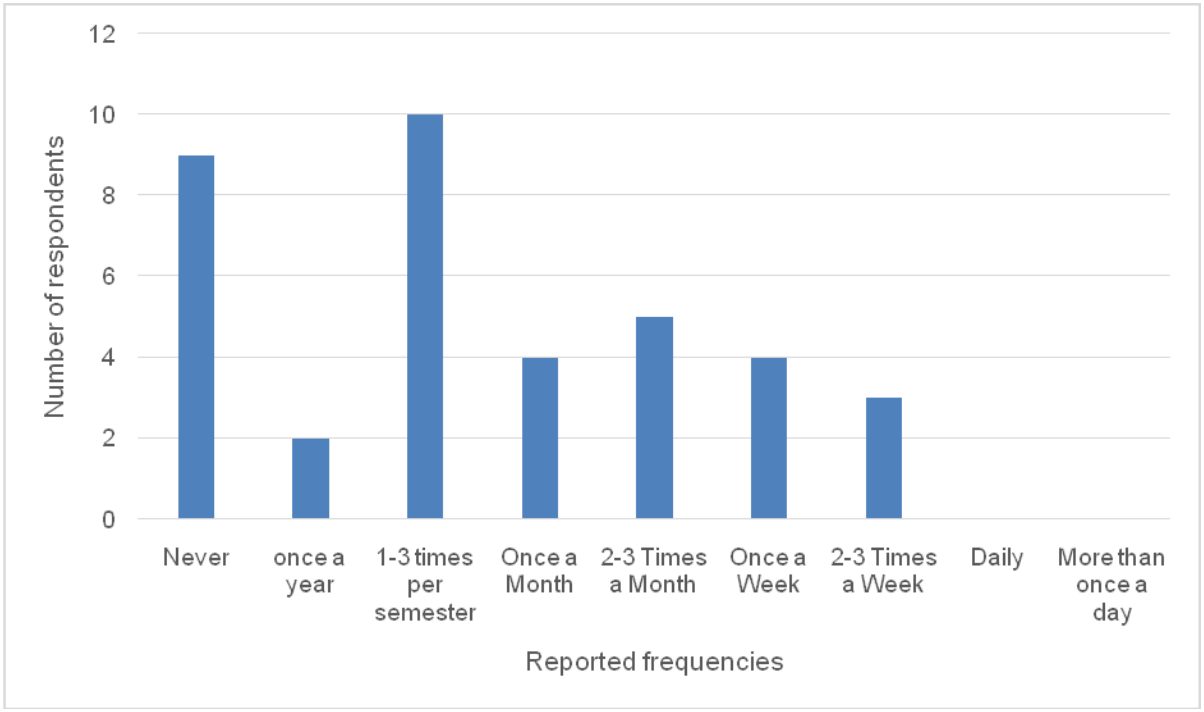

Figure 17. Reported frequencies of participants seeking out interactions with other language teachers in order to "participate in non-university-related social events."

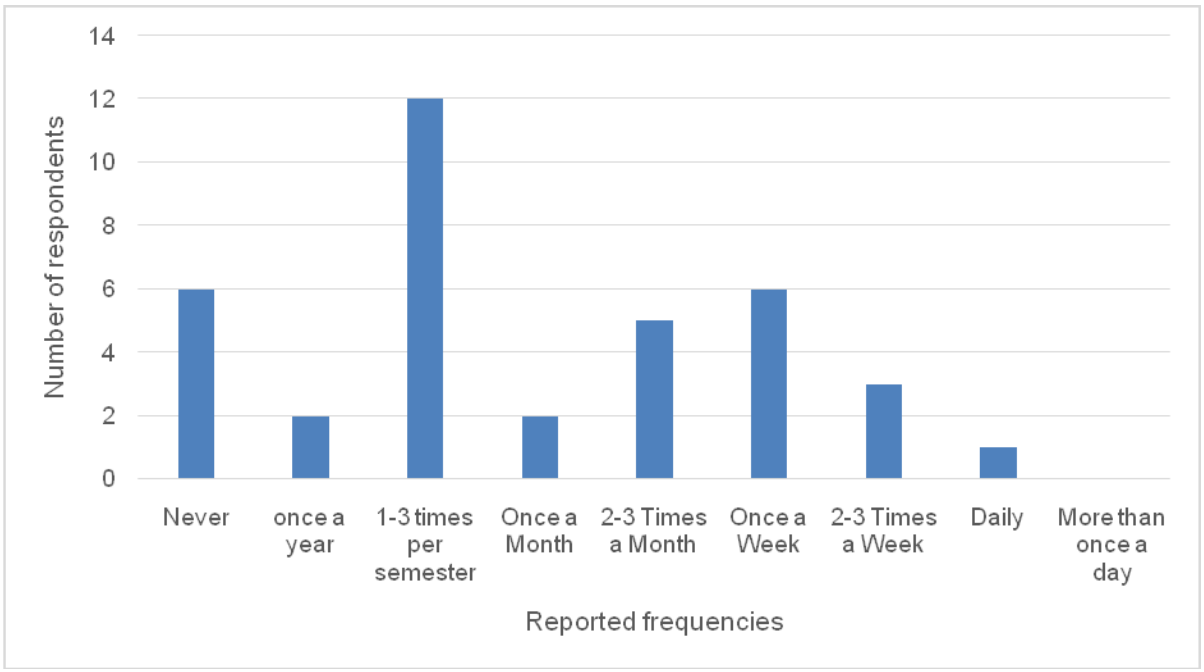

Figure 18. Reported frequencies of participants seeking out interactions with other language teachers in order to "get coffee / ice cream / lunch / a drink on the Terrace."

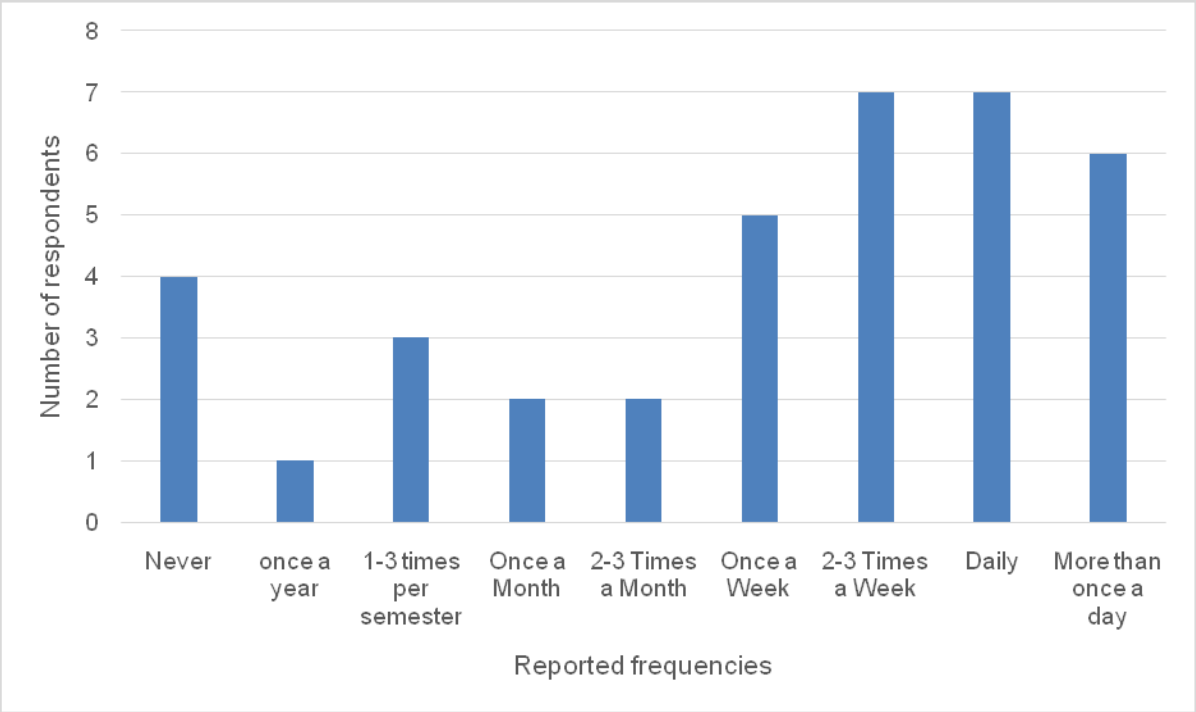

Figure 19. Reported frequencies of participants seeking out interactions with other language teachers in order to "spend time with like-minded individuals."

One survey question asked respondents to provide brief descriptions of "casual, spontaneous interactions" that they had with other language teachers, and to report the frequency of these interactions. Responses to this question included several social activities such as getting meals, coffee, drinks together, and other "social meetings with friends and colleagues," as one respondent put it. In the open-ended follow-up question to that item, one wrote, "There are also cookouts and grad student parties which happen a few times a year and will often include graduate students from other departments." Isabel reported texting daily, and it is likely that at least some of those interactions were social. Franz also reported: "We meet after hours with some frequency. Usually there is at least one unofficial social event per week."

A brief counter-example demonstrates that not everyone participated in social events, no matter how many were available, who organized them, or how frequently they took place. One

participant wrote, “I don’t have time to socialize outside of my teaching and preparing time. I have […] young kids and I usually rush home after I’m done with my work.”

Summary of research question 1. These data indicate that a range of interactions took place among participants, some about teaching, some about scholarship, and some purely social. In terms of the frequency of the different genres of interactions, there were some natural constraints related to the nature of a given interaction (e.g., in graduate course work and at conferences) and some natural affordances (e.g., shared office space and regular department meetings).

Research question 2: What builds community? What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support? What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?

To answer this research question, I asked a series of questions in each interview that invited participants to tell me about conditions that did exist or might exist within a department or language program that would build, or facilitate the growth of, community among the language instructors. In response to this series of questions, and also in response to other questions in the interview and the survey, participants talked about factors that helped community grow or that helped them feel that they were part of a community, and thus strengthened, for them, a sense of community. Participants also commented on factors that prevented a sense of community from developing (which were often, but not always, simply a lack of the factors that build community). Community-building factors that came up frequently but which will not be presented in depth here included a welcoming physical environment, office space shared with other instructors, and faculty with true “open door” policies. Three key factors

that emerged from the data will be presented here and discussed in the following chapter: (a) the importance of clear communication, which in turn contributed to (b) the establishment of trust and to (c) the creation of good relationships. I will present data here that reveal the value participants placed on clear communication between faculty, department administration, and instructors, and how they say that builds community. I will then present data revealing the role that relationships and trust play in the building of community.

Importance of clear communication. Participants talked about the importance of clear communication of faculty expectations about the balance or split of instructors' time between teaching and other responsibilities, and of clear communication about department and language program policies and procedures. Their comments also showed how clear and early communication of expectations about instructors' involvement in various aspects of the department or language program can impact instructors' willingness to participate and to be proactive in contributing to the existing sense of community.

Clear communication about expectations of the balance between teaching and other responsibilities. Participants told of the value they placed on the clear communication of expectations about the use of their time and the balance of their often competing priorities. This was particularly pertinent for those participants who were graduate students, but was also remarked on by two participants who were not graduate students. Graduate student instructors talked specifically about the struggle they faced when faculty, whether dissertation advisors or those who taught graduate courses in which the participants were enrolled, seemed to have different expectations than the graduate students themselves about the amount of time graduate student instructors had available to spend on their graduate coursework, research, teaching responsibilities, and department-sponsored events. Ezra said:

> some people get a professor of their own, […] a literature professor, or, you know, one of their professors, in a seminar, or maybe even a dissertation director, that is so demanding that they ask for so much time that it can impede the teaching.

Tessa told of events held within the department, some related to teaching, some to research, and some purely social, and shared her frustration of the times when "you get chastised for not participating." She said that "certain professors give you an exorbitant amount of work," seeming to not understand how much graduate instructors have on their plates:

> I have got so much going on between teaching, and taking, you know, however many courses, or writing my dissertation, and having a life where I want to sleep at night, [so] I'm sorry I couldn't make this one event, when I've attended all the other ones, 'cause we have in the past gotten angry emails from professors saying, you should have come to this, or, you know, it's just like, sorry ((half laughing)), can't do everything.

Joan, a part-time lecturer who teaches a LCTL, shared the similar difficulty she had with time constraints:

> the first [few years of being a lecturer] I participated a lot, I went to a lot of the events and felt more connected, but I also am only [part time], and I had to take other employment then because I was doing way beyond what I was being compensated for.

Rand, in speaking of all the time that he spend on preparing and creating teaching materials, also emphasized the importance of having a balance between competing sets of responsibilities: "it's affecting my academe, I don't focus on my school, too, so […] to balance, it's good." Jackson, who was not a graduate student, also talked about the difficulty of attending some professional development events due to a scheduling conflict with other responsibilities:

> the brown bags, for example, […] you have all these things at noon, in the [university language center], and I [have other daily professional responsibilities at that time], so I can't really do those at all, so, […] it would be really nice if there's a different forum, upon which that we can discuss those things.

No matter from which direction one looked at it, finding a balance between these competing priorities that pleased everyone impacted seemed difficult.

According to Ezra, part of the problem was when faculty in one role or another assumed that graduate students were "teaching […] only for the stipend," and communicated to graduate instructors that "that's not the important part of why you're here, […] the important part is […] advancing yourself academically, your research." He said,

> I can't get into [other TAs'] heads of course, [but] I do get the feeling that some teaching assistants have that mentality, [that] I'm here more for my research, this teaching thing is just so that I can do the research, but then other people I think are more evenly split [between teaching and research].

The result of feeling this mismatch of expectation between faculty in various roles and language instructors of various statuses (e.g., graduate TA and part time lecturer) was perhaps best described by Ezra. Due to the pressure from others to participate more fully in department events or to put more focus on graduate work, he said, "I think people are conflicted, then, you know, the people that I've heard say stuff like this are like, they still want to do a good job with their teaching." For Tessa, another result of this misalignment of expectations was that it "can create kind of this frustration and annoyance with the department, which of course does not, ultimately, does not lead to any sense of community or camaraderie."

Tessa described a feeling that she and her colleagues had had: “that the department doesn’t understand how much we have going on,” and then acknowledged: “I don’t know if that’s necessarily, you know, that’s not individual to my department, I think that’s probably endemic in grad school.” As shown above, this did seem to be a common sentiment of many of my participants in different departments and language programs, whether graduate students or not, and as Tessa pointed out, the resultant feelings of frustration and annoyance don’t lead to a stronger community.

Clear communication about policies. The second topic that my participants seemed to feel required clear communication for a strong community was policies within the department and within the language program. As Fulano put it:

> the thing about being clear about your policies, […] that’s something that you sit through [in trainings] at the beginning of the semester, and you’re like, oh this is stupid, I want to be outside doing something, but at the same time, knowing [the policies,] I think it’s a first step to feeling comfortable disputing it, or being able to rely on, like, I heard that, the department chair or administrator told me this, […] I can rely on that.

Communicating the policies of the department can help instructors feel that they can depend on those policies being enacted, which is a clear way to build trust, a topic I’ll address in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Fulano also spoke of how confusing it was for instructors not to know the processes or qualifications for certain awards or promotions. He said,

> I know in my department [the] grad students are kind of upset that there’s a lack of transparency in how things work, like, who gets what grants and scholarships, and what, like, there’s a hierarchy, but there isn’t a hierarchy, of who gets to teach, and this is more

> true with [a different TL] because there's so many of them competing…for TAships and things, that like, you have to be [an instructor for the second semester class] for this amount of time before you can, it's unspoken, but people have the feeling that that's there, and there's no explanation, it's just kind of like [who gets these] chancellors fellowships, […] the students don't apply for them, they're chosen for them…based on their performance or need or someth-it's unclear.

Fulano also told of a colleague in a different department who had a similarly disconcerting experience in regards to teaching duties and recognition. The colleague expressed that in her department,

> everything feels a little […] like you're in the dark all the time, like, she was like, well, I didn't get the [promotion], because they said […] my first semester evaluations weren't the best, then I got an award for my good teaching…she was like, […] I don't understand why I would get that award, it felt wrong.

Another example of lack of communication was when one participant, a LCTL instructor, was asked to take some supervisory responsibility for some other instructors, but felt a total lack of guidance or support from the department in this role. The participant said: "it's never been explained to me or described what I'm supposed to do, and at the same time they don't support any kind of training or they don't see the importance of language teaching." A lack of clear communication about the responsibilities or authority associated with a given role contributed in this case to frustration and an overall feeling of not being valued by the department, feelings which are not conducive to building community.

Fulano expressed how a lack of clear communication about department policies impacted the climate and opportunity for community to develop. He said,

> that kind of obscuring of how the department policies and […] unspoken policies work, I think makes the climate feel like, grad students feel like they need to compete, they feel like they're being, misled, […] so I think that makes it hard for them to create community sometimes, because maybe they feel like, resentment that their colleague got this, who they consider to be, […] on par with this colleague, they may not be older or something, […] they may be in the same cohort, and do the same kinds of things, but that person got this grant out of nowhere. That's what it feels like sometimes.

Clearly a sense of being misled or underinformed about department policies, and of resentment toward colleagues due to an obfuscated sense of competition, would not contribute to the development of community.

Clear communication of expectations can lead to buy-in. Another way that communication can play a role in the establishing and strengthening of community is when some of the communication within the community is about the community itself, its key features, its importance to the department, or the desire to build it. As participant comments show, starting that vein of communication in the initial interactions between the department or language program and a potential graduate student or potential instructor can be very effective, as it sets a precedent and can create both an expectation and a willingness to participate.

Ashley described how she was introduced to the atmosphere of collegiality in her department:

> when I arrived I remember that they said it was really important to be collegial, and to share material, and to have the different generations […] of the people who went through the department to share with the younger, with incoming students.

We see that from her arrival Ashley was introduced to the collaborative nature of department interactions and how important that was to department identity and culture. After describing this open, sharing atmosphere, she said, “they try to pick people who are more open about this, too, maybe,” indicating that one way to build a community is to choose people who seem to be amenable to it. Another way that communication about the importance of the sense of community was integrated into Ashley’s department was in the student recruitment process. Ashley related that when prospective students visited campus, “the faculty member who organizes [the visits] thanks everyone for being welcoming and collegial.” We see that, for Ashley at least, these communications helped her to see that: “I think that my department prides itself, telling everyone, oh this is really collegial, we like to share stuff, we are not trying to have students compete with each other.” Communication about the community culture helped the community culture to carry on.

It seemed that once the expectation of a collaborative community was established, the continuation of it from generation to generation of instructors was natural. One participant told of the role a department-based student organization played in passing on a sense of community. She said that the student organization provided a sense of “kind of having that, that sense of community already built in, that sense of being a good, departmental citizen, I guess.” Elsa’s comments about asking for help from others also show the power of a shared expectation within the community. She said, “I feel encouraged to [ask for help from others] because these people are really nice, and cool, and seem open to [wanting for us to] help each other, and […] that’s established, at least I feel that way.” Her further comments revealed the shared attitude about sharing, in addition to the shared expectation:

> I have people in mind that I would ask [for help the next time I teach that course], and sure, it's their time, and it would definitely be some effort on their part to come up with stuff, but I don't feel bad asking those people, because I feel like those people, […] they're not only people I consider just friends, but more so they're people that I think would…understand why, that would make me feel more comfortable in the classroom, and would be better for my students, and I think that they would support that.

We see that buy-in from community members can rub off on others.

Some of my participants demonstrated commitment to their language teaching community through a willingness to be proactive in creating or contributing to the community. Ulla told of how she worked to strengthen relationships within her personal community, and another participant told of how students in her department took it upon themselves to create and share a helpful guide for new TAs.

Ulla told me about classroom observations that were required of each TA, and explained her strategic choice of faculty observers:

> you get to choose, and I've always chosen somebody different, personally I know some people like to work with their advisor on that, but for me, […] I actually like to use it as an excuse to get to know professors I don't know as well.

She shared a story of inviting a faculty member who intimidated her to observe her; it turned out to be a great experience for her. She summed it up by saying, "so that's […] a valuable experience to bond with the faculty."

Another participant told of a guidebook for TAs in her department, which had been created and then later updated by TAs of their own volition: "it was [originally meant to be] a TA guide, for [new] TAs, kind of like the nitty gritty, like, here's how the copy machine works,

here's how this works." Within a few years, enough of that information had changed that the guide needed to be updated, and another TA took the initiative to make that happen, with the idea that it would be "a helpful, guide for new TAs and grad students, so they don't feel completely lost when they get here," with the goal of making the transition into the department "less confusing for new people." This guide was shared with me as an artifact that represented community, and it seemed to represent both a cause and a result of a strong community.

With all this evidence of the power of clear communication in creating community, there was also evidence that the lack of clear communication could be a destructive force. One participant told of damage that had been done to the relationship between some graduate student TAs and the department, and shared that there were some among the faculty in the department trying to counteract these negative experiences and repair the relationship. The lack of clear communication and the receipt of mixed messages had created unease and lack of trust, neither of which are conducive to the development of a strong community.

The role of relationships in community-building. In addition to good communication, relationships emerged as a source of community building. Comments from Fulano and Juliet revealed how important they felt individual relationships were in developing community connections. Fulano even said that his relationships were the source of his community of teachers: "I feel like I do have a community, not…one that is cultivated…ahead of me becoming a graduate student here, for example, but one that kind of develops…as I forge individual relationships." Juliet spoke of the relationship development process within a community, and what a desirable end goal might look like. She said,

> Well, I think…the first thing is trust. You know, you gotta establish a relationship with them, so being supportive, being a good listener, being there, not just with words, but

> with actions…opens up […] friendship, and maintaining that friendship over time, I think…builds it, and develops it, 'cause at first it's the relationship, and then it's, wow, we've been doing this for 10 years, so it's the history that you have that keeps the relationship going. [I think] being, extremely positive, and having a positive environment, where people can learn and be comfortable, and everybody to know that, yeah, you're making mistakes, and don't worry about it, I'm making mistakes too, um…where people can kind of be comfortable with each other is super super critical, I think, 'cause otherwise their defense mechanisms are gonna kick in, and nobody wants to show anybody else what I'm doing, if it's not good enough, and you're afraid of being judged, so…getting rid of the guard, I think facilitates [a good] environment.

The growth of relationships, by Juliet's account, feeds right into the growth of a community.

In general, the participants spoke warmly and positively about their relationships with other instructors, often counting them as friends as well as colleagues. For example, Tessa said,

> those are the people that I see everyday, most of my good friends, like the people I would consider my good friends in my life right now, I'd say 80% of them are colleagues in my department, I just base [that] on the fact that I had a very large [department] contingency at [a recent celebration of an important life event].

Maggie seemed to concur, stating that "being friends with so many people in my department is just a part of everyday life." Fulano spoke of the overlap between the professional and the personal side of a relationship: "we're friends, so it's kind of unclear where head TA and friend stops and goes." Elsa found that since teaching had been such a major part of her relationships with her fellow teachers she could still talk about teaching with them after they left the university. She told of running into a former colleague:

> it's part of our friendship, […] I talked with him last time I did see him, about how I was thinking about not necessarily going into teaching, so he knew this stuff, but yet, he can still talk to me about stuff with teaching, and we can still share that part of our lives with each other.

In order to show how my data support the idea that relationships contribute to community building, I will first present how participants said relationships grow within communities and the results of good relationships among teachers. Finally, I will share some comments about the impact that negative interactions can have on relationships and community development.

How relationships grow. Relationships between instructors can grow due to department efforts or completely independent of the department. Department events can, however, provide opportunities for relationships to develop, and can even be specifically planned to encourage this. Juliet shared a way to think about event planning that worked in her department:

> if, from an institutional perspective, you want to get the most out of your teachers, I think if, you'd have to find out, what do they have in common, like, what can they bond on. Because birds of the same feather flock together. I might not bond with somebody who's from [another country] and I won't have anything [in common], so you, as an institution, step in and help me find something that we have in common [then] we're all bonding over something that we all love.

Another participant shared a few regular events that her department hosted that met some common needs and brought instructors together:

> every month we have an informal pizza lunch on Fridays, and it's planned so that [all TAs], no matter when they teach, can attend for part of it. […] and every semester, when finals comes around, we have a grading party, where we all grade them, [and the

> department spearheads this, and] makes it as fun as possible, and there's food and so it's not such a tedious chore as it might otherwise be.

These types of events not only provide a time and a place for instructors to interact and potentially develop relationships, but they also communicate a sense of shared identity within the department by drawing attention to the sometimes tedious tasks that all teachers share. In addition to planning those events, the department also has other measures in place to establish a sense of joint responsibility and communal support, which can lead to instructors feeling closer to each other:

> we all…work together to make sure that the workload is very evenly distributed, because […] enrollment can vary widely between sections and that's not necessarily fair, you know, one person has their section full at 24, another person […] maybe only has 12 students, over the course of a semester with daily homework, that's […] a big work difference, so [...] every semester, again, spearheaded by our language coordinator, we do our best to balance that out, and if […] one TA has a lot more students than another TA, that other TA will have more assessments that they're responsible for. Or […] that other TA will have to proctor the final, 'cause not everybody has to proctor the final, stuff like that, so we've got a system of checks built into our program structure that is designed to make the workload even, so that there's no resentment.

When asked about what departments or institutions do or might do that contribute to interactions between instructors, Fulano shared his feelings about something he heard about in a different language department. His comments indicated that relationship building activities can be quite simple, and that the choices and actions of an individual can have an impact on relationships within the department:

> Well, let's start with the department, […] I want to see, like gestures, […] nice, just random, gestures, I think, to build a sort of trust, or a feeling of […] we do nice things for TAs just to appreciate them […] from the administration, from the faculty, [I heard from a friend in another department that one of their faculty members] this summer and next semester, is scheduling coffee with each grad student. Wants to have a coffee date with each grad student. Just he wants, 'cause he's new, he's a new faculty member, and wants to meet every grad student. Just have coffee, 15 minutes, 10 minutes, whatever it is, half an hour, [just to find out] what are you interested in, not gonna be taking notes, but like, or unless, you know, they ask for something, but like, just to chat. […] I like that idea. […] I wish people were that…you know, honest. I think if I were in the position like that, I would feel very uncomfortable, as a faculty member, not knowing who my grad students were, […] and it would feel very favored, I'd feel like I would be favoring the ones I knew because, those are the ones I knew, instead of saying, here, this is an opportunity for anyone, we're gonna go to [a café on campus] or whatever and everyone can come, just, schedule times, email me if you want, and then I'd feel like I could talk to that, person any time I felt I wanted to.

Fulano appreciated the effort by this faculty member to open the doors of communication in a casual way, and felt that that would provide a way for relationships to develop between graduate students and that faculty member.

In addition to seeing each other every day and being in each other's graduate courses, one participant also credited a student organization within her department as being one of the reasons for their "pretty good community": "[the student organization] has encouraged, you know, more,

intermingling within department." The opportunity, encouragement, and existing infrastructure to intermingle provided fodder for relationships to develop.

We see that a department can both create opportunities for relationships to develop and create an environment that is conducive to good relationships developing.

In addition to department-planned or -sponsored events, purely social activities, as discussed under research question 1, can also provide a space for relationships to develop. Tessa shared her perspective and a couple of examples of social activities that played a role in her developing relationships with other teachers. When asked what teachers need to get them involved or interacting with each other, she said,

> Um, honestly, we just need more happy hours ((chuckles)), I mean, it's the saddest thing I've ever said, but it's so true, I mean, the one reason why I'm so close with people in my department [is] because we have these get-togethers, like, let's go get a drink, […] and loosen up and hang out, or you know, something more, […] kind of, recreational that involves people from other departments.

Tessa told how relationships outside of the department can develop through social events as well:

> I don't know if the [campus-wide teaching assistant organization] still does this, but I remember they used to have […] fall happy hour [every year], [and] we would just go en masse from [the building that houses most of the language departments] down to the [student union], and get to meet all these people from History, from Mass Communications, from Theatre, and that was a lot of the ways that you would just, get to know people, and collaborate with them.

A participant told of a group of friends who played a game together. The game group started in one language department and then was joined by graduate student instructors from other

language departments and from other departments around campus. They played so regularly that they became really good friends, and participated in other social activities together regularly as well. The participant stated:

> a lot of the people that were in that group have since moved on to other institutions, but I'm still really good friends with them, some of them are still here, and I see them pretty regularly, and […] for that reason I have now friends who I've, who I've relied upon with teaching and studying questions, in journalism, in history, one who's running the international studies department or something, so, all because of [that game].

While these types of social activities seemed to be good sources for developing relationships, not all participants felt that they were the ideal source, or that having more of them was desirable. Rita, for example, expressed the view that having some social events was fine, but that they were overemphasized. She said,

> there are some social events, which are, I think are important, like at the beginning of the year [there is a sports competition between two language groups in one department] so that's, nice, but again, it's just, I think there is too much focus on trying to get teachers to just hang out together, but without a purpose and a common goal.

She suggested that,

> if we had…maybe, meetings where we [shared] practices, or, not necessarily workshops, because with workshop, the problem with a workshop is that you need a trainer, but maybe, more formal opportunities to, to share, our practices. That could create, that [community].

Rita further said, "maybe […] if there was an opportunity for us to do something together, something constructive, then maybe, that would, [help]." She shared a story from her experience

at a previous institution that backed up her perspective on this. She told of a colleague who had taught in the past, but was not teaching at the moment and needed a course in which to teach a practice lesson before a job interview. She and Rita worked together to plan a lesson, which the colleague then taught in Rita's class. Rita enjoyed the interaction and the conversations that they had about teaching, and reported:

> now we have this connection, between the two of us, and she got the job, I'm not saying […] it's thanks to me [but] I was happy for her, and I followed what she was doing, and […] we had a special relationship, just because she came into my class for one day, so, little things like that, initiatives, um…doesn't have to, again, it doesn't have to be big scale.

We see from the above comments that both department-planned activities and social activities can lead to the development of relationships among teachers. While teachers might have preferences about the types of activities they enjoy engaging in, there is also a wide variety of ways to bring teachers together to foster a sense of community.

Results of good relationships. Having good relationships can lead to opportunities to collaborate, guest lecture, or share materials. For example, Tessa pointed out how knowing people with lots of different interests can lead to chances to collaborate:

> you get to make all these friends, and get to know these people from other areas, and then you say, hey, I'm working on this, could you help me with this, and then all of a sudden a collaboration is born, so you gotta know the people.

She further said, "the more we get to know people who are involved in [various organizations across campus], and, they say, hey, you might be interested in doing this, the more we think, oh, maybe I would be interested in doing that." Without inter- or extra-departmental events to

connect one to people outside one's home department, Tessa said that finding people to collaborate with is "almost just kind of luck of the draw, of, like, who's in your class with you, or who you happen to know from outside of studies."

Deedee also mentioned how having good relationships with other teachers resulted in collaborations. In discussing how co-creating materials is a big part of how the department is structured, she then explained what goes on in addition to that:

> what goes along with that, and this is highly dependent on each group of TAs, and whether or not they like each other and work well together, [and] this tends to be more common in first year than in second year, but first year TAs, I would say, collaborate a lot on materials. Second year TAs, if they particularly like each other and get along well then they definitely do.

Liking each other and getting along well, both elements of good relationships, were seen by her as prerequisites for teachers collaborating on materials. Deedee also pointed out that as great as it is when instructors get along and therefore are willing to collaborate, it isn't something that can be guaranteed or forced: "this group […] worked, together personality-wise and as friends. which is, you know, something that an institution, can't…really mandate, [and], you know, has limited control over." As discussed in the section above, however, departments can plan and host events that give friendships a chance to develop.

Fulano's comments indicated that he also saw this need to know people well as a prerequisite to getting teaching support. He said, "It feels a little, like…like, you have to know people to [freely ask for and trade lesson materials]." He said that he thought that after so many years of his TL being taught on campus with the same textbook there should be a repository of

materials, a “big huge accordion folder” with a section full of materials for each lesson. “But,” he said,

> instead it’s kind of like […] you have to ask, which feels a little, it could feel awkward, it doesn’t to me, but it could, I could see how that would feel awkward, or you’re a new TA, you kind of have to, like, reinvent the wheel, so I would like [materials sharing to] be a little more formal.

Fulano counted himself lucky in that he was friends with the head TA:

> at the beginning of the semester, the head TA, not formally, but because we’re friends, gave me [his] 101 folder, [his] digital folder that has […] worksheets for every activity there. So then basically I used that, and where he didn’t have something, I would make something myself, so then I contributed, and I’m sure if the incoming TAs or whatever next semester need something I’d give that to them.

His relationship with the head TA got him access to a wealth of materials.

Another instance in which a relationship opened up an opportunity was in Tessa and her friend’s experiences with faculty in their department. Tessa even started out her account of this experience by stating the importance of the role that the relationship played:

> it really depends on the relationship between a TA and […] a faculty member. So we don’t have anything formal set up, but for example, if you have a strong relationship with […] a professor who’s also teaching languages, you know, sometimes they might ask, [for example,] my advisor is teaching languages this semester and I subbed in for her a couple of days, and so there was that, [and] one of my colleagues [in a different TL], we had discussed […] that there was an increased desire to teach literature, which is not something that’s really allowed for the university, but some of the [TL] professors were

> definitely on board with this idea of having kind of a guest lecturer, in the sense of a grad student teaching a class of theirs, so my colleague did that for her advisor [recently, so yeah,] I think we're moving in that direction of kind of more interactions [between TAs and faculty] on a pedagogical level, on a teaching level as opposed to just administrative, updates, but it really does depend.

Another set of participant comments indicated how natural it was for people to turn to their friends in times of need, and brought to light a potential issue associated with that tendency. For example, when asked what leads teachers to interact with some teachers but not others, Rand's immediate response was, "Friends, you know. Yeah, friendship." He went on to say that he didn't think that was unique to his language group. In response to the same question, Juliet said, "why do I interact with some and not with others? Friendship, like I'm friends with somebody, I've known this person for longer, and I've also developed a friendship with them." She also cited recommendations from her supervisor and her own interactions with a teacher as reasons she might choose to interact with someone, but it is significant that her first response was friendship.

Rand's comments revealed that not all of these good working relationships developed immediately or smoothly. His co-teacher was an experienced teacher in the TL, and Rand said, "I have been working with him long [sic], so I think we are in a good stand[ing]." The process of getting there took some time and effort, though, as Rand recounted:

> So I have gone through…ups and down with [my co-teacher], like, agreeing, disagreeing, but then I came to a point, where, you know, I should agree…50%, at least, [with what he's doing], so we [worked] well, and I learned from him a lot, so, […] I came to a point, like, ok, let me see if this, what he's saying, is working. So I tried, all, some of his things

> that he does in class, some of them worked, some of them didn't work, and I changed [his] mind, too, about the way how things should be, because sometimes, like, no, it should be like this or that, so […] it came to a point where we agreed on stuff. So we started seeing stuff clearly after you see the [results at the end of the] semester, […] and I finished it on time, and students, you see their level, they are speaking well and studied, so we came to a point. And I learned from him a lot, actually. Yeah, a lot.

The effort to learn from each other seemed to have paid off, and Rand told of how at the time of the interview they worked closely together on a regular basis, and helped each other out when the other was overwhelmed.

Maggie and Ulla's comments revealed yet another side of the "friends rely on each other" picture, which could be seen as negative, and which became difficult for Ulla in particular. Maggie told of the routine in her language program for co-writing quizzes, and after she outlined the different resources that new TAs could go to in this process (e.g., head TA, TA mentor), she shared,

> and personally, being friends with a lot of people, I got a lot of questions and I wasn't even part of the [TA group for that course], but you know you kind of serve as a mentor, in any case, […] and it's kind of interesting because [a close friend of mine] was the head TA for that group, but I was personally closer to some of the new people, so they would come to me and ask me questions, but then they'd also go to her and go to the TA mentor.

In Ulla's case, it sounded like she began to be a constant resource for people when she was the TA mentor: "if any question came up, they would just stop in, and, it was fine, I mean that was what I was there for." And yet she added, "but it really was hard for me to get anything done at

all in terms of my own work." Even though she didn't fill that formal role anymore at the time of the interview she explained,

> I still get a lot of questions that aren't my area anymore, just because people know me, and if I happen to be around, [and due to a role in a student organization] I'm just sort of the go-to person for any question that isn't automatically assigned to somebody else, and again, I don't mind, in principle, it's just when I'm trying to work it can just be really hard for me.

As her comments indicate, her struggle showed a possible down side of having lots of good relationships with lots of other teachers.

Bad experiences prevent relationships from developing. I have presented participant comments about means that can be used to create opportunities for good relationships to develop, and about the results that come from good relationships. Before we move on to discuss how trust builds community, I want to share some final participant comments about what might keep good relationships from developing. One possible barrier that came up in the interviews was rude or dismissive behavior. Juliet said,

> if somebody was a jerk…it's, that judgment, […] that's gonna be in my head, like eeeuuww, that's a bad interaction with someone, so many I'll stay away from them, or maybe they're not in a good mood […]. But I'm pretty good at being like, you know, I know this person's pretty new so I'm not going to be offended but I could imagine a person getting offended, like, oh this person is, I asked them to go to my class, and, or I wanted to go to theirs, and they just brushed me off. You're probably not going to interact with that person because they just brushed you off. But if you're intelligent, you

> might think to yourself, you know maybe they're having bad day. But I think [on] average, I think people probably judge quickly.

She continued,

> your interactions with that person [will lead you to interact with someone or not]. If you approached me for the very first time, and I was a jerk to you, you're probably not going to come back again, and you probably wouldn't approach me either, if I gave you a bad vibe.

Even with plenty of opportunities to interact, unpleasant interactions could keep a good relationship from developing.

A comment from Fulano revealed another potential barrier to relationships developing, and that is the absence of time or opportunities for them to develop. As reported earlier, he expressed,

> I think if I were [a new faculty member], I would feel very uncomfortable, […] not knowing, who my grad students were, […] and it would feel very favored, like, I'd feel like I would be favoring the ones I knew because, those are the ones I knew, instead of saying, here, this is an opportunity for anyone.

Not having or making the time to get to know others would restrict one's focus to those one already knew, and Fulano seemed to think that wouldn't be fair, and that making and taking the time to get to know others would open up opportunities for both parties.

Another participant shared how relationships could go wrong with too much overlap between personal and professional relationships. She explained,

> there was a social conflict outside of the professional environment, where I ended up feeling very uncomfortable with my mentor, and then […] I felt really uncomfortable

> having her in my classroom, once I was personally uncomfortable […] with her, I mean, that was since remedied, actually, after she graduated […] but it was a little awkward at the time, and so that was something that I tried to be very mindful of, as the mentor, like not talking about my mentees to the other experienced TAs, 'cause it can get back around to people and, so yeah, it's delicate because we are all friends and also co-workers.

Indeed, more than one participant talked about the blurring of the lines between professional and personal relationships in terms of being close friends or neighbors with fellow teachers.

One final barrier was shared by a participant who told of negative interactions and poor treatment of others within a department, and the efforts that were being made to repair the situation:

> we've been trying to let [the impacted people] know that their work is very respected, and that they can contribute a great deal to what we're doing, […] we could clean [it] up […] a little bit better so that our…interaction [would] be more, cordial and respectful.

We see that on professional and personal levels, negative behavior can impact the development of good relationships, which can in turn impact the development of good community.

Trust. The third major factor of community building that emerged from the data is tightly connected to both communication and good relationships, and that is trust. It was difficult at times to distinguish when participants were talking about trust versus relationships, and trust versus communication, since they are tied so closely together: good communication can help establish both trust and relationships, and good relationships are built on communication and trust. I have included trust as a separate factor because it did stand out, despite being so interwoven with other factors, and because it provides a valuable focus for the efforts of those who would like to strengthen communities. The participant comments that I present here

revealed the importance of trust between individuals, both in one-on-one situations and in general within a department. Two participants also shared their perspectives on trusting department representatives and the department itself.

Trust between individuals. As presented above, Rand worked to establish a good relationship with his co-teacher, and several aspects of the trust they shared were evident in his comments:

> I meet with him almost every day or two day, twice a day. [I] go to his office, so what did you do today, we covered […] this, so we share materials. And […] we share, totally, why, because he shares with me stuff. And we agreed that this is one class, not two classes. So we share everything, and we talk, and we know our students, like, he knows, I know his students, I know what they are doing […]. And I feel comfortable because he shares with me, so I don't feel that I'm sharing a lot, giving, so it's give and take, it's good, […] because sometimes he helps me, like, you know, he will send this materials [sic], and I don't have time to type whole page [in the TL with all the accents], and he does, so it's good, saves me time […] today, so next day I will send him. […] So, it's give and take. And now he's preparing the final, I'm not preparing it, because […] I'm busy now, so he's doing it, and I will just come and turn it in, that's it. And […] I will not have any problem [with what's on it], I agree what he says, because I, we're on the same page.

Because of the trust and the relationship they had, Rand was willing to share materials with his co-teacher, knowing that he wouldn't take advantage of that willingness, and that he would also share with Rand in a "give and take" manner. Rand also trusted that the materials his co-teacher created, including the final exam, would be quality materials, and would be appropriate for the

level of his students. He trusted that his co-teacher would support him when he was temporarily occupied with other priorities.

Other aspects of trust were evident in Tessa's comments about her colleagues in general. She said,

> it was really only coming here, and seeing my colleagues teach, getting ideas from them, running ideas past them, that gave me the confidence to think, you know what, I can do that, and so it's really just a question of having someone, knowing that someone's got your back, knowing that someone thinks you can do this, don't worry about it, if something goes wrong, we can work through it, and you know, […] just kind of why again […] half my friends, or most of my close friends, that I consider my close friends now, are also colleagues, or former colleagues, because we've just been, it feels like you've been through the war together, [and that] they're war buddies, like, remember when this happened, so just that sense of, you know, that community and that sense of like, no one's going to let you fail, […] which is nice, and […] you definitely get that from your colleagues, I think, just that sense of […] we're all in this together, we're not going to let you just completely crash and burn, so we can do it.

Tessa trusted her colleagues' confidence in her, and trusted that they would support her if something went wrong and that "no one's going to let you fail." As she pointed out, that trust was closely tied to the relationships and the community they had.

Maggie talked about the feeling of safety or security in a trusting environment. She said that in order for teachers to interact with each other,

> you have to feel like you're not being judged on everything that you're producing, […] not necessarily a total lack of competition but you have to feel like it's not a competitive

> arena that you're walking into, that, you know, whatever you do suggest isn't going to be completely shot down, […] and I feel like that's something that I strive to get across to my students as well, you know, make mistakes, everybody makes mistakes, and I think […] it goes the same for teachers, too, you know, understanding that, you know, not every worksheet that you make is going to be completely perfect and free of typos, it happens, and you share stuff on LessonShare and it's got typos in it but that doesn't mean that everyone's going to come down really hard on you, […] so, I think that helps.

Trusting that one can make mistakes without attacks or major repercussions is valuable in creating a good community.

Trusting the department. Ezra's comments about his role as head TA touched on the issue of trust in institutions and their representatives. Ezra explained the different types of mentors, both formal and informal, that operated on various levels in his department, and talked about the importance of TAs having someone to talk to that they could trust, so that any complaints or issues with faculty wouldn't get them in trouble. He explained:

> [if TAs] don't like how something's been done, or, […] if the complaint or whatever it is could come back and bite them, […] not everyone was like that, but I think some people could be a little nervous about talking to their head TA about something […] that they don't want the faculty coordinator to hear. […] And you know, […] I didn't go to the coordinator and say that stuff as head TA, but I always kind of wondered if they think that I did.

From his comments it sounded like TAs didn't mistrust him as a person, but weren't sure if his role in the institution also deserved their trust. Tessa was in a different department from Ezra, but she had a similar concern about trusting the head TA. She shared,

> there have been other head TAs that I haven't really gotten on with, or I felt would not respect my anonymity […] we're a pretty good group all together, but there are of course people that just don't get on with others, and I always had that feeling like if I talked to this person, they are either going to report immediately what I said to the language coordinator, or make fun of me behind my back for ages.

While she acknowledged that this fear could have been entirely in her head, she still didn't rely on that person. Both Tessa's and Ezra's experiences suggested that TAs did not see the head TA as a trusted confidante on sensitive issues.

In addition to Ezra's experience related above, Fulano's comments also revealed a lack of trust in a department. It seemed that Fulano wanted to be able to trust that the department knew and understood his needs as an instructor and was committed to helping meet them, but that he didn't. For one thing, Fulano felt that workshops and events that the department planned weren't always relevant to him. He said, "I can't think of what would get me to go to something, I'd have to feel like […] I was gaining something from it." This comment reveals an overall lack of trust that department events would be useful for him. Speaking about these events in general, he explained,

> they don't really tell you anything, you don't really gain anything, they all feel very introductory, like, the titles and things, […] it seems interesting, but sometimes, it's just, it feels like, too specific, or too…I don't know how to describe it, like kind of contrived, in my head, maybe that's just me personally, honestly it could be.

Even after his caveat that it could be "in his head," he then gave more detail about how he felt about workshops on a specific topic:

> it might not apply to me, or it might feel too broad, where it's like, how to incorporate technology in your classroom, well, my classroom has a projector […] I feel a little resentful, […] like, I can't, there's no, how am I going to incorporate technology into my classroom with a projector? [Last semester] I had […] a beautiful classroom, but I never know if I'm going to have that or not, so I feel like, the bigger problems, at that moment, when I'm thinking of going to something [like that is] well…I need a nice classroom, or a nicer one, so then I can incorporate technology.

In this and another pedagogy-based example, it seemed that he felt that the specific topics (e.g, how to use technology in the classroom) didn't address, or even skirted around, what he felt were the more important issues (e.g., access to better-equipped classrooms). In another couple of examples, he seemed to indicate that he felt that the department wasn't coming through on important things. The following comment showed that he felt the department was falling through on its responsibility to create a good climate:

> I think that communities can sort of, [they] can become parallel entities to a department, for example, and then that just hides that the department doesn't do it, doesn't do enough …to make it, I don't know, make, to create a good climate.

This comment revealed that he felt it was the department's job to create a good climate, and that it was not doing it.

Summary of research question 2. The data reported above demonstrate that communication, relationships, and trust all play important, intertwined roles in the building of community.

Research question 3: How do teachers' beliefs or attitudes about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities? What beliefs or attitudes do teachers have about community among themselves?

In order to address how teachers' beliefs or attitudes about community among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities, we will first consider how they define their communities. I will then recount participant comments on one particular teaching-related activity which arose from the data as important: the sharing of teaching materials and ideas. Participant beliefs and attitudes about community emerge from their comments about their behavior in this area.

The use of the word "mediate" in this research question ties directly into activity theory, the theoretical framework on which this study is based. Please see the "Theoretical framework" section of Chapter 1 for a reminder of the relevant components of activity theory. In the next chapter I will discuss how activity theory helps us to interpret participants' behavior.

Definitions of community. When asked who their language teaching community consisted of, participants most frequently mentioned the colleagues they saw and interacted with on a regular basis. This was generally other language teachers in their departments, who often shared offices or had offices close to each other. For example, Drusilla stated: "so the closest [ring of community is] probably the ones that I share an office with." Several participants mentioned the almost automatic community they were "inserted" into by becoming a TA of a given course. Ashley, a CTL TA, said,

> when I was teaching, for instance [the first semester TL course], I was supposed to meet with other TAs who were teaching [that course] twice a month…so we talk about what's

happening, and we sync, basically, so in that regards I would say [that is a network I am inserted in already].

Fulano, on the other hand, while acknowledging that the community he values most is the one among his LCTL TL TAs, pointed out that "the nature of communities, many times, is that they're not official," as with those who meet regularly because they teach the same course. He described his community as "one that is cultivated…one that kind of develops…as I forge individual relationships." Among other participants, these individual relationships took a variety of forms; several participants mentioned close family members with careers in teaching with whom they had on-going conversations about teaching, and a few mentioned that their social and personal lives were tightly interwoven with those of their university colleagues, citing the university as the source of the initial connection. "Most of my good friends, like the people I would consider my good friends in my life right now, I'd say 80% of them are colleagues in my department," said Tessa.

Ginger described the "realms" of her language teaching community as ranging "from the casual to the formal, and then from the professional to the personal." Other participants referred to similar facets of their communities. In contrast to the more casual day-to-day interactions described above, the formal realm included those with whom participants interacted at conferences, either while presenting or attending, and those with whom they networked at such events. Several participants mentioned connecting with groups of people who shared similar professional or research interests. As discussed previously, Ulla described attending a certain conference and feeling like she had found her "professional family." This professional realm of community was also built while working on research projects or publications together.

Participants also brought up former colleagues as being part of their communities, either colleagues from previous institutions, or those from the current institution who lived and worked elsewhere at the time of this study. A few shared experiences like this one of Tessa's:

> I have one good friend who's in [another state][8] and teaches at a community college, and she basically is the [TL] department there, so she'll email me every now and then, say, you got any exercises on this, I've never taught this before, and I'll send her what I've got, and if she's tried something or modified it, she'll say, hey, this worked well, here's what I did and send it back to me so that I can use it, so there is that sense of community that has kind of like spread beyond the [current university].

In addition to occasional emails like this, interactions on Facebook provided a sense of on-going connection with former colleagues. As one survey participant wrote, "thanks to Facebook, it's really easy to keep in touch with former co-workers who are now teaching FL in universities and campuses both elsewhere in the US and also in [the country where my TL is spoken]."

An additional source of community connection only mentioned by a few participants was social media platforms such as Pinterest and Tumblr, as well as blogs and news sites, which allow one to participate as passively or as actively as one chooses by observing others' posts and/or making one's own posts. While potentially one-sided "interactions" like this might not necessarily create community through developing relationships, Drusilla pointed out two different ways that they can still help one feel connected to one's field. First, "some of [the social media sites] are associated with names that I recognize from the field," and second, "there's also, sharing lots of articles that come up on BBC.com…that are related to [recent discoveries in my

[8] Recall that I sometimes withhold specific information if including it risks the anonymity of the participant.

field] so there's lots of conversation on blogs about […] about how to interpret those." Thus Drusilla demonstrated that her community extended out into the worldwide community of those in her field, and that she could feel connected to that community even without personal communication.

Beliefs and attitudes about communities mediate teaching and teaching-related activities. As participants discussed what engagement in their teaching communities looked like, the sharing of teaching materials and ideas emerged as a strong common thread. Participant comments provided evidence of a range of behaviors when it came to the sharing of materials, as well as a range of attitudes and beliefs that seemed to be guiding those behaviors. When we recognize participants' behaviors in relation to sharing (or not sharing) materials and ideas as outcomes on the activity theory triangle (see the "Theoretical framework" section in Chapter 1), this prompts us to explore how the other parts of that triangle served as mediating forces in their decisions to share or not to share. I will outline briefly what some of the behaviors are that the participants engaged in with regards to sharing materials and ideas, including what it is that they say they are sharing, and will also present some of their beliefs, as suggested by their comments. In the following chapter I will discuss how these attitudes and behaviors fit into the activity theory triangle.

In the context of this study and the data presented below, sharing materials means the back-and-forth giving and/or receiving of hard copies or electronic copies of teaching activities, lesson plans, or other teaching artifacts. It also includes conversations in which instructors tell and ask about teaching activities or lesson plan ideas, and the seeking of teaching materials on the internet. In a few cases I will distinguish between the giving of materials to others and the

receiving of materials from others, but generally when I use the term "sharing materials" here, it is intended to mean either or both of those actions.

Contexts of sharing. As with community building in general, the data indicated that the sharing of materials and teaching ideas took place formally, informally, online, face-to-face, sporadically, regularly, and in both premeditated and unpremeditated ways. While the general consensus was that participants shared teaching materials regularly and freely, there were dissenting voices to this trend, some of which I will present below. In general, however, participants appreciated when others shared materials with them, and they willingly helped others by sharing their own ideas and teaching materials. Although, as previously mentioned, some participants told of department requirements to upload materials to an online repository, this institutionalized sharing seemed slight in comparison to the more informal sharing of materials that happened in casual, spontaneous conversations in shared offices or other common spaces.

Participants reported sharing and getting materials online. Some participants reported how they complied with department requirements to upload materials to a specific online repository mentioned previously. For example, in Ashley's department instructors were required to upload "one activity, or one handout, or whatever you want, but one thing per chapter." Drusilla described searching the online repository for materials:

> if I'm about to teach participles or some particular grammar thing, and I'm just at a loss, or last time I taught this chapter it didn't go as well as I would have liked or something like that, then you can search for items and see what other people have posted.

Some participants reported that they and their fellow instructors used a different online repository in addition to the required one. For example, Maggie explained that she preferred the alternate repository to the required one due to the way the files are organized:

> it just seems like a really, really easy way to be able to share those files with everybody and know that that's just the material for the section that we're teaching this semester, […] rather have to go through [the required repository] and through all the stuff for all the different sections, and it just kind of, I don't know, I like [the unofficial one] a lot better, personally.

Participants from more than one department also reported that the online materials provided to new teachers in their departments included lots of core materials for a course and vetted lesson plans for at least the first few class sessions, giving new teachers a sort of grace period before they had to produce their own lesson plans. Julia explained,

> their first week, [the new TAs] don't have to make any original lesson plans, then their second week, I mean, it's all in [the target language], but from their second week on, like for this grammar point, you can do these exercises, for this thing you can do this, for this conversation you can do this.

Similarly, Tessa pointed out, "it's a good way […] for new TAs to kind of ease into teaching, and get a feel for it, and then start writing their own stuff, or preparing their own lessons." Ezra also found materials online, but not in a designated department repository:

> there's a professor [at such and such] College, […] that has created like a ton of activities about [a topic], and […] they're, you know, multiple choice, they're good for review at home type of stuff, but she obviously doesn't know I'm using them.

We see that participants took advantage of materials that were intended for use with the established curriculum and of those that were not.

Face-to-face sharing also happened in a variety of ways, and seemed to be a rich and valued source of teaching ideas. As reported previously, participants discussed regular formal coordination meetings with others teaching the same course, in which teaching ideas were sometimes shared and the co-writing of tests was organized. A few talked about the usefulness of consistent informal conversations in shared offices with others who taught the same course. Miguel said:

> I could get [to our shared office] before he taught, and we could talk a little bit about what he was going to do, and then, I was still there for an hour after he taught, and we could talk about how it went, so I usually got a bunch of ideas from him.

Participants also collected teaching materials via very casual interactions, such as when they saw people at the copy machine with an activity that looked interesting and requested a copy. More than one participant mentioned borrowing ideas from classes they took as students. Ashley, for example, told about how one of her language teachers "like[d] to make funny…statements, or sentences, and have us say them in the target language, so that was, it was more playful, I guess, and I picked up on that." In addition to learning from their own teachers, one participant explained, "I have totally used stuff that [my child's] teachers did in [elementary school], I'm like oh wow those are really interesting reading strategies, I'm going to do those in my class…they're [college] students, but, they'll still work."

In terms of what exactly it was that instructors shared, the ideas and teaching materials that participants reported sharing covered an interesting range as well, from the very detailed to the very broad. Before conducting this study, my definition of materials sharing consisted largely

of the sharing of worksheets, lesson plans, and ideas for classroom activities. The results of this study revealed that instructors share much more than those concrete teaching aids.

Many participants told of sharing particular classroom activities, as Tessa recounted: "I ran into a colleague of mine [and] said, I totally stole your [grammar point] exercise the other day so thank you for telling about that one." Drusilla, a LCTL instructor, explained how her experience with materials sharing was set in motion very early in the year by a fellow TA sharing her syllabus:

> the first email of the year [a senior TA who had taught the class several times] sent all of us her syllabus that she had used in the past, because we were all beginning teachers, [and so she said], here's my syllabus, in case, take it or leave it, but here's what I do, so I think that, yeah, that really kicked off that very natural, easy relationship with sharing and collaborating.

From another teaching context Miguel got the classroom management idea of passing an object around to students to designate students changing speaking turns (he got the object itself from his officemate, a very concrete example of sharing). Another participant discussed sharing an entire pedagogical approach with another colleague, a way to make an entire course a little less content-based and a little more focused on progressively complex learning strategies.

Another form of materials sharing that emerged from participants' comments was the co-writing of tests. (This was also part of the response to research question 1.) Most departments or course coordinators required the instructors of a given course to write the exams together, although occasionally instructors wrote them together independent of any requirement, as Elsa explained: "one time I co-wrote a reading exam with a colleague, 'cause we'd both never written one before, so we wrote it together." The common structure for the required co-writing seemed

to be that either the instructors would take turns writing different established sections of an exam, or they would take turns drafting the entire exam. Elsa said that in her department, "we rotate who writes exams, and everybody has to take a turn writing a quiz." Whatever the method of constructing the exam, another step in the process involved passing the drafted exam along to other instructors and the course coordinator or faculty supervisor for feedback and corrections. This kind of distribution of labor was a way of sharing the load of materials preparation, as Ashley explained:

> we have to write a quiz draft […] per chapter, and then we send the drafts to our fellow TAs and they have to comment on it, […] or suggest alternative activities if they think that what we're doing is completely off-topic, [we do that] for every chapter, so we distribute, basically, the load between us.

Beliefs and attitudes. So with these material sharing behaviors in mind, let us look at the attitudes or beliefs behind the behaviors, as revealed by participants' comments. Patterns of attitudes emerged in participants' comments, on both the giving and the receiving ends of materials sharing. On the giving end, attitudes ranged from a desire to share freely to a reluctance to give away materials they had worked so hard on. On the receiving end, some participants expressed an eagerness to get any materials that others were willing to share, while others expressed a preference for making their own materials. There also seemed to be different expectations about what adaptations might be needed to prepare someone else's ideas or materials for use in one's classroom. There were also some negative feelings about an imbalance in sharing, as alluded to above. These different attitudes and beliefs will be elaborated below.

Some comments provided evidence of a belief that freely sharing materials was a natural and expected part of being a teacher. As reported above, some language programs required a

formalized sharing of materials, and perhaps that requirement helped in some cases to set the expectation of sharing, but spoken or unspoken, there seemed to be a ubiquitous tradition of sharing materials, often centered on a feeling of gratitude. In some cases where instructors had had materials or ideas shared with them that helped them, they expressed a willingness and a desire to provide that same service for new instructors. Sometimes the willingness to share was merely stated by the participant as a natural and therefore unremarkable element of their behavior toward other instructors: others shared with them, they would of course share with others. For example, Fulano told how

> at the beginning of the semester, the head TA, not formally, but because we're friends, gave me [his] 101 folder, [his] digital folder that has […] worksheets for every activity there. So then basically I used that, and where he didn't have something, I would make something myself, so then I contributed, and I'm sure if the incoming TAs or whatever next semester need something I'd give that to them.

Drusilla expressed a similar attitude when she stated,

> we have 5 incoming grad students next year, […] and we're planning to do a meeting a few weeks into the semester to train them how to use [the online materials repository], and to make sure that they know all about it.

From these statements it seems apparent that these instructors were willing to share materials, and perhaps even that they considered contributing to a set of materials and passing them on as a natural and even implicitly expected part of their involvement in their teacher community. Elsa expressed this expectation as well:

> if you improve something, the unwritten rule is, if you take a handout and you adapt it, and you really think, like, ok, this is a lot better than what was up there, then you just, you can add it, as a, here's […] an updated one.

Another experience that Drusilla shared also demonstrated the open and voluntary sharing that happened among her group of teachers. In describing an email that she and others received from a fellow teacher containing a link to an online language resource, she said,

> that's the kind of casual interaction that [happens,] no one would have known if she had found it and didn't share it, this wasn't meeting a requirement that we share resources with each other, […] but I brought it [up] as one small example of the kind of rolling interactions that email especially can help with, because that semester I could have printed out thirty different [emails] like this, oh I made this quiz, and it has a funny bonus question, or I made this worksheet, or I came up with a MadLibs story.

Drusilla's comments demonstrated that the voluntary sharing of materials was a norm in her community, and based on these comments, we can see that among my participants there was a belief that at least some materials sharing was a natural part of being involved in a community of teachers.

Where instructors were required by the department to upload materials to a shared online repository, participants generally reported that they did so, although one reported being behind the required rate of sharing (e.g., one activity per unit or one per month):

> I've taught for 3 years and I haven't put anything in there, but […] I'm planning on going back and uploading stuff […] it's definitely something that I have to do and I will do probably this summer when I get some free time.

Participants seemed to accept this as an obligation, and to accept that their supervising faculty member could require it of them, which demonstrates that they recognized the power of the department and/or the usefulness of shared materials. Elsa, for example, described her experience with the online repository:

> [it is] a really easy thing to go to and submit to, and our supervisors require us to submit one thing to [the repository] per chapter, so that's one way to get the materials, […] to have them grow, […] and then also to keep them up to date […] if you improve something […] then you just, you can add it as, […] an updated one.

Her comments revealed no resistance to using the required repository, and no questioning as to why it was important or valuable.

While there were a few comments that indicated that not all participants liked the features or structure of the required online repository, my data did not include any flagrant explicit refusals to comply with department requirements to upload materials. In fact, it is interesting to note that while participants generally complied with the department requirement to upload materials to the designated shared repository, they often actually made use of a different repository as well, as Miguel described: "I taught [this course], three times, and I've shared everything in a private [online repository] folder, and I gave a lot of people a lot of different materials for [that class]." So many of my participants made reference to using this additional online repository that it was apparent that they believed that sharing materials did have value for them, and that they were willing to allow their resources to serve other people, even beyond what was required by the department. There didn't appear to be resistance to the idea of sharing, just preferences as to the means of doing so.

What they get out of sharing. As they discussed how and when they share materials, participants also touched on why they liked trading teaching ideas and activities with each other. Participants appreciated getting materials and ideas from others because they appreciated not having to think of everything by themselves, because they acknowledged that sometimes other people have better ideas, and because it can be refreshing to renew one's own teaching practice with ideas from other people.

Tessa spoke of incorporating ideas from others as she refined her lesson plans each time she taught a course. She said that thanks to ideas from others,

> my teaching doesn't get stale, […] a lot of times I'll say, hey, remember that exercise that [another instructor] did, let's steal that one, or let's modify that one, so I just, I don't really like using the same activities over and over and over again, especially since a lot of them can sometimes go, be out of date, so it's nice to kind of take inspiration from things that colleagues do, or from suggestions that they have in order to keep updating myself.

Getting too stuck with one's own ideas is a problem that Drusilla expressed as well:

> when we're experts in our particular subject area, not even as an arrogance thing, but you kind of feel like you know it, or that you can just kind of assume, oh I had one idea and didn't think it was that good, and I have this other idea that was better so I'll just do that, but you don't have any idea what kinds of other ideas might be out there, until you speak with people, and then, so there's kind of just mind-blowing experiences where someone says, oh I had a great idea on how to teach, [a particular grammar point] that just never would have occurred to you, […] and that in itself is a good learning tool.

Fulano stated strongly how vital the sharing of materials was for him:

> in my [TL] TA community, it's been very positive, that we exchange materials, […] if I felt like I wasn't part of a community, it would be really tough to be a [TL] TA, you would really have a hard time, like…if you didn't interact with the other [TL] TAs, you probably couldn't teach, it'd be really difficult, because you'd have to make up everything yourself.

These types of comments demonstrate that the sharing of materials can serve as a benefit to teachers, assisting them in improving their teaching and surviving a stressful job and time period in their lives.

Reluctance to sharing. In the midst of so many positive and generous remarks about freely sharing materials, there were also comments indicating that some instructors did not have the same "all for one and one for all" attitude about this open sharing, and even had some problems or concerns with it. One participant had a unique motivation and perspective on sharing materials, and others were reluctant to share and to use others' materials, for several different reasons. Even though these participants were only a small proportion of the participants, I feel that it is important to present their views to demonstrate the nuance and the lack of uniformity of perspective among them. One of the goals of this study was to present a snapshot of language teachers' views about community, and such a snapshot would not be complete without these counterpoints to what seemed to be the majority perspective.

Due to the nature of the status of the current position of one of the participants that I want to talk about here, I have chosen not to identify the gender of the participant, or to describe their position, for the sake of protecting their identity. I mention this to explain why I have not used a pseudonym or gender-specific pronouns (using "they" and "their" instead), and also to say that the nature of the position does seem to have contributed to the person's views.

One participant's perspective was unique in that they seemed to see more than just the day-to-day value of sharing materials. This participant was one of several who were familiar with the perspectives and struggles of LCTL or CTL K-12 language teachers, and this particular participant's perspective on sharing materials appeared to have been impacted by interactions with these language teachers outside day-to-day contacts at the university. This participant's comments revealed a wider perspective than those of other participants on the potential impact of the choices instructors make about whether or not to share materials and which materials to share.

During our interview, this participant showed me an online resource of language learning materials which no other participant mentioned, and while we did a quick review of some of the materials available there, they spoke of weaknesses in the materials we were seeing:

> unfortunately, [a lot of] teachers are given somewhat of a cliché education in [the TL,] they seem to get the surface of [TL] culture, and that's all they can grasp really, […] for example, I will say that this thing about [a TL short story] is an example of the type of [TL] that is fine, that we like to teach, but I wish teachers would focus on other things, always teaching [that one short story isn't] the only way to teach literacy in the classroom, [consider the plot], there's very little practical basis on that, [and for example,] this [other activity] is about getting to [the capital city of a TL country], and why not visit [another major city] instead.

They said that "we need to change the focus," and spoke of the vision they had for changing these more cliché materials to activities that are not only more practical, but also go beyond superficial aspects of the culture:

> let's take this out, which is nice, and let's put something back in that can give you the same linguistic goals, that can teach them to read better, that also when they go home and they talk to their parents, you know, they said, this is what we did in [TL] class, […] something a little bit more practical, doesn't always have to be business-like, but more practical, [let's not always] gravitate back towards the very superficial things, […] which I don't think are always serving us [the] best.

These comments indicated simultaneously several beliefs about the sharing of materials. First, this participant appeared to believe that sharing materials can have an impact on the field of language teaching as a whole, and therefore instructors bear some responsibility in the materials they share. If the materials that are repeatedly shared in online repositories are all cliché or superficial, or all focus on the same few works of literature or the same major cities, then those will be both perpetuated and also continually validated as sufficient by the very fact of their being continuously shared and available to every new teacher. Second, this participant's comments revealed a conviction that since sharing materials can have an impact on the field of language teaching, teachers therefore have a responsibility to make sure that the materials they choose to share will make that impact a positive and meaningful one. Their comment that such superficial materials don't "[serve] us [the] best," indicated this sense of shared responsibility. Other participants echoed a similar desire to be selective in what they uploaded to the required repository, but perhaps due to the fact that the shared repository was only available to those within their department or language program, these participants' comments didn't reveal a similarly broad perspective on how the choice of what to share could impact the field at large.

While the above participant discussed the need to be selective in the sharing of materials, other participants were reluctant to participate freely in the sharing of materials, either as providers or as recipients, due to some problems inherent in the process.

Maggie and Miguel both simply preferred to use their own materials, rather than borrowing or adapting materials from others. For example, Maggie said,

> I kind of prefer to make my own materials, [because] I feel a little bit more comfortable with it, because it's my brainchild, I kind of know what I want to get out of it and I know how I would use it, whereas sometimes I feel like if I go and I look for activities I might not like them, 'cause I'm kind of picky, or I might not understand what they're getting at or what the purposes were.

In addition, she had had a bad experience in which there was a typo in something that she borrowed from someone else, which her students discovered. She explained that after this experience she felt "a little bit more comfortable making things myself." Miguel had a slightly different reason for preferring his own materials:

> I try not to use other peoples' PowerPoints […] the benefit of having my own is that […] if there's any kind of animation, I know how to use it, and I just like, stylistically, the way I do things better, rather than, you know…if somebody has mixed font or something it bothers me, […] I like to have it very legible, and not too many pictures, […] unless it's an important picture, some people will throw like all kinds of graphics and stuff in there, too, […] just to make it […] look nice, I guess, I think mine look pretty nice anyway. Yeah, I like to have my own materials.

Neither Maggie nor Miguel said that they categorically refused to ever use something that someone else had created, they just both expressed a preference for creating their materials themselves.

Another issue that was a concern to some but not to others was having to modify materials they received before being able to use them in their own classes. Rand felt that having to modify materials made them essentially useless to him:

> some ideas, some things [don't] work for me as a teacher because […] my personality as a teacher affects […] the way how I manage […] So […] actually in summer [I asked another teacher], can you share materials, I want just to see the perspective [of a] lady or teacher from abroad, they are teaching there and here, I give her lot of materials, she was so happy, wow, this is great material, I never knew that, this is good, blah blah, but when I saw her materials I didn't feel comfortable using them. [Because] the sentences, the ideas there, […] doesn't match what I want to say in class, and sometimes like just the examples, I use the examples that based on students' experience, life, every-day life, she has examples of something general that doesn't speak to the students, so it doesn't make sense for me to […] talk about neighborhood in [major city in a country where the TL is spoken], like, what [are] students gonna know about that?

As these comments show, some materials or ideas he got from others didn't match his personality, and others didn't align with his pedagogical approach.

Tessa and Ashley, on the other hand, acknowledged that they adapted others' activities, and their comments suggested that they saw it as a normal and expected part of the process of sharing materials. Speaking of a teaching activity that she got from another teacher, Tessa said,

> obviously I modified it 'cause I didn't have a hard copy of what he used, but he told me about it, he said, oh it was really fun, and I said, oh, when I do imperatives I think I'll be stealing that.

Ashley told of being in a language class and seeing an activity she liked: "I'm like wow this is a cool way to introduce the vocabulary for [my TL class], for instance, so I did it and I adapted it." Her mention of adapting the activity was very nonchalant, and she even talked about a couple of changes she made to the activity to make it meet the needs and preferences of her students, but at its core it was still the activity that she saw another teacher use.

Another benefit to materials sharing, which also had a negative side, was the idea of the reciprocity of sharing. While there were some who talked about reciprocity as one of the benefits of sharing materials, others discussed the lack of it as a problem to watch for and monitor, and yet another presented the lack of it as one of the reasons he severely restricted his sharing of materials.

Charlie and Ginger both commented on the benefits they saw themselves and others getting out of the back-and-forth sharing of materials. Charlie said, "I think that's the idea [of the official shared repository], is that […] someone comes up with a really great idea of a lesson, but then says, you know, you all can, can benefit from that." It balances out, he said,

> because ultimately, you're going to come up with something too, and he or she over there is going to come up with [something] else, and I'm going to benefit from that later, so I think that's really beneficial.

He didn't seem to be actually keeping tabs on each individual's contributions, but trusted that all would contribute and all would benefit. Ginger seemed to be expressing gratitude for the materials and ideas she got from others when she said,

> I think that that's, it's really neat to be able to have that kind of fluid relationship, where it's not just you giving them but it's the back and forth and you know, I really relied on the TAs in that group a lot.

From her comment, it is evident that her reliance on the TAs in her group didn't mean that she only took and never gave, but that she valued a back-and-forth exchange.

While perhaps Charlie and Ginger didn't keep track of the rates of back-and-forth sharing, Elsa indicated that there were some who noticed when it got out of balance:

> there was this discussion [among an organized group of graduate students in her department] about […] how to organize and pick materials from [the unofficial repository] to go [in the official repository], and how to really, make it so that people aren't just relying on [the unofficial repository], and not actually […] putting stuff in there themselves, like, making sure that everyone's collaborating, like, how do you, 'cause, somebody was like, there was one person who really wasn't ever putting anything in [the unofficial repository], but was like, constantly using everything in it, and then, they weren't sure if they were only using those materials, or if that person, […] if they were coming up with stuff by themself, if they just weren't sharing it with other people, and they were just kind of like, hey, you've never made a PowerPoint, and you use my PowerPoints all the time, but, so there was some discussion about that.

The fact that this topic came up in an organized student group indicates that there were some who were both noticing it and concerned about it.

Drusilla mentioned the imbalance between giving and taking as a hypothetical situation that was not part of her experience. In speaking about what a department might do that would

create barriers to the development of community, she said that she imagined that if there was a feeling of competition between instructors then they might be hesitant to share:

> [I can imagine] people feeling not comfortable sharing their materials, because someone won't give proper credit, or because it's completely imbalanced, that one person's always sharing, always creating and always sharing, and not getting anything in return.

This issue of giving proper credit did not arise in comments from any other participants.

Rand brought up the topic of reciprocity in response to the very first question of the interview, which was not overtly about the sharing of materials. He prefaced a lengthy comment about the sharing of materials by saying, "I might give a statement now that summarizes the whole, what I feel." Then, among other things, he said,

> I don't think everybody does the same, or spend the same time, or amount of energy, developing materials, for their classes. [In my] experience, some of my colleagues don't spend time as I do. I feel myself like I develop lot of materials, and others don't, so I don't think I should share with them.

He talked about the unfairness of spending so much of his time finding resources and creating materials and then being asked to just hand them over to someone else:

> I'm spending a lot of energy. Sometimes I stay up late, 'til like 2 and to just type and listen, go over, look at many videos. My friends don't do that, so it will be unfair for me…it will be, yeah, to spend the energy. […] if you give me [materials] I will give [to] you, but it's not give and take, […] There are some people who take advantage, if you give them, they will ask you again. There are some people, they will ask you, like, can you give me materials chapter, so-and-so. Chapter so-and-so, it's a lot of materials. Want me to give you my night that I spent?

From other comments that he made, Rand's concerns seemed to include that creating materials was taking time away from his own graduate studies. He seemed to think that it wasn't fair that others should have the benefit of his good, well-researched materials when they had not made the sacrifice to create them themselves. He indicated that there were times when he did share or receive materials that others had created, such as when he was overloaded with work and didn't have time to create something; in such cases he would generally turn to his co-teacher, as mentioned previously. A factor in his limited willingness to share was the relationship with his co-teacher, another instructor who taught a different section of the same course. He had known and worked with this instructor for several years, and he felt they had a good working relationship. Due to this relationship, and the balanced give-and-take between them, he was willing to share materials with this person.

Summary of research question 3. We can see that participants' comments about their materials sharing practices revealed beliefs and attitudes about the value of these behaviors. They appear to believe that sharing materials is part of what teachers do, that the department can require them to share materials with each other, that sharing materials helps them to be better teachers, and that there are some downsides both to being on the giving end and on the receiving end of sharing materials.

In the next chapter, I will present and discuss possible interpretations and significance of the results of each research question.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I will present possible interpretations of the data presented in the previous chapter, and will discuss its significance in the light of other research. For each research question, I will first summarize the findings, and then interpret and contextualize them.

Research question 1: What types of interactions do language instructors at the post-secondary level have with other language instructors, and how frequently?

The types of interactions that arose in the data fell into three categories: interactions about teaching, interactions about scholarship, and social interactions. For each category of interaction, I will summarize the findings and will then discuss their significance.

Interactions about teaching. Interactions about teaching that were identified in the data included pre-service and in-service trainings. 92% of participants reported participating in pre-service training, which took the form of workshops at the beginning of their first semester teaching. 89% of participants reported that they had participated in a pedagogy course, although none were participating in one at the time of this study. As with the pre-service training, it seemed that this only took place once in an instructor's experience. Workshops and brownbags were sources of other interactions, and 76% of respondents reported participating in them, and reported that they were put on by different entities, including but not limited to language departments. In terms of regularly scheduled meetings, 81% of participants reported participating in TA meetings, and 86% reported participating in department meetings. Conversations in shared offices were also a substantial source of interactions between teachers: 84% of participants reported that they shared offices, and 81% reported interacting in shared offices with some frequency. Of the 30 participants who reported engaging in this type of interaction, 20 (67%) reported the frequency as either "daily" or "more than once a day." Topics of these conversations

included getting support, getting ideas, and talking about plans for their classes, among other things. These "shared office" conversations seemed to include not just instructors in the exact same office, but sometimes also those close by in the same hallway. In addition to these interactions, departments also had specific assignments that their instructors did, which were additional sources of interaction. These varied by department, and included observations, both observing others and being observed. Another specific assignment was co-creating materials with other instructors, especially tests or quizzes. Instructors reported that they did this more with other TAs than with faculty. Other assignments included hosting a language table, where students taking language classes could get speaking practice, and sharing teaching materials on LessonShare, the online shared repository.

Significance of interactions about teaching. In all these interactions, many factors play into how frequently they take place and thus how much they would contribute to the development of community. The high percentage of participation in the pre-service training could be explained by the fact that it was mandatory. Also, as Brandl (2000) suggested, the proximity of the training to the beginning of the semester may result in a level of desperation that would make first-semester teachers attend any training available. The pedagogy course would offer a structured time and space for interactions, but since instructors only took it once, generally toward the beginning of their teaching experience, it would not be an on-going source of interactions throughout a teaching career. In addition, since those courses were usually put on by language departments, a participant's experience and potential to interact with others in the class could vary greatly based on the course structure and assignments. There were apparently so many different types of workshops and brownbags offered by a variety of entities that my data were unable to provide a clear picture of what was available for or attended by instructors.

Future research could explore more fully what was offered, by whom, and for what audience and purpose. It would be interesting to know what motivated instructors to attend which offerings, and which offerings instructors perceived as being professional development opportunities. There were hints in the data that depending on the content, workshops and brownbags could also have been included in the interactions about scholarship, but since the topics provided by participants were largely about teaching, I included it here instead of there.

In terms of regularly scheduled meetings, the frequency and even the existence of them appeared to depend on department or language program structure, and even on how many instructors were teaching a given course in a given semester. For example, in cases where only one instructor taught a course, a meeting of all course instructors would obviously be unnecessary. I included items about two types of meetings in my questionnaire, TA meetings and department meetings, but the data revealed that were was some confusion about what was meant by each of those. For example, one TA indicated that she "never" interacted with other instructors "in department meetings," but four other TAs who taught the same language all indicated a frequency of "1-3 times per semester" for that interaction. The fact that the meetings seemed to be mostly administrative, rather than about pedagogy and teaching practice, could potentially impact the nature and quality of the interactions and thus the contribution of those meetings to the building of community. Conversations in shared offices are another type of interaction that could potentially be included among interactions about scholarship and in social interactions as well; we can only assume that conversation topics were not limited solely to teaching. These small, regular interactions can potentially play a huge role in the development of trust, relationships, and community. As Wenger et al. (2002) wrote, "interacting regularly, members develop a shared understanding of their domain and an approach to their practice. In

the process, they build valuable relationships based on trust and respect" (p. 35). The authors also reported that "every phone call, e-mail exchange, or problem-solving conversation strengthens the relationships within the community" (Wenger et al., p. 59). Brandl (2000) also found that informal conversations with peers and supervisor were two of the four training activities that TAs felt had the most impact on their teaching (p. 359), so the importance of these interactions cannot be ignored.

The final set of interactions about teaching are the specific assignments given to instructors within language programs or departments, including observations, co-creating tests or quizzes with other instructors, hosting a language table, and sharing teaching materials in an online repository. One reason these are significant is because depending on how they are structured and implemented, they have the potential to provide great opportunities to have the type of meaningful conversations that can lead to developing trust and relationships, as will be discussed later in this chapter for research question two. Classroom observations, for example, are a common element of teacher training programs, although there is little empirical evidence to show they actually help TAs become better teachers (Brandl, 2000, p. 356), but my data show that they can lead to connections developing between people. In terms of co-creating of materials, more research would be needed to know specifically what materials are being co-created, and who and how that is benefitting instructors. Quizzes and tests are conflated with other types of materials in the items in my questionnaire about co-creating materials, but it does seem from the data that the co-creation of quizzes is the most formalized and consistent. It also seems from the data that there could be more clarity about roles and expectations in that quiz creation process. One participant's experience in receiving pushback after he was "maybe a little too picky" in giving feedback on a quiz draft indicates that more exploration could be done in

how to help all to be professional in the process of co-creating materials. The assignments to co-create materials and to share materials via an online database raise the question of the nature of the knowledge that we are trying to pass from one generation of teachers to another. Communities of practice (CoPs), as discussed previously, are places of learning, and each CoP determines what knowledge is important and how to pass that on. We miss a lot of the potential of teacher communities, however, if there is too much focus on passing on concrete teaching materials themselves, and not enough focus on developing deeper understandings of pedagogy and how people learn or on improving teaching practices. Certainly a repository of teaching materials is not an inappropriate way to preserve learning, but it is worth being strategic about the emphasis being placed on various facets of the knowledge that instructors gain as they teach from semester-to-semester. The assignment to host a language table seemed to range between less and more formal depending on the department. It could be worth exploring what the objectives are in having the instructors lead those, and how the instructors perceive it, and if they consider it useful for their professional development.

It is interesting to note that these special assignments, as well as the other events or programs mentioned above that led to interactions about teaching, were relatively consistent across multiple departments in this study. Many of them were also present in Brandl (2000), which was part of a nationwide study about TAs at multiple institutions. The persistence of these training elements, as Brandl calls them, could be due to effectiveness, but it could also be simply preserving the status quo: these assignments have always been part of being an instructor, therefore they will continue to be required. Brandl (2000) made it clear how little empirical research has been done on the effectiveness of various teaching training elements, so future research could certainly explore that. Brandl's study explored which training elements TAs felt

had the most impact on their teaching, but it would also be interesting to know if and to what extent the training elements described by Brandl and those outlined here are perceived as professional development opportunities by the faculty who assign them and by the instructors who complete them. Do they all see the benefits for the current (non-TI) teaching experience and also for potential future teaching experiences? It is good pedagogical practice to inform learners of learning objectives; learners are more willing to engage in activities for which they understand the purpose and the desired end goal. In the lives of graduate student TAs and adjuncts with additional jobs or responsibilities, it would be especially important for them to see that the requirements being made of them have meaningful purposes and aren't just what some might call busywork. In order for departments or language programs to be overt with language instructors about the professional development learning objectives associated with each assigned task, departments or language programs would have to be clear on those rationales themselves, and be ready to be strategic and deliberate about the demands they place on language instructors. Having specific learning objectives in place also opens up the opportunity to evaluate whether the activities are allowing the instructors to meet those learning objectives, which contributes to thoughtful, incremental improvement of language teacher professional development programs.

Interactions about scholarship. There were two main types of interactions about instructors' scholarship: graduate courses and conferences. Instructor interactions in graduate courses were relatively less frequent than the teaching-focused interactions described above, with 15 participants saying that they "never" interact in graduate courses, with many explaining that they had finished that stage of their graduate work and weren't taking courses anymore. And of course, 7 of the 37 questionnaire respondents (19%) and 4 of the 19 interview participants (21%) were not graduate students at the time of the study, so this category of interaction wouldn't apply

to them. In terms of interactions with other teachers at conferences, 68% reported some frequency, and 24% reported "never." The most frequently that any reported interacting at conferences was "1-3 times per semester." Interacting through presenting at conferences, either with TAs or faculty, happened even less frequently. Even with low frequency, meaningful interactions happened at conferences with new and old friends and colleagues. In addition to the graduate courses and conferences in this category of interactions, the data provided hints that some conversations in shared office and some workshops or brownbags were also sites of interactions about instructors' scholarship.

Significance of interactions about scholarship. The data provide evidence of the existence of parallel and overlapping communities associated with language teachers' scholarly research in addition to their teaching-related communities. These two overlapping communities could be said to mirror the two aspects of the work that TAs might face in the future as faculty. If they are hired at research institutions, these individuals will likely continue to have both research and teaching responsibilities throughout their careers. The importance of finding a balance between these sets of responsibilities will be further discussed in this chapter under research question two. Here I will discuss the importance of the two main activities in this category: graduate courses and conferences.

Since graduate coursework generally takes place at the beginning of a graduate program, the opportunities to interact with others and form community through those courses are limited by time. They can still be effective in forging connections, however, as students are generally given the option to choose at least some of their coursework based on their scholarly interests, and this will connect them with others with similar scholarly interests. The connections formed

there can lead to research collaborations during or after the class, and the relationships formed through those collaborations can last beyond the course itself.

Participation in conferences, either attending or presenting, and the corollary of participation in the professional organizations that put on the conferences, is another place for interactions and connections to form based on scholarship. The relatively infrequent participation in either conferences or professional organizations in my data is easily explained by two factors: time and money. Since each conference generally only happens once a year, an instructor would have to attend multiple conferences to pull that frequency above "once a year." Traveling to distant conferences also takes several days, and it would be difficult to find time to do that multiple times a year. In addition to the time, financial constraints on graduate student TAs, who comprise 26 of the 37 survey respondents, would make it difficult for them to attend conferences more than once or twice a year. In the current climate of budget crisis, it would be especially difficult for graduate students to secure funding that would support their attendance at professional conferences.

As we consider the low frequency with which the instructors in this study, 26 out of 37 of whom are TAs, participate in conferences, it raises the question of whether faculty attend conferences more frequently than that, or what the expected frequency of such participation is. As graduate students are socialized into the professoriate, do they gain a sense of what their participation in conferences and the related professional organizations is expected to look like? It would be interesting to know how frequently tenure-track faculty interact in professional organizations. Is the frequency reported by my respondents actually below the expectation of how frequently anyone would interact in that context, or does it just look infrequent when compared to the other types of interactions in this study? Do we want to increase graduate

students' involvement in professional organizations? If so, how, and why? One of my interview participants, a graduate student, related how she found her "professional family" at a conference that was related to her interests but not to her graduate department's central focus. It would be interesting to follow someone like her throughout her career to see how she engages with that community and how it impacts her professional development.

Social interactions. Social interactions were of two main types: those planned by the department and those not planned by the department. Department-planned social activities generally consisted of events at the beginning and/or end of the semester, often a potluck or a gathering at the student union. In one department, potlucks often occurred after monthly pedagogy workshops. Social interactions that were not planned by the department consisted of a wide range of activities, engaged in at a wide range of frequencies. Participants reported chatting in their shared offices or on the way to class, riding the bus to and from campus together, getting lunch, or dinner, or coffee together, and attending celebrations of each other's life events, among other things.

Significance of social interactions. "The heart of a community is the web of relationships among community members" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 58), and social interactions can help to grow those relationships. The existence of department-planned social events appeared to be pretty consistent across multiple departments. Participants seemed to be aware that those events were to allow for "camaraderie and friendliness," as Tessa put it. Wenger et al. tell us that public events allow "people [to] tangibly experience being part of the community and see who else participates" (p. 58), but that there need to also be opportunities for more private interactions, as not all events will appeal to all people. They suggest that those planning community events allow for, encourage, and facilitate a balance of public and private

interactions in order to "use the strength of individual relationships to enrich events and use events to strengthen individual relationships" (Wenger et al., p. 59).

The social interactions that were not department planned encompassed a wide range of interactions, most of which happen spontaneously. These spontaneous, voluntary social interactions are the type that those trying to build community are happy to see; they can serve as evidence that the efforts to build community things are working. Wenger et al. (2002) reported that two signs that a community was starting to thrive are that "people were engaged in the topic and had begun to build relationships" (p. 53). Voluntary social interactions can show that community-building efforts are working.

Summary of research question 1. Interactions between language teachers included those focused on teaching, scholarship, and social activities, at a wide range of frequencies, some limited by the nature of the interaction. Some of the opportunities for interaction in each category were planned by departments. Data suggested directions for further research about the effectiveness of various teacher training elements, as well as a need for those planning trainings to be clear and to clearly communicate the desired learning outcomes of participating instructors, and these will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

Research question 2: What builds community? What draws teachers to a certain person/group for community or support? What can or do departments do, or what conditions could or do exist, to facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities?

My data indicated that clear communication, good relationships, and trust all contribute to the establishing and growth of communities. These findings are significant because they align with what others have found about how to grow communities, because they contribute to our

knowledge about communities in the specific context of university foreign language instructors, and because they provide universities, language departments, and other institutions associated with language teachers with guidance and areas to focus in their efforts to build and sustain communities among their instructors. I will present here a brief summary of each finding and a discussion of its significance.

As we consider what my data teach us about how to build community, I want to first discuss the significance of how participants defined and understood their communities, since those are the communities we are trying to build. As I anticipated prior to conducting this study, there was in most cases a strong sense of community and connection between participants and their fellow language instructors, as outlined in the "Definition of community" section of the previous chapter. These teacher communities were formed and strengthened through interactions in shared offices, in required meetings, in graduate coursework, and through social activities, to name a few contexts. An unanticipated finding was that in addition to their teacher communities, some comments from my participants revealed that they had parallel and often overlapping communities associated with their scholarship, including relationships and interactions associated with graduate coursework, research, publications, and conferences. The existence of these multiple communities is a reminder of the importance of recognizing all potential community members as complete people with complex social and professional communities and interests, rather than as people who are monolithically interested in our focal community or domain. There is richness and complexity in considering all aspects of human relationships and interactions, and in a case like this, where there is overlap between communities, there is also potential for amplified power and synergy due to the overlap. I will discuss the potential for future research in these overlapping and potentially synergistic communities in the next chapter.

Clear communication. Three main points arose from the data about clear communication. First, communication between instructors and faculty (in their various roles) needed to be clear in terms of expectations about the balance of time spent focused on teaching responsibilities versus time spent on other responsibilities, including scholarship. Second, there needed to be clear communication about policies in the department or language program. Third, it appeared that clear communication, including about the aforementioned topics, can lead to buy-in and thus greater commitment from instructors.

Clear communication about expectations of the balance between teaching and other responsibilities. Some of my graduate student TA participants described stress, "frustration," and "annoyance with the department" that resulted from perceived misalignments of expectations of how much of their time would be spent between teaching responsibilities and the coursework and scholarship (including dissertation research and writing) associated with being in graduate school. It is perhaps significant that Ezra spoke of professors who gave so much work for their graduate classes that "it can impede the teaching," while Rand talked of how his teaching preparation time affected his ability to focus on his own school work. The opposite angles from which these two graduate TAs expressed a similar idea (disadvantaging teaching versus disadvantaging school work) provides evidence of the pull that could come from both directions—feeling the need of more time for teaching responsibilities and feeling the need of more time for coursework and scholarship. Tessa shared another time-related stressor in her comment about being "chastised" by a faculty member for not attending a department-planned event. She felt that "the department doesn't understand how much we have going on," and thus had unrealistic expectations of how many events TAs/graduate students could fit into their schedules. Ezra also explained that he felt that faculty assumed or implied in conversations with

TAs that TAs' research or coursework was a much higher priority than their teaching, that they were teaching "only for the stipend." Ezra said that this was not true for all TAs, and it was partly this assumption that led to TAs feeling "conflicted" about how to do well in both teaching and coursework.

The stresses of time and conflicting responsibilities also existed for those who were not graduate student TAs. Joan shared how in the past she had regularly attended professional development events, but then had to take additional employment due to her part time adjunct status and thus had less time to participate and connect with others. Jackson, also not a TA or a graduate student, spoke of professional responsibilities that overlapped in date and time with regular professional development events and consequently prevented him from attending professional development events that he was interested in.

While time management in general is an important professional skill, and instructors at any level need to learn to balance teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities, the need to find a balance between heavy publication requirements and teaching is unique to tenure-track faculty at research institutions, and being taught ways to find this particular balance could be considered professional development for future faculty. As we consider the importance of non-TIs, particularly graduate student TAs, learning to find this publication-teaching balance, however, it is important to consider the likelihood that they will be hired as tenure-track faculty at research institutions, and the related likelihood that they will need this specific balancing skill. It is worth remembering that only a portion of these graduate TAs will end up at Research 1 institutions. In fact, based on data from 2013-2014, only 7.2% of degree-granting institutions grant doctoral degrees and would therefore be considered research institutions (only 2.5% are classified as Research 1 institutions, including the one at which this study was conducted) (The

Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d.). In addition, in the 2003-2004 academic year, only 45.5% of graduates who received doctoral degrees in foreign language received tenure track positions in the year their degree was granted, and only "47.0% of the tenure-track placements that United States foreign language graduates obtained were in institutions that grant the doctorate" (Steward, 2007, p. 92). Thus many graduating PhDs will not receive tenure track positions immediately, and many will not be hired at research-heavy institutions, and will not therefore be required to find time in their work weeks for both teaching and heavy research-for-publication requirements, although they may have to fit in some research.

Not only are graduate TAs being prepared for positions that many of them will not be able to receive, but they are discouraged from planning for anything "less." In addition, since the participants of the current study were at an R1 institution, the vast majority of faculty with whom they interacted were modeling for them a job that they might never have. If a TA did have a clear goal of working at a teaching-focused (as opposed to a research-focused) institution after graduation, it is possible that he or she would be unable to find a faculty member who could mentor him or her in preparation for that type of position, since none of them might have held one.

Despite all these caveats, it is nonetheless true that whatever a TA's future career trajectory, he or she is still faced, during graduate school and teaching assistantships, with the need to find a balance between teaching responsibilities, scholarship, and administrative responsibilities. As part of a department, a language program, or a course-level TA group, each TA has teaching-related duties for which they are responsible to others in their department, program, or group. Shirking those responsibilities for the sake of their own graduate studies would not only disadvantage their own students, but would let down other instructors and

potentially place additional burdens on others. Even without publication requirements, instructors often do research as part of their teaching, as they seek to incrementally improve their skills and increase student learning.

If learning to find a balance between teaching and research is therefore considered professional development for graduate TAs, either for current or future jobs, then it might be helpful for TAs if it were directly addressed as such, and if specific mentoring or scaffolding, starting perhaps with clear communication, were provided to support TAs in becoming successful at it. This could be accomplished through individual or group mentoring, and/or through advocacy from otherwise disinterested faculty. Advocacy could be particularly useful for TAs.It is worth considering that faculty, either in their roles as teachers of graduate courses, dissertation advisors, course coordinators, or job supervisors, are in positions of power over TAs, and it is not realistic to think that TAs would be comfortable pushing back against faculty demands on time, perhaps fearing that they would put their job security or their reputations as good students at stake if they were to do so. Advocacy from other designated faculty might therefore assist in empowering TAs to make personalized choices that would benefit their own future goals while not disadvantaging their students or their fellow teachers.

In addition to incorporating mentoring or structured advocacy, it is also worth considering whether there are other models for graduate funding or for finding language instructors that could ease this struggle for balance between priorities. Geisler et al. (2007) proposed a reevaluation and restructuring of the current language-literature divide in language departments based on more global and comprehensive learning goals for undergraduate students. Their proposals would change the dynamics of who (graduate students, adjuncts, tenure-track faculty) taught what courses, among other things. Kennedy (2000) compared graduate school,

including funding, in Australia and the United States, and identified ways that graduate students are motivated and develop professionally differently in each approach. Vastly different structures might allow graduate students to see immediate connection and applicability between their teaching and their research, and might empower and motivate them in their individual professional development.

Thus we see that while the struggle to find a balance between teaching and research, and the pressure that graduate TAs receive or perceive from faculty on both sides of the equation, is certainly something that these graduate students might experience in their future careers and do experience as TAs, constraints in the job market, plus personal or professional preference, might lead them to careers that involve this struggle in varying degrees. Clear communication of faculty expectations, TA time constraints, and the current and/or future relevance of these prioritizing skills could lead to individual or collective compromises that would allow TAs to fulfill both sets of responsibilities in a manageable way.

Clear communication about policies. Two participants spoke about the importance of clear communication about policies by describing their experiences with a lack thereof. While Fulano said that knowing department or program policies was the first step to being able to rely on those policies being enacted, demonstrating the impact that clear communication can have, he also shared his sense of a lack of clarify around how decisions were made about awards, grants, fellowships, and teaching assignments. He cited a lack of explanation for the ways decisions were made, and said that obscured and unspoken policies led to a perceived need to compete with other TAs, a sense of being misled by the department, and even resentment toward those TAs who did receive desirable recognition or appointments. He told of a TA friend in another department who got conflicting messages about the quality of her teaching through the

combination of a teaching award and not getting a promotion because of poor teaching evaluations. Another participant, a LCTL instructor, felt that she did not get clear communication about new supervisory responsibilities she was given. The addition of these responsibilities combined with a lack of guidance or support through department policies led to her feeling undervalued by her department.

These findings are significant because of what they can teach departments about what is important to graduate TAs about department policies. First, graduate TAs, as represented by Fulano, would like to know what the policies are, and they would specifically like to know the policies related to how decisions are made regarding who is given grants, awards, fellowships, and teaching appointments. Second, it is possible that whatever means are currently being used to communicate policies within a given department are not sufficient. Third, even if it is not possible for a department to be completely transparent about why certain people are chosen for awards, etc., being as communicative as possible might minimize resentment between TAs and could encourage deeper trust in the department. Since building trust is a way to build community, as I will discuss later in this chapter, clear communication to build trust contributes to the goal of building community. It is a problem if a lack of communication about policies leads to resentment between TAs, and leads to them limiting their interactions with each other and thus limiting their access to the community that can provide them professional development and support.

These findings are also important because they provide additional evidence of the relevance of activity theory in this study. As seen in Figure 1, rules are one of the elements of the human activity system that can impact the outcome (result) of a subject's object (goal). If we consider policies within a department to be rules, then we can see that the lack of clarity about

rules that Fulano referred to about who was given awards, etc., impacted his desire to interact with others, or his desire to engage with the community. And as he himself pointed out, "it would be really tough to be a [TL] TA, you would really have a hard time, like…if you didn't interact with the other [TL] TAs, you probably couldn't teach, it'd be really difficult." If his object was to be a good teacher, however he defined that, we can see that the lack of clarify about rules would certainly impact his ability to achieve his object, thus impacting the outcome. In the next section, I will discuss the flipside of this point.

Clear communication of expectations can lead to buy-in. Participant comments indicated the role that talking about the community had in helping it to continue and grow. Ashley shared that what was said about the community culture in her department when she first joined the department showed her that it was important to the department to keep the community strong. Elsa spoke of feeling that collaboration in her department was "established," and that helped her feel comfortable asking others for help. Another spoke of there being a "sense of community already built in, that sense of being a good departmental citizen." An established sense of community and collaboration seemed to encourage new "departmental citizens" to join in in a similar manner. Ulla told of how her deliberate choice of a professor that she didn't know well to do a classroom observation led to "a valuable experience to bond with the faculty," showing that individuals can make choices that will expand their individual communities. Another participant described the efforts of a few graduate students to make a guidebook for TAs in the department, demonstrating that the efforts of a few can also impact the whole community.

These findings are significant due to the simplicity and ease of their implementation. Simply talking about the community in the department can be a relatively easy action to take, and it seems to have positive consequences on the establishment of the community. This is also

something that individual students and faculty can all take part in and make a difference in. While a concerted group effort would likely have an impact, it appears that even small efforts can be helpful, perhaps even just in making others aware that any type of community exists in a department or language program, or that establishing a sense of community is a goal. From a few participant comments it seemed that even participating in this study raised awareness of community. For example, Fulano said, "Well after we've been talking about it for a long time, I think I've come to the conclusion, or a conclusion, that the [TL] program here relies heavily on community." Another participant wrote in the questionnaire that, "this survey has made clear to me that I do interact with other language teachers on a weekly basis." It seems that raising awareness of community, no matter how it is done, has the potential to contribute to community growth.

Relationships. The second of the three main findings about what builds community was relationships. I will briefly review the findings, and will then discuss their significance. Participant comments revealed that communities were built on a series of relationships, that relationships develop starting with trust, which is demonstrated through actions, and that maintaining relationships long-term can continue to strengthen them. In a workplace community, friendships and professional relationships can overlap, and the lines between them can blur, with both positive and negative consequences.

How relationships grow. Relationships can grow through department efforts to get people together for social events or for work-related tasks or events. Department events can lead to instructors feeling that they have a shared identity as teachers, and that they are and can work together toward common goals that benefit everyone. Even just being provided a time and place

to interact can create space for relationships to grow, as can gestures of appreciation from the department, which show care for individuals.

In addition to department-planned activities, purely social activities between instructors can also lead to relationships developing, and can lead to the expanding of one's community as one is introduced to those in others' communities. Another important point is that different types of events will appeal to different people, and these preferences may change over time.

Results of good relationships. My data show that relationships can provide opportunities for collaboration, including chances to guest lecture and to share materials with other instructors. A couple of participants pointed out that one has to know people in order to have people one can ask for help, and to then feel comfortable doing so. Relationships can take work to build, but can then provide support and a lightening of one's burdens. There is potential for good relationships to then lead to one being over-relied on, which can then add to one's own burdens.

Bad experiences can prevent relationships from developing. Not all interactions will build good relationships: negative ones can halt their progress. Initial interactions that are not positive can prevent a desire for further interactions that might have resulted in a relationship developing. The overlap between personal and professional relationships can get tricky here; negative interactions in the non-work-related side of a relationship can lead to discomfort in the professional side as well. As with trust, which will be discussed below, relationships that need to be rebuilt will take effort and time to repair.

The significance of findings about relationships. An interesting and significant fact about the above findings is how closely they align with the literature about communities of practice (CoP). Recall from Chapter 2 that CoPs exist due to (a) a domain (the topic, problem, skill area, or passion that brings the individuals together), (b) a community (the set of individuals

who engage with each other to share ideas and expertise about the domain), and (c) a practice (how the community-based knowledge is enacted in members' behavior and choices in the domain), and that they grow and develop throughout their lifespans (Wenger et al., 2002).As I explained in Chapter 2, I am not restricting myself to communities of practice as a model for communities among language teachers. There is, however, valuable literature related to CoPs that can contribute to our understanding of communities in general. In terms of how communities grow, Wenger et al. (2002) have found that communities are "usually [built] on preexisting personal networks" (p. 51), and that one indication that a community is starting to thrive is when people begin to build relationships (p. 53). My data also indicated that communities developed via these preexisting networks, and that the relationships within the community became key to participants' definitions of their communities.

My data indicated that trust was important in developing relationships and that it can take time to develop. This coincides with Wenger et al.'s statement that the level of trust that will be useful in a community is "not simply the result of a decision to trust each other personally [but] emerges from understanding each other" (2002, p. 85), which understanding relies on sustained long-term interactions. In the preliminary findings of a study about what makes an effective leader, specific attributes that contribute to "creating a safe and trusting environment" were ranked highest (Giles, 2016). While leadership and community building are not the same, it is interesting and significant that trust appears to be important in both. A safe and trusting environment was found to be a top priority for leaders, and therefore is valued. If communities can provide them, then that is a great value added. (Trust will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.)

My data showed that different types of events and interactions can all contribute to the development of relationships and community. Two of the seven principles for cultivating communities of practice in Wenger et al. (2002) support this finding. The first relevant principle is to "invite different levels of participation," because "people participate in communities for different reasons" and thus different activities or events will appeal to them (Wenger et al., 2002, pg. 55). A key is "to design community activities that allow participants at all levels to feel like full members" (pg. 57). The second relevant principle is to "develop both public and private community spaces," meaning to both have big events and to create spaces for day-to-day interactions, since "the heart of a community is the web of relationships among community members" (p. 58). Successful communities "use the strength of individual relationships to enrich events and use events to strengthen individual relationships" (p. 59). The variety of types of events recommended—public and private—align with my data in both the types of activities said to build relationships and also in the vast array of individual interactions discussed previously in this chapter.

The alignment between my findings and the CoP literature means that there are commonalities between the communities I researched and those Wenger et al. (2002) identify as communities of practice. This means that the CoP literature can serve as a resource for those looking for ways to grow community among university language teachers; it is a rich body of literature that can benefit those who see the benefits of community and want to make those available to others. These links provide evidence that the communities of teachers that I researched are valuable resources for the language instructors who participate in them.

Trust. In building community, my data found trust between individual instructors to be important, as well as individual instructors feeling like they could trust the department and its

representatives. In order to put these results of my study into a larger context, we will look briefly at how trust in the workplace is defined in the literature.

Definitions of trust. Feltman defined trust as "choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions" (2009, p. 7). Dietz and Den Hartog (2006), in their meta-review of instruments that measure trust, also compiled a thorough and detailed analysis and summary of definitions of trust in the literature. The work of these authors is relevant because, like mine, it is interested in trust within organizations "as an intra-organisational phenomenon, such as between employees and supervisors/managers, or among co-workers" (p. 557-558), as opposed to trust between organizations or trust between organizations and their customers. Definitions of trust analyzed by these authors included phrases such as "confident positive expectations" (Boon and Holmes, 1991; Lewicki et al, 1998), "the intention to accept vulnerability" (Rouseau et al., 1998), willingness "to ascribe good intentions" to the actions of others (Cook and Wall, 1980) and "the specific expectation that an other's actions will be beneficial rather than detrimental" (Creed and Miles, 1996; all cited in Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006, p. 559).

Based on these and other definitions they found in the trust literature, Dietz and Den Hartog broke trust into three parts: "trust as a belief, as a decision, and as an action" (2006, p. 558). Trust as belief had to do with one person's evaluation of another's trustworthiness, including assessments of their integrity, benevolence, ability, and predictability (p. 567-568). We see another's trustworthiness being negatively evaluated by Tessa when she said, "I always had that, that, feeling like if I talked to this person, they are either going to report immediately what I said to the language coordinator, or, make fun of me behind my back, for ages." A positive assessment of another's trustworthiness still might not result in the one actually trusting the

other, however; that is the decision part of trust: “at [the decision] stage, [one person] considers [the other] to be trustworthy, and further intends to allow her/himself to be subject to the risk of potentially detrimental actions on the part of [the other], on the basis that such outcomes are unlikely” (p. 559). Maggie told of her decision not to trust her fellow instructors when she shared her decision to use only her own materials, rather than those created and uploaded by others. (A previous experience with her students finding a typo in a worksheet created by someone else had led to Maggie’s decision.) The decision to trust may or may not be followed up with action, the third part of trust. Evidence of this aspect of trust is demonstrated by engaging in “trust-informed risk-taking behaviours” (p. 559), which fall into two broad categories, those based on reliance, such as yielding control over something to someone else, and those based on disclosure, such as “sharing potentially incriminating or damaging information” (p. 560). Even this level of trust of another doesn’t necessarily apply in every context; there is still the question of “trust them when and to do what?” (p. 569). Rand exhibited the “reliance” type of trusting behavior when he allowed his co-teacher to write the final for both their classes alone, since Rand was too busy at the time to contribute. The “disclosure” kind of trust appeared in my data in a negative form: Ezra and Tessa shared the possibility and the reality of instructors questioning decisions to share certain opinions or certain types of information with a head TA as a representative of the department. The unwillingness to disclose in that context can be seen as evidence of a lack of trust in those perceived as representatives of the department, which could further imply a lack of trust in the department itself. I will discuss this lack of trust in the department further in the “Trusting the department” section below.

The literature about trust in the workplace brought to light the complexity of the context in which my study was conducted. While my study was intended to focus on individuals in a

work environment, the data revealed additional layers of complexity not typical to work settings in general. If we consider the "work setting" of my study to be solely the teaching context, then we ignore the overlapping "work settings" of both graduate course work and, related but not identical, especially for those participants who were not graduate students, research being done by participants. As an example of this complexity, some participants were close friends and in some cases roommates with their fellow teachers. The trust existing in those relationships could not be attributed solely to their interactions in the workplace.

Trust between individuals. In the context of trusting another individual instructor, the aspects of trust that my participants talked about aligned with various delineations of trust in the literature. For example, Rand talked about trusting his co-teacher not to abuse his generosity (by using Rand's teaching materials without sharing his own), and trusting that the co-teacher both could and would create materials that would be beneficial and appropriate for Rand's students. These parts of Rand's trust in his co-teacher support Feltman's distinctions between "reliability" (that one meets the commitments one makes), "competence" (that one has the ability to do what one proposes to do) and "care" (that one keeps the well-being of the other in mind) (2009, p. 14). The reciprocity in sharing teaching materials that Rand frequently mentioned and thus clearly valued also appeared in the "Reina Trust and Betrayal Model" under "transactional trust," with the description, "got to give it to get it" (Reina and Reina, 2007, p. 37). Tessa spoke of trusting her teacher community to support her and not let her fail. This coordinates with Feltman's "care" distinction of trust (p. 14), and with the "benevolence" attribute of trust described by Dietz and Den Hartog (2006, p. 560) as including "benign motives and a personal degree of kindness toward the other party, and a genuine concern for their welfare." Maggie spoke of trusting that her teacher community wouldn't judge her, but that the environment was one in which an

instructor could make mistakes and no one would "come down really hard on you." This could go along with Feltman's "competence" distinction of trust; Maggie trusted that her community would have confidence in her abilities as a teacher despite mistakes that she might make.

Trusting the department. My data also aligned with published delineations of trust when it came to trusting the department, but participant comments on this topic were mostly about the absence rather than the presence of trust. As mentioned above, Ezra and Tessa both talked about the lack of the "disclosure" part of trust in a head TA. The concern seemed to be related to what might get communicated by the head TA to the supervising faculty. Ezra specified that a TA might not want the faculty supervisor to find out if, for example, he or she needed some mentoring in regards to his or her relationship with that faculty supervisor, or if he or she didn't like the way something in the language program was done. If that information made it to the ears of the faculty member in question, then the concern seemed to be that that would be to the disadvantage of the confiding TA; Ezra said a TA's concern could be that it would "come back and bite them." Tessa also expressed a concern about those who she felt would not "respect [her] anonymity." These comments are interesting because they raise the question of what the TAs were afraid of: what trust was lacking, and where? Certainly the faculty supervisor would be in a position of authority over the TAs, and would likely have some say in which TAs were offered positions in future semester, and thus the TAs might have a concern about job security. It could be interesting for a language program or department to investigate if this lack of trust existed in their program, and if so, why, and if so, how might the department like this to be different, and how could they impact it. If, to use a possibly oversimplified example, hiring decisions were made through a formal hierarchical seniority system which did not take into account TA comments to anyone about anyone or anything, or which didn't involve the faculty supervisor at

all, then a department would be able to set TAs' minds at rest about any risk associated with confiding in the head TA.

Fulano's lack of trust in the department stemmed from a different source and had different results. He was disappointed in the topics of the professional development workshops that were offered, feeling that they were not relevant to him, and that the issues they addressed were peripheral to more important ones that they should be addressing. He felt that the lack of relevance of those topics to his teaching was evidence that the department didn't know his needs and was not committed to knowing them or to meeting them. This perceived lack of the "care" distinction of trust (Feltman, 2009, p. 14) resulted in evidence of Fulano's lack of trust in the department: he chose not to engage in the "trust-informed risk-taking" behavior (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006, p. 559) of attending professional development events put on by the department. He commented, "I can't think of what would get me to go to something, I'd have to feel like […] I was gaining something from it." This remark is very poignant because it conveys a sort of hopelessness, a sense that his expectation of gaining anything from attending these events was extremely low.

Another comment from Fulano revealed another aspect of his lack of trust in the department. He said:

> I think that communities can sort of, [they] can become parallel entities to a department, for example, and then that just hides that the department doesn't do it, doesn't do enough …to make it, I don't know, make, to create a good climate.

This comment revealed a possible disconnect between what Fulano considered to be the responsibility of the department and what the department considered to be its responsibilities. It seemed that Fulano considered it the responsibility of the department to create a good climate,

and that the department was not doing it. This perceived lack of the "reliability" distinction of trust (Feltman, 2009, p. 23) appears to have decreased Fulano's trust in the department, but it is worth asking if the department recognized that it was letting him down, or even if the department agreed that creating a good climate was within its purview or ability. Without a clear, detailed, and shared understanding of the responsibilities of each party, trust can be broken without one of the parties realizing it.

Building or rebuilding trust with an institution has the potential be tricky, especially because what constituted the institution might be different for various individuals, and the institution might be represented by different individuals in different contexts. For Ezra and Tessa, it appeared that both head TAs and faculty supervisors were part of the same institution, and therefore the fear or discomfort associated with the faculty supervisor being privy to certain information was also connected to the head TA, even if the head TA didn't have the same power as the faculty supervisor. For Fulano, it might be more complicated to pinpoint an individual who had betrayed his trust; who was actually in charge of planning professional development events, and was there enough of a connection between that person and those who might know Fulano's needs? Even if only one person had actually been involved in this perceived betrayal of trust, if Fulano didn't know who that was, his lack of trust could extend to anyone who might be responsible, ergo, a lack of trust in "the department."

The alignment between my data and the delineations of trust in the literature confirm that trust among university language teachers is similar to trust in other work settings. Having identified trust as a key element of building community, and having seen some evidence of trust and lack of trust in my data, it behooves departments or language programs to seek to evaluate the levels of trust that exist among their teachers and between teachers at the department, perhaps

using one of the measures of trust analyzed in Dietz and Den Hartog (2006). Once trust deficits were identified, steps could then be taken to build trust in areas it was lacking, including rebuilding trust that had been broken or betrayed (Feltman, 2009; Reina and Reina, 2007). Having information about what kinds of trust does or does not exist can empower people, those in leadership positions and those not in leadership positions, to make changes as necessary to create the optimum trust for productivity, employee satisfaction, and program growth.

Summary of research question 2. My research indicates that clear communication, good relationships, and trust all contribute to the establishing and growth of communities. Those interested in supporting and developing communities can take advantage of my findings and those of other research about creating good communication, establishing good working relationships, and building trust in the workplace to benefit their communities. These findings are strengthened by the fact that others have found that similar factors contribute to the growth of communities in other contexts. In addition, since very few studies like this have been carried out among university foreign language teachers, we now have more evidence of similarities between communities among teachers and communities in other professional contexts.

Research question 3: How do teachers' beliefs or attitudes about communities among language teachers mediate their teaching or teaching-related activities? What beliefs or attitudes do teachers have about community among themselves?

One way in which teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the community among them was made manifest was in their choices and behaviors about sharing or not sharing teaching materials. I will briefly summarize the data that reveal this finding, and will discuss its significance.

This research question connects to the theoretical framework of this study, activity theory. Different elements of the human activity system in Figure 1 create mediating forces as the "subject" moves toward his or her "object," and thus impact the actual "outcome." For the purpose of this research question, we will consider the "subject" to be each individual teacher, the "object" to be the possession of good teaching materials, and the "outcome" to be either the sharing or not sharing of teaching materials. For different types of analysis, the different elements of the human activity system could be different elements of a teacher's experience or goals.

Definition of community. The participants' communities, by their own reports, consisted of those with whom they had a range of interactions, from the more personal to the more professional, and at a range of frequencies, from more to less frequent. Their closest connections were with those they interacted with the most frequently, generally those with whom they shared offices. Their communities developed through such happenings as being assigned to teach a given course and thus being placed into a set group of teachers, or through individual relationships. Those at other institutions were sometimes still part of their communities, and even some non-relationship-building interactions such as reading blogs or other internet postings still connected instructors to nation- or world-wide communities.

Context of sharing. The sharing of materials and teaching ideas took place formally, informally, online, face-to-face, sporadically, regularly, and in both premeditated and unpremeditated ways. Most, but not all, participants shared materials freely with each other. Informal sharing that happened in casual conversations in and out of shared offices seemed more frequent and more significant than the sharing required by the department. Instructors got teaching ideas from many sources, including a couple of online repositories, sites on the internet,

officemates, casual conversations, course coordination meetings, classes they attended, and classes they heard about. Instructors shared more than just concrete classroom activities. They also shared ideas about the overall classroom atmosphere, reading strategies, classroom management techniques, an overall pedagogical approach, and entire syllabi. Some departments provided new TAs with an entire set of materials for the first few weeks, including full lesson plans and additional classroom activities. A fairly structured way that instructors shared materials with each other was in the co-writing of assessments.

Beliefs and attitudes. One belief that arose from the data seemed to be that freely sharing materials was a natural and expected part of being a teacher, and of being part of a community of teachers. Gratitude seemed to be a part of that, and a sense of giving back to the community by sharing with others. Another belief seemed to be that a supervising body did have the authority to require them to share materials; there was no overt resistance (albeit some procrastination) about the requirement some departments made to upload a certain number of activities to a shared online repository. Instructors also seemed to believe that sharing materials had value for them. Participants spoke of how sharing materials lightened the burden of having to think of everything themselves, of how sometimes other people have better ideas than one does oneself, and of how it can be refreshing to renew one's teaching practice with ideas from others.

A few participants' comments revealed a reluctance to share materials, for several different reasons. One participant's very broad perspective on the field of language teaching gave them a sense of each teacher's responsibility to share good materials, seeing beyond the day-to-day need to have something to do in the classroom. This participant felt that sharing materials can have an impact on the field of language teaching as a whole by perpetuating certain types of

teaching strategies or activities, and that teachers therefore have a responsibility to make sure that the materials they choose to share will make that impact a positive and meaningful one. Two participants, Maggie and Miguel, both preferred to use their own materials, for stylistic and accuracy reasons. Rand's reluctance to share materials seemed to stem from a few sources, one of which was based on previous experiences where the extent to which he felt he would have to modify the materials shared with him in order to use them in his classes rendered them practically useless. Others talked about modifying materials as natural and seemed to expect that they would to have to modify someone else's materials in order to use them.

The other main source of reluctance to share materials was tied into the idea of reciprocity. Reciprocity, or the give and take in sharing materials, as Rand described it, seemed to be expected among teachers. An idea behind sharing materials seemed to be that everyone benefits from it. As Charlie put it, "ultimately [...] you're going to come up with something too, and he or she over there is going to come up with [something] else, and I'm going to benefit from that later, so I think that's really beneficial." Elsa told of how a student leadership group in her department discussed making sure everyone was contributing to the online repository, confirming that contributing to it was a responsibility of all teachers. A perceived lack of reciprocity led to Rand's reluctance to share materials. He expressed a sense that good materials are a valuable resource, worth the time spent making them, and thus he was reluctant to share his freely and openly with those that didn't provide him with equally valuable materials. Relationships changed this dynamic, however. Rand was willing to share materials with his co-teacher with whom he had a well-established relationship based on effort and trust.

Significance of sharing or not sharing materials. We can see that numerous mediating forces, including their own beliefs and attitudes about their community, acted on instructors as

they made decisions about whether or not to share (give or receive / seek out) teaching materials. (Elements of the activity theory triangle in Figure 1 will be italicized for emphasis.) One such mediating force is the *rules*. The requirement in some departments to share materials via a certain online repository certainly motivated many instructors to share materials in this way, although not always on the schedule designated by the requirement. There also seemed to be some pressure from the *community* to meet this requirement, as Elsa related about the student leadership group discussing the balance of contributions among instructors. This ties in with the teachers' belief that the department does have the authority to require them to share materials. Another mediating force from the *community* seemed to be a sense of gratitude, coupled with a sense of responsibility. Several participants expressed that they relied heavily on materials from others, especially as new instructors, and that they would pass materials on to instructors that came after them. The fact that instructors did share materials, both in face-to-face contexts and also online, both in the required repository and in a different repository, revealed a belief that sharing materials did have value for them and for the community as a whole. This attitude, along with the co-writing of quizzes, provides evidence that the *division of labor* plays a role in their materials-sharing behavior as well. Rand was very clear about this when he talked of his co-teacher and how they took turns creating certain materials based on their non-teaching time constraints. Rand's comments about the importance of reciprocity also revealed his belief that materials were valuable, which in his case seemed to be a mediating force in his decision to not share materials. The desired *object* of having good teaching materials seemed to impact Rand's, Miguel's, and Maggie's decisions not to use the materials of others. In the cases of those three instructors, they seemed to feel that getting materials from others did not provide added value or save them work.

> Wenger et al. (2002) explained the role of reciprocity in communities:
>
> Members of a healthy community of practice have a sense that making the community more valuable is to the benefit of everyone. They know that their contribution will come back to them. This is not a direct exchange mechanism of a market type where commodities are traded. Rather it is a pool of goodwill—of 'social capital,' to use the technical term—that allows people to contribute to the community while trusting that at some point, in some form, they too will benefit. This kind of reciprocity is neither selflessness nor simple tit for tat, but a deeper understanding of mutual value that extends over time. (p. 37)

This statement aligns with Charlie's comments about everyone benefitting from the sharing of materials, providing further evidence that the similarities between CoPs and the teacher communities among my participants are strong enough that those involved with teacher communities can reference the CoP literature to learn how to grow, strengthen, and understand their communities, even if those communities don't specifically qualify as CoPs.

It is interesting to see that in developing a community culture, and particularly a culture of freely sharing materials, one person can make a difference. Recall that Drusilla told of the power of one person taking the lead in sharing materials and how it "just snowballs" from that. Perhaps community culture could be considered another mediating force that impacts teachers' decisions to share or not share their teaching materials.

Summary of research question 3. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes about sharing materials were made manifest in their decisions and actions in regard to sharing or not sharing teaching materials with other teachers. The activity theory triangle provided a way to see how and what mediating forces were impacting teacher decisions.

The choice to focus on materials sharing in this chapter was due to the frequency with which participants talked about it in the interviews and the integral part it seemed to play in many of their interactions. As I reviewed the data related to materials sharing and the beliefs and attitudes about teacher community and how they tied in with activity theory, it seemed very possible to me that we could pick another behavior, such as attendance at certain department or professional development events, or a tendency to spend time or not spend time in a shared office, and that looking at that behavior in similar detail could also reveal participants' beliefs about community.

In the next chapter I will present conclusions based on the findings of the study, limitations of this study, areas of possible future research, and implications and suggestions.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I will report some conclusions from the findings of the study. I will then present limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research that could address those limitations. Third, I will present implications and suggestions based on the current study, and the chapter will end with a few final comments.

The goal of this study was to explore community and community-type interactions among university language teachers. The focus on community was not just for the sake of community itself, but because communities can be significant sites of learning, or in the case of university language teachers, professional development. Communities and professional development are intertwined; it is often the very participation in a community that leads to professional development, so the implications and suggestions for future research presented in this chapter will therefore include both community and professional development focused ideas.

Conclusions

In this section, I will briefly discuss global lessons and takeaways from this dissertation's findings.

First, sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000, 2006; Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1991) and activity theory (Engestrom, 2001; Johnson, 2009) provided a useful and appropriate theoretical framework for this study. Using this frame to analyze my data brought to light different mediating forces that impacted instructor choices and behavior. Activity theory also provided a way to talk about the differences and the connections between instructor goals (object) and their decisions and actions (outcome).In addition, my data also provide evidence of the usefulness of activity theory in analyzing these types of community interactions: the mediating forces anticipated by activity theory did actually seem to be present among my participants. Thus

activity theory was suitable in that it confirmed my findings and was at the same time confirmed by my findings.

Second, the community of practice (CoP) framework and literature (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger et al., 2002) was a valuable and useful tool. While I was not attempting to show that the teacher communities explored in this study were CoPs, and while I did use a broader definition of community than is used in CoPs, there were still many similarities and points of alignment between what is described in CoPs and what happened in the teacher communities in this study. With these similarities in mind, there was value in referencing the CoP framework in this study for two reasons. First, since CoPs have been shown to be places of learning, similarities between these teacher communities and CoPs mean that these teacher communities can also be places of learning, or in this case, place of professional development, thus justifying efforts to develop them and support them. Second, similarities between these teacher communities and CoPs mean that we can use principles and lessons learned from CoPs to grow teacher communities as well.

Third, this study has contributed to the field of teacher preparation in several important ways. Although previous studies have been carried out about communities among pre-service teachers (e.g., Clarke, 2009; Sim, 2006) and among K-12 teachers (e.g., Vescio, Ross, and Adams, 2008), this may be the first study that has addressed community among non-tenured/non-tenure track university language instructors (non-TIs). This demographic is important not just because of their possible future status as university faculty, but also because, in doctoral-granting institutions such as the one in this study, they provide the majority of beginning language instruction to university undergraduates (Geisler et al., 2007). This is especially true in the less commonly taught languages, where tenure-track positions are so scarce

and even non-TIs may find themselves as a "majority of one" (LeLoup and Ponterio, 1998), the only teacher of their TL at their institution. Their access to supportive teacher communities and professional development opportunities thus benefit not only themselves presently and in the future, but through them the generations of college students in the classes they teach.

Fourth, despite the fact that communities among non-TIs, and particularly among graduate students, are constantly in flux, with students potentially coming and going every semester (and typically leaving after a few years), it is still possible to create a consistent sense of community among those who are present any given semester. The following comment from Fulano expressed the fluid and on-going nature of these communities. He explained:

> the head TA […] gave me [his] 101 folder, [his] digital folder that has […] worksheets for every activity […] So then basically I used that, and where he didn't have something, I would make something myself, so then I contributed, and I'm sure if the incoming TAs or whatever next semester need something I'd give that to them.

Putting effort into building community among even these more transitory members of language departments can have positive results, not just for the current generation of instructors, but also for future generations, as the sense of community and commitment to community is passed on.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Limited participant sample. One limitation of this study was the small number of participants and the participant distribution between departments. While the total number of participants was sufficient for the current study, more participants would have allowed for a more detailed picture of community interactions across multiple departments and language programs. One issue was that a relatively high percentage of participants were instructors of one commonly taught language (CTL). Twenty-one of the 37 questionnaire participants (57%) taught

CTLs, and 12 of those 21 were from this one language. That means that 32% (12 out of 37) of the total participants and 57% (12 out of 21) of the CTL teacher participants taught the same language and were thus in the same department and language program. Among the interview participants, a subset of the questionnaire participants, 11 of them taught CTLs (58% of the total), and of those 11, eight (73% of CTL) were from this one CTL. That high proportion was not intentional, but the method of choosing interview participants from among the survey participants did not prevent it. Coincidentally, with all the factors that I took into consideration while making those choices, the actual TL was not a factor (although the distinction between LCTL and CTL was). This resulted in a clearer picture of one department and language program than of any other, with more detail and more instructor perspectives. This also meant that the image of CTLs throughout the study was weighted heavily toward one language program in one department, with much lighter representation from the other CTLs. For example, there were only 2 interview participants (6 from the questionnaire) from another CTL, and only one interview participant (3 from the questionnaire) from the other. Having more balanced numbers of participants across the 3 CTLs would have allowed for a more balanced view of CTLs in general, and having more from the other two CTL language programs would have allowed for more detail and a clearer picture of those.

A possible explanation for this imbalance is the access that I was given to the teachers of that one CTL. When I sent the second recruiting email asking for permission to attend TA or staff meetings to recruit, the person in this language program who received the email invited me to contact the head TAs for permission to attend their meetings. I did so, and received permission and attended several of those meetings. While participation in the questionnaire and the interviews was still voluntary, it is interesting that the language program to which I had the most

access and the most interactions was the one that produced the most participation. Was it perhaps due to the fact that they do have a strong supportive community in that department that I was given access to the head TAs, that head TAs invited me to their meetings, and that so many chose to participate? There are too many factors to know for sure that the strong sense of supporting each other and other graduate students played into all those decisions, but it is interesting to consider.

Another factor related to the participant sample to take into consideration when considering the results of this study is that the university at which this research was done is well-known for its extensive course offerings in many foreign languages. This means that there will likely be more non-TIs in more languages at this school than at other universities around the country. This should be taken into account when comparing or generalizing the results of this study to other institutions.

To address this limitation, future studies could include more participants, with a more even spread across departments, and could even include multiple universities in order to get an even broader picture (e.g., Brandl, 2000). Research questions could address the variations in structure and requirements between departments and institutions to see how different factors encourage or facilitate the development of teacher communities. More participants from each language program would allow a clearer picture and more perspectives on what facilitates interactions between teachers and what supports professional development.

With more participants, spread across more language programs, departments, and institutions, future research could also make comparisons across subsets of instructors. Teachers of less commonly taught languages could be compared to teachers of commonly taught

languages, and teachers with more experience could be compared with novices. Comparisons could also be made across programs of the same language across multiple institutions.

The nature of self-report data. A second limitation is that the data are all self-report data. While this was an appropriate choice to address the research questions in this study, it does have some inherent limitations. In particular, we cannot know if the frequencies of interactions reported are accurate. This applies to all types of interactions, from the day-to-day conversations in the office to teachers' attendance at workshops or brownbags. I asked the participants to give me frequency counts of their interactions with other language teachers, but I did not triangulate those counts with observations, corroboration from others, or attendance or participation records. The participants also described their communities, including within their language groups or departments, and I did not collect any data from departments to corroborate participants' descriptions of department meetings, events, office space set ups, etc. Despite the potential lack of accuracy, the data do show the perceptions of the instructors about the frequency of their interactions and of the value of those interactions in forming communities. These perceptions are important as they reveal participant attitudes and beliefs about those interactions and their teacher community in general.

While the self-report data of this study might not reflect all the professional development or community-building opportunities that instructors had or participated in, future research could combine self-report with other data collection techniques to complete the picture. A method like the 24-hour recall method employed by Ziker, Wintermote, Nolin, Demps, Genuchi, and Meinhardt (2014) would increase the accuracy of the self-report data itself, as well as heighten participants' awareness of relevant interactions. In addition, data could include reports on professional development or community-building events from department administrators,

professional development specialists, and other relevant department personnel. This could include more detail about what workshops or brownbags are offered, by whom (e.g., language departments or other entities), whether they relate to teaching topics or scholarship topics, and what motivated instructors to attend. It would be interesting to compare reports from instructors to reports collected from various administrators, coordinators, etc., in the department about what PD events were supposed to be available and actually took place. Mismatches in those two sets of data could provide valuable information to departments about the marketing, implementation, or perceived professional development relevance of their events.

While self-report data allows insights into participants' memories, beliefs, and perceptions, it doesn't necessarily provide access to a complete picture of what improvements instructors actually make in their teaching due to professional development opportunities, and which training or PD elements are most effective in bringing about those changes. As Brandl (2000) pointed out, future research could also explore these issues. Direct observation of communities in action, using ethnographic data collection methods, would help to provide a more complete picture of what interactions take place among teachers and how communities grow and develop. This study did not focus on any particular community in this way, but future research could look at a given community or set of communities and explore the interactions and development within that community as a unit.

Inclusion of tenure-track faculty and administrators. This study did not include tenure-track faculty or other members of the targeted departments among the participants. As described in Chapter 3, this was intentional, since my interest was in the non-tenured/non-tenure-track population, but it did mean that I did not get a view of any department's workings from the faculty or administration perspective, nor did I get an image of what the interactions or

community of a tenure-track professor, the purported model for the graduate students in the department, look like. A robust view of the community-building and professional development interactions within a department would need to also include the administrators' perspective (coordinators, directors of programs, and other supervisors).

Future research could include tenured and tenure-track faculty, coordinators, directors of programs, other supervisors, and a larger pool of adjuncts and lecturers, as well as graduate TAs. (The potential participant pool for this study did include adjuncts and lecturers, but they ended up being only a small proportion of the total participants, and could be recruited more specifically.) Having data about involvement in communities and professional development opportunities from tenure-track faculty, adjuncts, lecturers, and graduate TAs (rather than just about TAs, e.g., Brandl, 2000) would allow comparisons between those groups, which would provide valuable information about what works to promote teacher community and professional develop for each demographic, as well as about what each group values about those interactions. Questionnaire and interview protocols could also be adjusted to more specifically address the experiences of all those demographics. As we consider the importance of socializing graduate TAs into the professoriate, knowledge about tenure-track faculty communities and involvement in professional development could allow those to serve as models for TAs with that career goal. Future research could also address the fact that there are multiple careers goals among such a population.

Implications and Suggestions

The implications of this study are largely programmatic, and are comprised of suggestions for language programs or departments who want to facilitate either community among teachers or professional development of language instructors. I will refer to departments

for the sake of simplicity, but these suggestions could apply to institutions, departments, language programs, or other relevant entities.

Evaluate trust and communication. Given the important intertwined roles that trust, communication, and relationships were shown to play in the development of community and relationships, departments would do well to evaluate the trust that does or does not exist in their departments. (Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) provided a list of 14 trust measures that might be used.) The results of such an assessment would help department leadership to see where trust was lacking and would need to be built or rebuilt. As one participant expressed, "I know in my department [the] grad students are kind of upset that there's a lack of transparency in how things work, like, who gets what grants and scholarships." He continued, "grad students feel like they need to compete, they feel like they're being misled, […] so I think that makes it hard for them to create community sometimes." Identifying and repairing gaps like these in trust and in communication can improve the community and create an environment where people are comfortable and feel safe and willing to learn from each other and contribute to the community. If a lack of trust is allowed to exist long term, it can become a mediational force that can prevent community and relationships from developing.

Evaluate requirements placed on teachers. I recommend that departments carefully examine the requirements they place on language instructors, both in terms of work to perform and events to attend. For example, if a department has a requirement to post materials online, what is the goal of that requirement? Is it to ensure that instructors are sharing with each other? Is it to build up a permanent repository of teaching materials, and if so, for whom, and to what end? Is the requirement resulting in the creation of a quality, usable collection of materials? How many teachers use materials from it, and how frequently? Does that frequency justify the amount

of time instructors spend selecting and uploading materials? My data show that instructors are sharing materials with each other, but largely not via the required online repository and not because of the requirement. They have alternate repositories, and they also share face-to-face or via email as needed. Departments should consider if the requirement provides any added benefit to the sharing that is already happening, and if so, to whom. If a permanent repository is valued by the department, perhaps a graduate student could be hired to do this systematically, so that the end result will be cohesive, comprehensive, and regularly completely updated. Or perhaps such a graduate student could collect or create materials for certain parts of a course, as Julia reported that her department did for the first few weeks of a course. Julia's account of doing this work provides important insights:

> it was a learning experience for me, to make it, ((laughs)) and to think, you know when you make a lesson plan if you're the only one who's going to read, it doesn't matter if it's coherent, ((laughs)) as long as you know [how to follow it], so to make a lesson plan that you know someone else is going to read was really challenging.

Ginger's comments align with Julia's:

> I know what it feels like to be handed material, and I think that, you know, when you have more ownership over something that, it's easier to teach, I think it's harder to actually go into a class with someone else's lesson plan, than it is to plan it yourself, because you feel I think less confident.

Miguel agreed as well:

> a lot of the stuff that's in [the required repository,] I almost never use it, […] I hardly ever look in there, […] I find it actually kind of hard to find things that are relevant, if I

> need to do something […] I'll do a search in [the required repository] and I won't find anything that I really want, so that's why I usually end up creating my own stuff anyway.

All these participants' comments reveal that there are difficulties inherent in trying to use materials that someone else created and shared. Conducting an evaluation within a department of the objectives, uses, and actual benefits of such a requirement and such a repository would be time well spent, and would hopefully result in solutions that would both meet needs and not take undue time.

In terms of requirements placed on instructors to attend social or professional development events, departments should carefully consider the objectives of each event and the possible value of it to the different demographics in their departments. It is clear from my data that language instructors have to carefully prioritize the use of their time, and such events will attract and therefore benefit more instructors if they are seen to be relevant and useful. Based on the varied career goals of the instructors, certain events may not be relevant or of a high enough priority to secure participation. As Fulano bluntly put it, "I can't think of what would get me to go to something, I'd have to feel like […] I was gaining something from it." Tessa expressed a slightly different concern:

> I think sometimes there is this sense, I've had it, and my colleagues had, this sense that the department doesn't understand how much we have going on, and then they expect us to finish things in a certain time, or they give us […] an exorbitant amount of work, and then you get chastised for not participating.

Department efforts to make the objectives, desired learning outcomes, and relevance of events clear, and to communicate an understanding and empathy related to the need to prioritize, could empower instructors to make deliberate choices about their participation. If one of the purposes

of such events is simply to build community, that objective and the value to the attendee should be explicitly identified and communicated, and the events should be planned at a time and place accessible to all.

Encourage self-reflection and strategic planning. Tessa expressed a struggle that she faced as a graduate student instructor, which she acknowledged was not unique to her:

> I have got so much going on between teaching, and taking, you know, however many courses, or writing my dissertation, and having a life where I want to sleep at night, […] so, you know, I mean, I'm sorry I couldn't make this one event, when I've attended all the other ones, 'cause we have in the past gotten angry emails from professors saying, you should have come to this, or, you know, it's just like, sorry ((half laughing)), can't do everything.

To assist instructors, graduate students or not, in making strategic professional development decisions based on their individual professional goals, departments could encourage or facilitate instructors being reflective and proactive about their choices and priorities. In other words, departments could provide a mediational space, both individual and dialogic, that Johnson (2009) reminded us can lead to learning. This reflection and planning could be part of an instructor's relationship with their graduate advisor, their department's pedagogy specialist, their course coordinator, a teaching mentor, or another mentor. Reflection and planning like this could be done once a year and could be done in individual or group settings. (Group settings could provide opportunities for peer mentoring between the members of the group.) Graduate student instructors in particular might need to engage in this process twice: once with regard to their teaching and once with regard to their scholarship and research. Instructors could be encouraged to reflect on how the different professional development opportunities available to them move

them toward their career goals and strengthen and expand their skills and experience. They could be invited to reflect on areas they feel the need for improvement, based on the model of someone in their chosen career path, and then to choose professional development options to lead to those improvements. Taking into account the possibly varied career aspirations of each instructor could also help departments offer relevant professional development opportunities, as mentioned above.

Create shared spaces. As another way to create more literal mediational spaces, departments could acquire or designate space near offices that could be used for casual interactions. As outlined in research question 1 in Chapter 4, many interactions take place in shared offices, and participants noted the value of shared spaces in creating opportunities for interactions between teachers. The following participant comments expressed some of the affordances and benefits of shared spaces:

- The offices, the way this, the way they're set up as they are now, that encourages a lot of interaction ((chuckling)) just because you can't get away from people, I mean you know you have these bigger rooms, where of course you're going to run into people on a daily basis, the interaction's going to be there. (Maggie)
- Most of these collaborations are from sharing an office, being in the breakroom, running into each other over coffee, going out for beers in the evening and then we end up talking about teaching. (Drusilla)
- If it weren't for my friends, especially my office-mates, I would probably be in a good deal of trouble from a mental/emotional and physical health standpoint. (Lauren)

Despite the existent advantages of shared offices, there were still improvements that could be made in terms of available shared spaces. Participants also mentioned the lack of more social

spaces, such as a break room or coffee room, where teachers could be out of their offices and casually run into others and sit and chat.

- We don't have a community space, we don't have a place where we're going to run into each other buying a cup of coffee, or something like that, we seem to have to run out to these other cafeterias, […] we don't have a, even a space to organize an informal event that's not in a classroom. (Jackson)
- The space isn't really conducive to people, and we have a coffee room, but there's no place to sit. (Joan)
- I think if there were like, oh, I don't know, a common, kitchen […], like, break room, kind of place, and all of you had to go there for your lunch, you would run into people more, I mean, I think that's…I've seen that happen in other buildings. (Fulano)
- Just to have a space where people can, like a lounge room, where people can have lunch together, or, 'cause we have a lounge room, and often we go there, and we chitchat, so that works pretty well. (Ashley)

Addressing this gap could provide further opportunities for interactions to take place and communities to develop.

Continue to address calls for change. As discussed in Chapter 2, several calls for change have been issued in regard to TA preparation and future faculty professional development. These include calls for more team teaching collaboration (Byrnes 2001), interdisciplinary team-taught courses, mixed language and literature courses as well as interdisciplinary collaborations (Geisler et al., 2007), and cross-department collaboration (Kern, 2011). My data confirm that these types of collaboration aren't happening very much at all; they are certainly no more a standard part of TA professional development than when Byrnes issued

her initial call in 2001. One participant did share how getting to know people in other departments via social interactions opened the door for knowing about and becoming interested in what other scholars work on, including the possibility for collaboration. We still have room for growth and effort in this area, and encouraging communities to develop across department boundaries can potentially create the relationships that will open doors in this area.

Another shortcoming in current TA training and future faculty preparation presented in Chapter 2 is a lack of opportunities to teach courses beyond lower-level language courses (Allen and Maxim, 2011; Byrnes, 2001; Pfeiffer; 2008). My data confirm that opportunities to teach such courses are still extremely rare, and happen as a result of individual relationships and not in a systematic way. This is therefore also an area in need of continued efforts.

I will close with some of the words of my participants that demonstrated to me the power of community in their lives, and have made me feel that my efforts to support teacher communities were justified and important. Tessa described how in a community "it's really just a question of…knowing that someone's got your back," and "no one's going to let you fail." Charlie believed that, "you all can, can benefit." Deedee expressed her sense that "teachers are community-constructed." Fulano stated that "if I felt like I wasn't part of a community, it would be really tough to be a [TL] TA, you would really have a hard time, like…if you didn't interact with the other [TL] TAs, you probably couldn't teach." Continued research efforts will allow us to discover ways that we can support and empower teachers and improve language teaching as we tap into the power of communities as a source of professional development.

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Appendix A: Recruitment materials from the pilot study

Email (to be sent by student researcher):

Dear language instructors,

For my dissertation research, I am investigating **community among language teachers**. **Whether or not** you feel like you are part of such a community, I would like to invite you to participate in a small pilot study about this topic. Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire and possibly an audio-recorded interview. Your participation will take less than 1.5 hours of your time.

If you are willing to participate, please access the survey here: [link]

Please complete the survey before **Friday, March 16, 2012**. You will be contacted by the end of April if you are selected for participation in an interview.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the project. I can be reached at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Thank you,

Margaret Merrill
Doctoral student in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Text of flyer (to be distributed to TA department mailboxes by student researcher if insufficient participants are found via email):

Notice of Research Study

Attention language instructors!

You are invited to participate in a small research study investigating **community among language teachers.**

Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire and possibly an interview, and will take **less than one and a half hours** of your time.

You are invited to participate **whether or not** you feel that you are a part of a community or network of language teachers.

If you are willing to participate, please access the survey here: [link]

Please complete the survey before **Friday, March 16, 2012**. You will be contacted by the end of April if you are selected for participation in an interview.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the project. I can be reached at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Thank you!

Margaret Merrill
Doctoral student in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Appendix B: Questionnaire from the pilot study

(The first page participants encounter in the survey will be the survey consent form. At the end of the form they will have the 2 options listed here. If they choose not to participate, they will be exited from the survey.)

1. I consent to participate in this study. My initials typed below indicate that I give my permission to be quoted directly in publications without using my name.

☐

2. I choose not to participate in this study.

(Page break)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study!

Please provide your full name. Your confidentiality will be protected through the use of the pseudonym that you provide, but I would like your real name in case I need clarification of any of your responses here, and also so that I can contact you if you are selected to participate in a follow-up interview after completing this survey. Providing your full name does not in any way obligate you to agree to participate in the interview.

In both the survey and the interview data, your confidentiality will be protected through the use of the pseudonym that you provide.

Name: _____
Preferred pseudonym: _____

(Page break)

Background information:

Age:____
Gender: _____
Native language(s) / mother tongue(s): _____
Home city/state and country: _____
Language(s) you teach: _____
Years of experience teaching language (if you have taught more than one language, please include the number of years you have taught each language):
_____
Current job title: ___ TA
___ Lecturer
___ Other: _____
Is there anything else you would like us to know about your language teaching experience?
_____
_____
_____

(Page break)

Education and career:

Are you currently pursuing a degree? ___ Undergraduate: Major: _____
___ Graduate (Masters): Major: _____
___ Graduate (PhD): Major: _____
___ Other: _____

Is language teaching part of your longterm career goals? ___ Yes
___ No

Please COMMENT ON YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION:

_____
_____
_____

(Page break)

Involvement in teacher "communities" or "networks":

This section of the questionnaire asks you to comment about the types of interactions you have with other language teachers, and the frequency of those interactions. Please indicate ALL responses that apply to you, and leave blank the items that don't apply to you. It is expected that there will be some overlap between these items, so please consider each one separately.

I interact with other language teachers:

online more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

face-to-face more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

indept meetings more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

in trainings more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

in pedagogy course more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

in casual conversation more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

in shared office space more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

in professional organizations more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

at conferences more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

My online interactions **with other language teachers** consist of:

visiting their blogs more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

visiting lesson plan/idea sites more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

seeking teaching events more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

sending / receiving email more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

visiting teaching-related discussion boards more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

participating in social media (facebook, twitter, etc.) more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

visiting professional organization sites more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

My purpose in seeking out other language teachers is to:

seek teaching ideas: more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

vent frustrations / anxieties: more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

share successes: more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

When you need support in your language teaching, to whom do you turn?

faculty advisor more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

course coordinator more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

head TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

TA in shared office more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

language teaching TA friend more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

non-language teaching TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
family more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
friend more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

What structured language teacher communities or networks do you participate in, such as professional organizations? Please list them and indicate the frequency of your interactions with them (if there are more than 3, please add them in the following question):
_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never
_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / never

If you had more than 3 responses to the above question, please use the space here to indicate any additional structured language teacher communities or networks in which you participate, such as professional organizations. Please list them and indicate the frequency of your interactions with them.

_____
_____
_____

Do you feel well-connected to other language teachers? Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____

Please describe any ways in which you interact or network / feel a sense of community with other language teachers that have not been already covered here.

_____
_____
_____

What impact does your involvement in any of the teacher communities or networks or interactions mentioned above have on any aspect of your teaching (classroom management, lesson planning, assessment planning, etc.)? Please include positive or negative impacts.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your participation! You will be contacted by the end of April if you are selected for an interview. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact the student researcher, Margaret Merrill, at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Appendix C: Interview protocol from the pilot study

Welcome and thank you; reminder of audio recording.

Please take a minute to look over your questionnaire responses. Are there any that you would like to elaborate on?

I would like to ask you to talk a little more about the final section of the questionnaire:

Do you feel like you have a community or a network of support in your teaching? How would you describe that community or network? How did it form? What are the ways it manifests itself (weekly casual lunches, trading of lesson plans)?

Do you feel well-connected to other language teachers? Why or why not? Which types of interactions, of those listed in the questionnaire, help you to feel the most connected to other language teachers?

Do you feel like you are part of a nation-wide or world-wide network of teachers? Who does that community or network consist of? How do you know it exists? How does it manifest itself in your communications with other teachers?

What is the role of technology, in any of the forms listed on the questionnaire, or in any other form, in the creation or maintenance of your connections or sense of community with other language teachers?

What impact do you think your interactions with other language teachers has on your teaching? Please mention positive or negative impacts.

Is there anything else you would like me to know about your interactions with other language teachers in terms of communities or networks, or how they form or how they impact your teaching?

Thank you!

Appendix D: Updated questionnaire for the full dissertation study

Note: New/updated items are indicated in italics.

(The first page that participants encounter in the survey will be the survey consent form. At the end of the form they will have the options listed here. If they choose not to participate, they will be exited from the survey.)

1. I consent to participate in this study. My initials typed below indicate that I give my permission to be quoted directly in publications without using my name.

☐

2. I also consent to being contacted in the future for further research.

3. I choose not to participate in this study.

(Page break)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study!

Please provide your full name. Your confidentiality will be protected through the use of the pseudonym that you provide, but I would like your real name in case I need clarification of any of your responses here, and also so that I can contact you if you are selected to participate in a follow-up interview after completing this survey. Providing your full name does not in any way obligate you to agree to participate in the interview.

In both the survey and the interview data, your confidentiality will be protected through the use of the pseudonym that you provide.

Name: _____
Preferred pseudonym: _____

(Page break)

Background information:

Age: ____
Gender: _____
Native language(s) / mother tongue(s): _____
Home city/state and country: _____
Language(s) you teach: _____
Years of experience teaching language (if you have taught more than one language, please include the number of years you have taught each language): _____
Current job title: ___ TA
___ Lecturer
___ *Head TA*
___ *Instructor*

___ *Teaching fellow*
___ *Faculty associate*
___ *Faculty assistant*
___ *Adjunct*
___ Other: _____

What percentage of fulltime is your current position? (e.g., 33%, 50%, etc.) _____
Is your current position a tenure-track position? ___ *Yes /* ___ *No*
Please indicate the levels at which you have taught language:

___ *University – graduate courses*
___ *University – undergraduate courses*
___ *Community college*
___ *High school*
___ *Junior high/middle school*
___ *Elementary school*
___ *Other:* _____

Is there *additional information you think it would be helpful for us* to know about your language teaching experience?

_____
_____
_____

(Page break)

Education and career:

Are you currently pursuing a degree?
___ Undergraduate: Major: _____
___ Graduate (Masters): Major: _____
___ Graduate (PhD): Major: _____
___ Other: _____

Is language teaching part of your long-term career goals? ___ Yes
___ No

Please comment on your response to the previous question:

_____
_____
_____

What types of TA or teacher training or education or professional development have you participated in, or are you currently participating in? Please select ALL that apply (list adapted from Brandl, 2000).

___ *Undergraduate degree in teaching*
___ *Methods course*
___ *TA Orientation (or equivalent pre-service)*
___ *Mentoring*
___ *TA meetings (w/department or level or course)*
___ *TA meetings are/were mostly administration*

___ *TA meetings are/were a mix of administration and training/professional development*
___ *TA meetings are/were mostly training/professional development*
___ *Workshops*
___ *Observations of your teaching by supervisor*
___ *Observations of your teaching by other faculty*
___ *Observations of your teaching by another TA*
___ *Observing faculty (you observed their teaching)*
___ *Observing TA (you observed their teaching)*
___ *Other:* _____

If any of the trainings/meetings in which you do/did participate need further explanation, or if you would like to comment on any response to the previous question, please do so:

_____

_____

_____

(Page break)

Involvement in teacher "communities" or "networks":

This section of the questionnaire asks you to comment about the types of interactions you have with other language teachers, and the frequency of those interactions. Please:

- Consider each option separately; it is expected that there will be some overlap between these items. *For example, if you interact "in casual conversation" with another TA "in shared office space," please count that interaction for both items.*
- *Remember that I am interested in ALL types of interactions that you have with other language teachers, whether those interactions are specifically related to teaching or not, and whether or not those interactions seem to you to be part of a community or network.*
- *Provide a frequency for ALL types of interaction ("never" is an option ;)).*

I interact with other language teachers:

online more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year*/ never

face-to-face more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year*/ never

in department meetings more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year*/ never

in trainings more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never

in pedagogy course more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never

in casual conversation more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never

in shared office space more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

in my graduate courses more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

when they observe my teaching more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

when I observe their teaching more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

in professional organizations *(GAFIS, MLA, TAA, etc.)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

at conferences *(SLAG, AAAL, etc.)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

in social situations (e.g., hanging out, getting coffee, etc.) more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

If you would like to expound on and/or clarify any of your responses above, please do so:

_____

_____

_____

Please provide some information about your shared office: With whom do you share your office – other language teachers? Of your language or other languages? Is your office near the offices of other faculty/staff/graduate students in your department?

_____

_____

_____

My **online** interactions **with other language teachers** consist of:

visiting their blogs more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

visiting lesson plan/idea sites *(e.g., LessonShare, etc.)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

setting up or running a course together in Learn@UW more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

seeking teaching events *(e.g., workshops, etc.)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

sending / receiving email more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

visiting teaching-related discussion boards more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

participating in social media (Facebook, Twitter, *Instagram, Pinterest*, etc.) more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

visiting professional organization *web*sites more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

setting up or running a course website that other teachers use or will use more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

interacting anonymously more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

interacting as myself/with my real name more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

PLEASE make sure that you provided a frequency for ALL types of interaction ("never" is an option).

If you would like to expound on and/or clarify any of your responses above, please do so:

_____

_____

_____

My purpose in seeking out other language teachers is to:

get new teaching ideas *for a specific activity/topic/technology* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

get help for classroom management issues more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

vent frustrations / anxieties more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

share successes more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

improve my language skills in the language I teach more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

spend time with like-minded individuals *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

get coffee/ice cream/lunch/a drink on the Terrace *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

participate in non-university-related social events *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

PLEASE make sure that you provided a frequency for ALL types of interaction ("never" is an option).

If you would like to expound on and/or clarify any of your responses above, please do so:

_____

_____

_____

When you need support in your language teaching, to whom do you turn?

teaching job supervisor (e.g., course coordinator*, etc.)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

faculty advisor*/chair (for your graduate work)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

language faculty *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

non-language faculty *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

head TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

TA in shared office more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

language teaching TA friend more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

non-language teaching TA *friend (e.g., TA of a different subject)* more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

family more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

friend more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never
other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never
other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year* / never

PLEASE make sure that you provided a frequency for ALL types of interaction ("never" is an option).

If you would like to expound on and/or clarify any of your responses above, please do so:

_____
_____
_____

Please comment on the relationship, if any, between your online and offline interactions with other teachers. For example, do you only interact online with teachers you have already met in person, or would you perhaps follow another teacher on Twitter and then meet them in person at a conference?

_____
_____
_____

Which types of collaboration have you participated in?

team-teaching with another TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

team-teaching with faculty more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

mentoring other TAs more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

being mentored by faculty more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

co-creating a course with another TAmore than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

co-creating a course with faculty more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

presenting at a conference with another TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

presenting at a conference with faculty more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

co-creating materials, quizzes, exams with another TA more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

co-creating materials, quizzes, exams with faculty more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

collaboration with faculty or TAs from other depts. more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

other: _____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never

PLEASE make sure that you provided a frequency for ALL types of interaction ("never" is an option).

If you would like to expound on and/or clarify any of your responses above, please do so:

_____

_____

_____

Do you have formal or informal ways to share your teaching expertise with others? Please describe. Would you like more opportunities to do that? What would you suggest as means to share teaching expertise with others?

_____

_____

_____

What **structured** language teacher communities or networks do you participate in, such as professional organizations, *weekly brown-bags, on-going workshop series, etc*.? Please list them and indicate the frequency of your interactions with them (if there are more than 3, please add them in the following question):

_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

_____ more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / *once a year /* never

If you had more than 3 responses to the above question, please use the space here to indicate any additional structured language teacher communities or networks in which you participate, such as professional organizations, *weekly brown-bags, on-going workshop series, etc.* Please list them and indicate the frequency of your interactions with them.

_____

_____

_____

What casual, spontaneous interactions do you have with other language teachers, such as lunch with friends from your methods class cohort, walking across campus to class with a fellow TA in your class, coffee date with colleagues from other universities at conferences, etc? Please list them and indicate the frequency of your interactions with them (if there are more than 3, please add them in the following question):

_____ *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

_____ *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

_____ *more than once a day / daily / 2-3 times a week / once a week / 2-3 times a month / once a month / 1-3 times a semester / once a year / never*

If you had more than 3 responses to the above question, please use the space here to indicate any casual, spontaneous interactions you have with other language teachers, such as lunch with friends from your methods class cohort, walking across campus to class with a fellow TA in your class, coffee date with colleagues from other universities at conferences, etc. Please list them and indicate frequency.

_____

_____

_____

Do you feel well-connected to other language teachers *(including TAs, faculty, etc.)?* Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Please describe any ways in which you interact or network *or* feel a sense of community with other language teachers *(including TAs, faculty, etc.)* that have not been already covered *in the questionnaire. Please remember that I am interested in ALL types of interactions that you have with other language teachers, whether those interactions are specifically related to teaching or not, and whether or not those interactions seem to you to be part of a community or network.*

_____

_____

_____

What impact does your involvement in any of the teacher communities or networks or interactions mentioned above have on any aspect of your teaching (classroom management, lesson planning, assessment planning, *maintaining perspective and sanity ☺,* etc.)? Please include positive or negative impacts.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation! You will be contacted by the end of April if you are selected for an interview. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact the student researcher, Margaret Merrill, at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Appendix E: Updated interview protocol for the full dissertation study

Note: New/updated items are indicated in italics.

Welcome and thank you; reminder of audio recording; *reminder of my definition of community and that I am interested in all sorts of interactions between language teachers, even those not overtly about teaching or language.*

Please take a minute to look over your questionnaire responses. Are there any that you would like to elaborate on?

I asked you to provide me with a couple of artifacts—something that reflects for you the influence of community on your teaching, and then also your teaching philosophy statement, if you have one and are willing to share it. Will you please tell me about the item(s) you provided, and how it reflects the influence of community on your teaching?

I would like to ask you to talk a little more about the final section of the questionnaire:

Do you feel like you have a community or a network of support in your teaching? How would you describe that community or network? How did it form? What are the ways it manifests itself (weekly casual lunches, trading of lesson plans)? *Why do you continue to participate in it? Do you anticipate that these connections/networks will continue once you are faculty? What would keep you from participating in it in the future?*

Do you feel well-connected to other language teachers, *including TAs, faculty, etc.?* Why or why not? Which types of interactions help you to feel the most connected to other language teachers?*(Mention types of interaction addressed in the questionnaire if needed, as prompt.)*

How far do your connections with other language teachers extend—in your department, school/college, university, world-wide? Who does that community or network consist of? How do you know it exists? How does it manifest itself in your *interactions/*communications with other teachers?

What is the role of technology in the creation or maintenance of your connections or sense of community with other language teachers?*(Mention roles of technology addressed in the questionnaire if needed, as prompt.)*

How much interaction between language teachers, between TAs or between TAs and faculty, is mandated or institutionalized? For example, your department sets up mentoring between TAs and faculty.

What other opportunities do you have to interact with other language teachers, including TAs and faculty?

What types of collaboration have you participated in (mentoring, team-teaching, co-creating course, co-presenting, materials/exam developing, etc.)

What do you think teachers in general need to get them involved and interacting with other language teachers? What about you?

What do you think leads teachers in general to interact with some teachers and not with others? What about you?

Have you seen shifts in your own interactions with other language teachers, TAs or faculty? At what point(s) in your career or experience (make reference to their survey answers as needed)? Why?

What types of interactions or networks or connections do you see happening between other language teachers, including TA and faculty?

What value do you see in communities or networks among language teachers?

What impact do you think your interactions with other language teachers have on your teaching? Please mention positive or negative impacts.

What role do you see your current relationships with other TAs or faculty playing in your career or life once you leave your current position or this campus?

What role do you see your interactions with other language teachers playing in your personal professional development as a language teacher, and as a future professor?

*What do **departments** do, or what conditions exist, which facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities or networks?*

*What could **departments** do, or what conditions could exist, which would facilitate or encourage the formation or maintenance of teacher communities or networks?*

What do departments do, or what conditions exist in departments, that create barriers to communities or networks among teachers developing?

What might departments do, or what conditions might exist in departments, that would create barriers to communities or networks among teachers developing?

Is there anything else you would like me to know about your interactions with other language teachers in terms of communities or networks, or how they form or how they impact your teaching?

Thank you!

Appendix F: List of departments from which I recruited participants for the full dissertation study

African Languages and Literature

Anthropology

Classics

East Asian Languages and Literature

English

French and Italian

German

Hebrew and Semitic Studies

Languages and Cultures of Asia

Scandinavian Studies

Slavic Languages and Literature

Spanish and Portuguese

Appendix G: Recruitment materials for the full dissertation study

Email (to be sent by student researcher to department administrators to be forwarded to instructors):

Dear language instructors,

If you teach a foreign language and you are a **TA, lecturer, faculty associate, faculty assistant, or adjunct** – or any other title that means non-tenured and non-tenure-track – this invitation is for you.

For my dissertation research, I am investigating how **communities or networks among language teachers** can be sources of **professional development**. **Whether or not** you feel like you are part of such a community or network, I would like to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation will involve completion of a questionnaire and possibly an audio-recorded interview. Your participation will take less than 1.5 hours of your time.

If you are willing to participate, please access the survey here: [link TBD]

If you prefer to complete the survey on paper, please check for paper copies in your department office, or email me and I will send you one that you can print.

Please complete the survey before **[date TBD]**. You will be contacted by [date TBD] if you are selected for participation in an interview.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the project. I can be reached at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Thank you,

Margaret Merrill
Doctoral student in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Email (to be sent by student researcher to department administrators asking for permission to attend and recruit in TA/staff meetings):

Dear [name],

For my dissertation research in second language acquisition, I am investigating communities or networks among language teachers, and how participation in those contributes to teacher professional development. I would like to invite the non-tenured/non-tenure-track language instructors in your department to participate in my study. Their participation will involve completion of a questionnaire and possibly an audio-recorded interview, and will take less than 1.5 hours of their time.

Would you allow me to come to about 5 minutes of a department staff or TA meeting to invite them to participate in my study? I would briefly tell them about the project, describe what their participation would entail, and distribute copies of the questionnaire and flyers with my contact information.

The end date for the survey is [date TBD], and I would love to a TA or staff meeting a week or two before that.

Attending this meeting is not my only form of recruitment, but I do think that it will be the most fruitful, and I would be very grateful if you would allow me to attend.

My questionnaire will be administered on paper as well as online; would you allow me to leave a big envelope somewhere in your department offices for your instructors to deposit their completed surveys? I would remove it from your office on [date TBD].

Please let me know if you would like any further information, and I hope to hear from you soon about a TA or staff meeting.

Thank you,

Margaret Merrill
Doctoral student in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Semi-script (to be used by student researcher to recruit in department TA or staff meetings):

My name is Margaret Merrill, and I am a doctoral study in the Second Language Acquisition program.

For my dissertation research, I am investigating how communities or networks among language teachers can contribute to their professional development, and I am here to invite you to participate in my study. I would love to have you participate whether or not you feel like you are part of a community or network of teachers. Your participation will involve completion of a questionnaire and possibly an audio-recorded interview, if you are selected for that, and will take less than 1.5 hours of your time, total. The survey will take about 30 minutes, and the interview will take about 45 minutes.

If you are willing to participate, you can complete the survey online or on paper. I have paper copies of the survey here, and this flyer has the link for the online version.

The end date for the survey is [date TBD], so please complete the survey before then. If you complete the paper version, there will be an envelope in [location TBD for each department] that you can deposit it in.

You will be contacted by [date TBD] if you are selected for participation in an interview.

Are there any questions that I can answer quickly? Otherwise, please contact me if you have any questions about the project. My email address is listed on the flyer.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will participate!

Flyer (to be distributed to non-TI department mailboxes by student researcher):

Notice of Research Study

Attention language instructors!

If you teach a foreign language and you are a **TA, lecturer, faculty associate, faculty assistant, or adjunct** – or any other title that means non-tenured and non-tenure-track – this invitation is for you.

You are invited to participate in a small research study investigating how **communities or networks among language teachers** can be sources of **professional development**.

Your participation will involve completion of a questionnaire and possibly an interview, and will take **less than one and a half hours** of your time.

You are invited to participate **whether or not** you feel that you are a part of a community or network of language teachers.

If you are willing to participate, please access the survey here: [link TBD]

If you prefer to complete the survey on paper, please check for paper copies in your department office, or email me and I will send you one that you can print.

Please complete the survey before **[date TBD]**. You will be contacted by [date TBD] if you are selected for participation in an interview.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the project. I can be reached at merrill2@wisc.edu.

Thank you!

Margaret Merrill
Doctoral student in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Appendix H: Interview transcript sample

Margaret: [What might a department do that would create barriers to teacher interactions, what might a department do, or if there are things that you've seen in the department that you work in, or at the institution that we're at, things that create barriers to teachers interacting with each other. And this can be things that you've seen, or things that you think, hypothetically, if a department were to do this, that would be really damaging to teacher communities, or whatever.]

[33:18]

Ashley: Like, um, the teacher interaction or the student interaction. ((teacher, teacher to teacher)) just the teacher, ((so yeah, TAs interacting, yeah))… … … [long pause] I [don't?] know, I can't think of any, except maybe pitting people against each other, ((oh)) like, creating a system of ranking, or ((ok)), but I mean, I don't think ((A half-laughing)) that would occur anyone to rank TAs, and maybe you can create an award for the best TA, but you would have an award for the worst TA, something like that, ((OK, M half-laughing, A half-laughs)) um……no, I, I can't think of any, except what I just said, and maybe, you know, comparing TAs among each other, ((ok)) but, uh, I don't think it would be appropriate or professional to do that, ((Ok)) so I don't, I, I can't see it happening, ((ok)) yeah, it would, it would be mostly creating, like competition against TAs, or…comparing them, ((ok)) yeah ((and that would keep them, that would keep them from being collegial with each other)) from, yeah, ((Ok, why do you think that would?)) … … well, I guess that it would create some sort of, uh, projected ranking in people's mind, as in, ah, this is the best TA, and I feel awful compared to that TA, I mean, this is how I would see it if, they started comparing TAs, ((ok)) um…yeah, I guess it would just, it would, it wouldn't be good for the ego, um, and then for, and then when you lose confidence, or, you know, you're not that sure of what you're doing, then it would create a bad atmosphere among TAs, I guess. ((Ok)) It's like, um, it's like the positive feedback basically, when you're teaching, instead of saying, oh, you ma-, you, you didn't see the word, uh, what it meant, you should rather say, ah, but you saw what this word and this word meant, this is good, keep doing, keep going this way, so I guess, yeah, I mean, the c-, the comparing thing, I don't see it happening, but if, if, if it would to happen I think it would be the most degrading thing for a TA community.

Margaret: [So I have one last set of questions to ask, and some of them are related, so first of all, what value do you see in community or networks among language teachers?]

[36:12]

Ashley: ……what values, um, ((yeah, what value, what benefit do you get out of it, or what do you see as being valuable about)) ok, ((teacher communities)) I think, uh, distributing the work load, among us, ((OK) is really important, ((ok)) uh, to know that we're not alone, like if we have a big difficulty, like at the beginning I thought it was really difficult to teach a grammar heavier material, so to benefit from tips and experience of other TAs who have taught this class before, ((OK)) was helpful, ((Ok)) um, yeah, just to know that there's this, a-a support, a supporting network basically, th-that's, in itself, is really helpful.