Research Report: Teach-a-LCTL Needs Analysis

A Study by the National LCTL Resource Center to Understand the Needs of Community LCTL Educators

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Community language education is a crucial yet often overlooked avenue for language education in the US. This research report shares the results of a study from the National Less Commonly Taught Languages Resources Center which explored the demographics of community language programs in the US, as well as their challenges and opportunities.

Author

Mary Ellen Rutemeyer

Teach-a-LCTL Project Team

Sandhya Shanker

Mary Ellen Rutemeyer

Mitchell Ernst

Emily Heidrich Uebel

Executive Summary

Project Overview

The Teach-a-LCTL Needs Analysis is a study undertaken by the National Less Commonly Taught Languages Resource Center (NLRC) to better understand the needs of community language educators. The NLRC is a Title-VI-funded language resource center whose goal is to support education of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) in the US. This report shares the results of that needs analysis, which used survey and interview data to understand not only the landscape of community LCTL programs, but also challenges and advancements in this unique branch of language education.

Community LCTL Education

Community language programs exist outside of formal educational systems, often meeting on weeknights, weekends, or in the summer to offer language instruction and cultural events. They often play important roles in connecting language communities and maintaining heritage languages, especially for LCTLs. In part due to their place outside of established educational structures, many community language programs face challenges such as teacher shortages, student attrition, and low or inconsistent funding. To understand both common themes and diverse experiences in community language programs, this study asked participants about program demographics and specific areas of interest such as teacher training, adolescent learners, and course content development.

Findings: Demographics, Challenges, and Recommendations

Participants in this study (n=27) represent programs with 17 different languages. Most schools mix a variety of funding sources to carry out programming, sometimes supported by a larger parent organization. While some programs have access to a pool of pedagogically trained teachers, others struggle to attract and retain instructors. Some programs employ classroom assistants, providing teachers with extra support. Participants shared mixed experiences with sourcing and generating content for their courses. While some educators lamented that pre-made curricula from parent organizations were not context-appropriate, others bemoaned an overall lack of materials. Most programs reported creating their own course content, which can be challenging, especially for inexperienced teachers. In some programs, teachers and administrators work together to adapt pre-made content to their program's specific needs. Finally, community language programs often lose learners in pre-adolescent and adolescent age groups, which this study's participants confirmed. Some participants shared approaches to keeping students in these age ranges engaged. In-class strategies included incorporating projects relevant to students' lives and offering classes at different times. Other strategies involved learners outside of their roles as students, engaging them as classroom assistants, or through cultural clubs. Most participants emphasized the importance of friends and social connections, particularly for this age group.

Full Research Report

In 2022, the National LCTL Resource Center (NLRC) was first granted Title VI funding from the US Department of Education.[1] In its initial grant proposal, the NLRC included a project entitled *Teach-a-LCTL Resource Guides* – these guides are intended to give reader-friendly, adaptable lesson plans to those who teach less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) to adolescents in the community language setting. To better inform this initiative, the team behind the Teach-a-LCTL project undertook a needs analysis. This report shares the results of that research, while contextualizing the findings within scholarship on the community LCTL education landscape and related topics such as heritage language education.

Introduction

For decades, community language education, which occurs outside of formal K-16 structures,[2] has been an important site of language learning in the US. Community language programs often serve as places for language maintenance among immigrant communities (Fishman & Nahirny, 1964). Many of the languages taught in the community language program context are considered less commonly taught languages (LCTLs),[3] meaning that they are not widely taught in K-16 educational institutions. This means that

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[1] The contents of this report were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

[2] The term "K-16" is used to refer to formal educational structures in the US from kindergarten through undergraduate (primary/elementary school through post-secondary).

[3] There are differing definitions of what constitutes a LCTL. The NLRC generally adopts the definition of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), which describes LCTLs as "all languages other than English and the commonly taught European languages of German, French and Spanish." (NCOLCTL, n.d.).

the community language program often serves as a crucial meeting place where teachers, students, and community members can come together to teach, learn, and use a language.

Heritage Language Learners in Community Language Programs

In the US, community language programs are often intended to provide sites of cultural connections and language maintenance among families who have, in the last few generations, immigrated to the US. This means that many learners in community language programs are considered "heritage language learners" (sometimes referred to as HLLs, in this report, HLs). Because heritage language users are often a significant proportion of learners in community language programs, it is worth considering some characteristics of HLs. Generally speaking, HLs are bi/multilinguals "whose native, heritage language is a minority language" (Montrul & Bowles, 2017, 488). While no single definition of HLs can capture the diversity of language experiences in this group, it is important to acknowledge the unique language learning and language use situations of HLs. For many HLs, their contact with the heritage language is primarily, or even exclusively within the home and family settings, while they use the context-dominant language (in the US, mostly English) in school and other areas of public life (Montrul, 2009). Because of the types of language contact exposure that HLs have, their use of a heritage language often differs from not only speakers of the heritage language in places where it is dominant, but also from learners of the language who study it in formal educational contexts (Montrul, 2009). In language learning settings, including the community language program, HLs' unique experiences with language mean that they bring certain strengths and needs with them into the classroom. For many HLs, it is important that a language learning space allows

them to develop as language users, while also "link[ing] students to their heritage language and their cultural identity" (López, 2010). Community language programs are, in many ways, uniquely situated to provide a place for HLs to practice language use and explore cultural identities, potentially offering HLs a place to escape the linguistic marginalization of the broader community (Creese et al., 2006, cited in Nordstrom, 2022).

Community Language Programs in the US

Heritage language education, in which community language programs play a large part, has existed in the US for hundreds of years, shifting with immigration movements, education, and politics (Fishman, 2001). While some community language programs can grow to function as immersion schools that operate during the week, many focus on delivering after-school or weekend lessons (Fishman & Nahirny, 1964; López, 2010). Given their existence outside of formal educational structures, community language programs can face resource scarcity, lacking consistent access to support such as funding, instructional staff, and teacher training (Liu et al., 2011). Despite these challenges, community language programs are often kept alive by dedicated community members, including parents, who teach, administer, plan events, and more (Liu et al., 2011). In order to understand more about how community language schools operate, their successes, and their needs, we sought to build upon the work of other research (e.g., the ongoing survey by the National Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools, found here: heritagelanguageschools.org/coalition/schoolfeatures) by conducting our own study of community language programs.

The Current Study

In researching community language education, we were particularly interested in findings that would inform the creation of our resource guides for community LCTL educators. Specifically, we wanted to learn more about how the community language programs we surveyed and interviewed handled teacher recruitment and training, curriculum and content development, and work with adolescent learners.

Participants, Instruments, and Methods

Participants for this study were recruited via direct emails from the NLRC and through the newsletter of the National Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools, a "nationwide initiative established to support, guide, and promote the interests of community-based heritage language schools and organizations across the United States." (NCCBHLS, n.d.). After removing duplicate responses and responses that did not meet the eligibility for the study, the research team had a total of 27 responses. Reasons for exclusion included: teaching a language that is not considered a LCTL; teaching a LCTL in a setting other than community language program (e.g., in the formal K-16 education system); teaching what is considered a LCTL in the US, but in a target-language country. Participants were all involved in community language education for one or more LCTLs, with most programs (n=24) located in the US.

This study used a survey and interviews to understand participants' community LCTL education contexts. The basic portion of survey (see Appendix A) consisted of 20 items that prompted respondents to share information about their school, including languages, location, learner and teacher demographics, and course offerings. All participants in this study (n=27) completed the initial portion of the survey. After the basic

portion of the survey, respondents were invited to provide more information about teacher training, the development of curricula and course content, and working with adolescent learners. Some participants (n=6) provided this information by answering 8 additional items in the expanded survey. Others (n=6) participated in semi-structured, online interviews (see Appendix B). Some participants (n=15) chose not to provide information beyond the basic portion of the survey. This report will indicate how many participants responded to a given survey item.

For most survey items in the initial, basic portion of the survey (items 1-20, see Appendix A), descriptive statistics are used to paint a picture of the community LCTL education landscape represented among the respondents. For items in the expanded survey (items 22-29, see Appendix A) and the interviews, the research team undertook a basic coding scheme that first involved pulling out quotes that directly addressed our areas of interest: teacher recruitment and training; curriculum and course content development; working with adolescent learners. We then worked to identify trends and outliers among our participants, summarized below.

Results and Discussion

This study sought to understand both overall and context-specific aspects of community LCTL education. The results described below begin with some general descriptive statistics from respondents regarding some basic features of their schools. Where relevant, some information from more detailed contextualization may be added into these descriptive statistics. As this section proceeds, topics and areas are better addressed by longer survey and interview responses, and the findings become more qualitative and context-specific in nature. Moving from these findings, we conclude by

providing prompts that community language educators and their supporters can use to consider what a program could use to grow.

Community LCTL Education Landscape: Program Demographics

The basic portion of the survey was instrumental in providing an overview of community LCTL programs, exploring features such as language, location, age of program, funding sources, affiliation with larger organizations, course offerings, and proportion of heritage learners. See summary tables 1-9 below for results.

Table 1 Languages (n=27)

Language		Language		Language	
Latvian	4	Arabic	1	Lithuanian	1
Brazilian Portuguese	3	Chinese	1	Portuguese	1
Tibetan	3	Czech	1	Romanian	1
Hungarian	2	Czech, Slovak	1	Telugu	1
Japanese	2	Greek	1	Ukrainian	1
Nepali	2	Hindi	1		

Despite a relatively low number of survey respondents, a variety of languages are represented in the survey. As results show, some schools explicitly focus on a given variety (e.g., Brazilian Portuguese), and some teach multiple, related languages in their schools (e.g., the school that teaches Czech and Slovak).

Table 2 Program locations (n=27)

Location	
US East	9
US West	7
US Midwest	5
US South	3
Online / Global	3

Table 3 Program age (n=27)

Years in Operation	
11-20 Years	13
50-75 Years	5
21-50 Years	5
1-10 Years	4

Responses indicate a heavier concentration of community LCTL programs in the Eastern and Western parts of the US, mirroring the results of recent reports by the National Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools (NCCBHLS, 2022). Respondents also shared the approximate years that their program has been in operation, showing that the vast majority of their programs have been operating for over 10 years, with some programs even having origins that reach back to post-WWII immigration to the US.

Table 4 Sources of funding (n=27)[4]

Type of Funding / Financial Support	
Volunteer labor	22
Tuition	17
Donations (cash)	17
Donations (resources such as books supplies etc.)	15
Additional materials fees	6
Grants	6
Free use of classroom spaces	1

Table 5 Affiliation w. larger organizations (n=27)

Affiliation	
No	19
Yes	8

Community language programs often rely on a variety of financial support to offer courses and cultural events. As responses show, a majority of schools surveyed utilize volunteer labor to offer courses and co-curricular activities. Revenue from tuition and cash donations also help support programs' missions, and many also receive in-kind donations to supply classrooms and school libraries. Responses show that a handful of schools received grant funding, and some respondents added detail that these grants were from a government branch or international organization with a specific mission of supporting that language's education. In a related trend, some schools have connections with a larger

[4] As table 4 reveals, many schools have multiple sources of funding and financial support, meaning that the summed total of the responses exceeds the number of respondents (27).

organization that serves to support the program's mission. These organizations take different forms and offer varying types of support for community language education programs. For example, some schools operate as a sort of "branch" of their US-based parent organizations. Parent organizations can provide resources such as centralized curricula development, regional or nationwide teacher meet-ups, and classroom materials. Another form of organizational support can come from a non-US government. In these cases, a branch of a foreign government, usually a ministry of education, will fund language and culture education efforts abroad, providing materials, funding, and training to teachers of that country's main language throughout the world. The affiliation with a larger organization (or lack thereof) does not just affect funding that a community language program receives, but can also determine aspects of their curriculum, materials, and teacher training.

Table 6 Course offerings by age group (n=27)

Age group[5]	Programs offering group classes	Programs offering group one-on-one tutoring
Ages 3-6	23	3
Ages 7-9	27	4
Ages 10-12	27	3
Ages 13-17	21	3
Ages 18+	5	4

As table 6 shows, most respondents indicated that their program focused its course offerings on children ages 7-12, with courses for very young children and adolescents

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[5] The age ranges for this item (3-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years, 13-17 years, 18+ years) were determined as approximations by the research team, not by respondents. Programs may divide their classes into different age ranges and by other factors.

slightly less widespread. Very few schools offered courses for adults, and most programs

focused on group classes, as opposed to individual tutoring.

Table 7 Course offerings – frequency (n=27)

Frequency of classes

1-2 times per week	23
1-2 times per month	3
Once per year	1

Table 8 Course offerings – duration (n=27)

Class duration

2 hours	10
More than 2 hours	9
1 hour	4
1.5 hours	3
Less than 1 hour	1

Tables 7 and 8 show the frequency and duration of courses, with most schools

offering 2+ hour classes on a weekly basis.

Table 9 Student heritage learners (n=27)

Approx. percentage of heritage learners[6]

70-90%	11
90-100%	8
50-70%	6
Less than 50%	2

Unsurprisingly, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that their

schools tended to draw students who had exposure to the language of instruction in their

homes (see table 9). Especially in community LCTL instruction (as opposed to community

programs that focus on instruction of commonly taught languages), this concentration of

heritage learners reflects both the lack of opportunity to study LCTLs in mainstream school

settings (Gor & Vatz, 2009), and the importance of continued language and cultural

education in immigrant and transnational communities (Eisenchlas et al., 2013; Kresin,

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[6] This survey item did not use the term "heritage learners." The survey item read, "What percentage
(approximately) of your students speak/hear the language of instruction at home?"

2017; Kwon, 2020).

Teachers and Classroom Assistants in Community LCTL Education

Along with some items in the basic portion of the survey, additional survey and interview questions provided a glimpse into issues surrounding teacher training and recruitment. As mentioned above, community language programs often rely on parents to fulfill many roles, including teacher (Liu et al., 2011). Furthermore, depending on the prevalence of the target language in the local community, the pool of eligible teachers may be limited, meaning that recruitment of new teachers is limited. When asked about teacher recruitment, many respondents indicated using word of mouth to reach out within their local language communities, or specifically recruiting among parents and/or program alumni.

Table 10 Instructors – number (n=26)

Number of teachers	
1-5	11
6-10	7
11-15	5
16-20	3

Table 11 Instructors – pedagogy background (n=26)

Teachers w. teacher or language education	
All or almost all	11
Some (about half)	4
Few	8
None	3

Respondents shared information on their teaching staff as well, showing that the majority of schools have ten or fewer teachers. While 58% of participants indicated that their programs have teaching staff with formal training in language teaching or education, but many rely on staff who may have little to no educational training.

When asked to expand on teacher training, survey and interview respondents shared a range of systems that their schools have developed to meet instructors' training needs. In some cases, community language programs recruit teachers who are already

trained as teachers, which reduces some of the program's training burden. In other cases, respondents indicated that, because the teachers are coming from school families, they are already familiar with the school context. As one survey respondent from a Latvian school shared, "New teachers are parents with kids in our program. They are deeply involved in the school / learning process and learn by observation. Teachers also frequently discuss methods / goals / strategies and support each other in close collaboration." Other programs also focus on as-needed teacher support via collaborative problem-solving and materials sharing.

Some programs shared that they had no formal training processes, but that they encouraged teachers to reach out to peers and school leadership for assistance. One interviewee, a parent and teacher in a community LCTL program, described her first months teaching in the program as "shooting from the hip." Even though she was very familiar with the program as a former student and parent, she expressed relief when the school principal "finally" showed her a website with a large repository of teaching materials from a larger language-education organization based in the US. In addition to providing materials, some larger language-specific organizations provide workshops for teachers of that language, which teachers at some of the schools we surveyed use for continued development.

In addition to head teachers, some community LCTL programs make use of classroom assistants. One program administrator shared that, while their teacher assistants do not come in with pedagogical training, "they often play a very important role in the classrooms, and the students often connect more with them." Many of these classroom assistants are younger students who have themselves gone through the same community LCTL education program. While not trained to take the responsibilities of being

a head teacher, assistants can be an asset to community LCTL education, by both continuing to involve young program graduates, and supporting classroom management and instruction in lessons.

Community language program teachers who do not have formal training bring valuable perspectives into the language teaching endeavor, yet their lack of prior training may mean that they face additional hurdles compared to their formally trained counterparts. Developing age-appropriate materials, employing classroom management skills, and constructing sequenced language-learning activities, all important for the language learning classroom, represent a complex set of abilities that take time and training to build.

Curricula and Course Content Development in Community LCTL Education

In expanded survey questions and interviews, some respondents shared their experience with how curricula and course materials are developed for their program.

Curricula

Some participants explicitly indicated having no centralized curriculum. Of these, a few simply stated that the school's mission was to contribute to language vitality among immigrant communities in the US. In such responses, the mission of the school was perceived as a sort of overarching statement about curricula. Another participant whose school had no overarching curriculum discussed drawing significantly on her own experiences learning her heritage language (which she now teaches) through reading with her dad and sister, "a big part of my curriculum is...pushing the reading, reading together, making sure the gist is understood, and then using that as a point to learn vocabulary." In lieu of a provided curriculum, this particular LCTL educator developed an approach based

on personal experiences to focus on reading skills. A further educator who indicated that her school did not have an established curriculum provided valuable context regarding how she and other teaching staff made decisions. Since a main goal of her school was to educate a future generation of scholars among the diaspora community of her language, the school placed a high value on textual literacy, knowledge of home country cultural observances, and proficiency in a high-prestige variety of the language. For the participants with no set curriculum, teachers and administrators used their own experiences and the school's principles to make decisions about what to emphasize and how to teach.

Multiple participants indicated that they used curricula that were provided by education ministries or language and cultural institutes based in countries where their language of instruction is spoken. Yet this approach did not serve all schools' purposes. One interviewee, an educator at a community school for Portuguese, discussed why the school that she was involved in shifted away from a curriculum used by the school system in Portugal, "It's as if the kids are fluent and speak Portuguese at home with their parents and grandparents. That doesn't exist anymore." In addition, this language educator saw an opportunity to make curriculum more representative of different speakers of Portuguese and acknowledge the range of linguistic and cultural heritages that learners brought with them. In this school, the teachers and administrator developed new curricula that were more representative of their learners' actual language experiences, and more representative of different regional varieties of the target language. Another community school administrator discussed receiving guidance from multiple sources, a US-based language and cultural institution, as well as an educational ministry of the country where the language is widely spoken. She described the ministry's diaspora language instruction

guidelines as "way too much...way too detailed and there's no practical use for it." To address this, she and her colleagues started a "project...to mesh them together...to take the best of both." Another instructor discussed receiving curricula directly from his school's parent organization, which he described as very "top down." Yet, even as this organization was centralized, there were mechanisms for providing feedback responsively changing the curriculum.

Survey responses and interviews indicate that teachers want support in the form of curricular frameworks. However, just because curricula are provided, it doesn't mean that they always match the teaching context and learners' needs. As shown in the responses cited above, schools and teachers adapt materials for a variety of reasons: to adjust to learners' language levels; to incorporate more diverse representation of target language communities; and to tailor content to the US-diaspora learning context.

Classroom Materials

Flexibility is also crucial when it comes to classroom materials in community LCTL education. In interviews, teachers and administrators expressed the constant flux that characterized instructional materials. Even when larger organizations provided support in the form of ready-made activities, textbooks, or other print materials, teachers were constantly adjusting to meet the observed needs of their learners. One participant discussed meeting the language-level needs of their students, "[textbooks from abroad] were of course not always corresponding to the same grade level, right?... So, teachers started compiling their own packets of information, and resources, and activities." Other participants described how teachers at their schools adjusted materials to acknowledge the transnational experiences of their students, with one teacher at a Telugu language school saying, "...now what they are trying to do in the academic program...for teens and

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preteens is...trying to include [a] lot of context of the United States...Because most of the kids...are American citizens, though their parents are from India." and another discussing how the curriculum has shifted to incorporate holidays celebrated in the U.S. and local region.

These participants shared how community LCTL education adapts their curricula and their classroom materials to fit the needs of learner populations. Community LCTL educators often welcome curricular guidance and pre-made materials, which can offer orientation in this unique teaching context. Participants' responses indicate that key features of curricula and course content are flexibility and adaptability. Yet, when it comes to developing and adapting curricula and course content, community LCTL educators have varying resources. Schools are equipped with a range of trained personnel and financial support, meaning that some community LCTL educators have the time and expertise to adapt materials, while others find themselves relying more heavily on improvised solutions to curricular needs.

Working with Adolescent Learners in Community LCTL Education

Student Retention

One widespread challenge of working in community LCTL education is retention (Liu et al., 2011), and survey data from the National Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools hints at the problem of adolescent student retention, showing drops in course offerings for students grades 9-12 (NCCBHLS, 2022). As students enter the middle and high school years (often 6th through 12th grade in the U.S., corresponding roughly to ages 11 through 18), a number of factors impact their participation in community-based language learning: languages being offered for credit in middle and/or

high school; increased difficulty and expectations in community language classes; and the intensification of competing interests (e.g., extra-curriculars, work) (Eisenchlas et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2011). Many participants in our research confirmed that they struggled to maintain enrollments among adolescent learners, with 10 of 27 respondents showing some drop in enrollments as learners grew older.[7] In surveys and interviews, respondents shared their challenges and successes in engaging adolescent learners both within the classroom and the larger community.

Classroom Engagement

Participants in our survey and interviews shared the factors and approaches that they see impacting adolescent engagement in the classroom. One community Tibetan educator shared that, when high school-aged students themselves sought out their program and subsequently experienced positive feedback from their family and in online communities, they stayed invested in the program through graduating high school, a rare experience for community language instruction. This same educator also noted lower engagement among students whose parents had pushed them to participate. Community connections proved important for other respondents as well, with multiple interviewees stressing that social connections with friends were a key component of why adolescent learners returned to the school. One administrator of a community language program for Ukrainian language shared that, in recurring conversations with her own teenage daughter about if she will return to the school, the daughter "hesitates, but there is one reason that keeps her going...and that's friendship." Some respondents shared their school's strategies for adapting classroom structures, content, and strategies to meet the needs of

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[7] For this study, participants indicated the approximate number of students for the following age groups: 3-6 years old, 7-9 years old, 10-12 years old, 13-17 years old, and 18+ years old. For the section on adolescent learners, data on adult enrollment (18+ years old) is not being considered.

adolescent learners. In one survey response, an educator in a community Lithuanian program shared that their program had experimented with making finer age divisions so that learners were in more age-concentrated groups and splitting study groups by gender. Another logistical adjustment that one school mentioned was changing the time and modality of the lessons for high school students, "We meet Tuesdays on Zoom, 5:30 to 8:30." For students determined to stay in language instruction, changing from weekend to weeknight offerings proved crucial for this program. Topic and activity selection for teenage learners also proved important, with one survey participant in a community Czech program stating that students in this age range wanted to see "real-life relevance." Finally, a community language educator of Telugu emphasized the need to not simply deliver information to students as a teacher, but to engage them by incorporating their perspectives into the class: "It's not only me teaching them, we try to learn from them also, because...especially during teen and preteen ages, they will have very interesting perspective or opinion. …[W]hen I am open to that, I think...they will also get engaged and learn fast."

Engagement outside of the Classroom

Some schools that struggled with adolescent enrollment found alternative ways to keep students engaged outside of the classroom setting. One survey respondent noted that, for their Brazilian Portuguese language program, students 14 years of age and older can volunteer to work with the younger children in the program. The participant shared that this had been a "very successful program...it has proven to be a great way for the teenagers to remain engaged and connected with their language and culture...all the while earning community service hours." Another participant, an educator in a community Latvian program, shared that clubs specifically oriented to an aspect of culture, such as

dancing, have been a way to keep teenagers integrated in the community in a more "low-key" way. Two respondents at different community Latvian language education programs both mentioned summer camps for young Latvian learners. One Latvian community educator explained, "it definitely helps with that disconnect that kind of occurs for kids at that age," while also acknowledging the role of financial barriers for some families, "not all of them can afford that, realistically." Lower cost, lower-commitment, skill-developing, and community-building forms of involvement seem to be some of the ways that community LCTL programs can endeavor to engage their adolescent learners.

Summary and Practical Implications for Community LCTL Programs and Their Supporters

In our research, we found community LCTL education programs throughout the US, representing a variety of languages. Many tend to focus on language education for young learners, often experiencing a drop in enrollment among learners ages 10 years old and older. With their status as community-based organizations, these programs are reliant upon a range of support types to stay in operation. While welcome, this support can also come with difficulties such as unreliability (fluctuation in resources) or context-inappropriateness (resources actually meant for another learning context). It is common for community LCTL programs to recruit instructors from within the families of their students. Whereas this population often has an in-depth understanding of the school and its mission, it may or may not have expertise in teaching, and providing extensive training is a time and resource-intensive process that not all programs are able to support. Unsurprisingly, we found that well-established programs with more centralized support and larger staff were

best able to provide the pedagogical support that untrained teachers needed. In addition, well-resourced programs were able to both provide and adapt course content that met teachers' needs.

While we know there are no easy, one-size-fits all solutions, we hope that by sharing the experiences of our participants, we can provide community language educators with ideas so that they can consider applicability for their own programs. For those in community LCTL education, and for individuals or entities looking to support community LCTL education, we offer the prompts below, based on our findings, to consider how a language program may stabilize and grow.

Guiding Questions and Considerations	Examples from Participants
Internal and External Sources of Support	
What kind of support do you receive from larger, language-specific umbrella organizations? Does this support meet your needs? Can you get more appropriate support from other sources (other language-specific organizations, US-based or otherwise; language departments in local/ regional institutions of higher education; local cultural or religious organizations)?	One community language school that taught multiple Slavic languages uses a local community cultural organization's space free of charge. Some community language programs (e.g., Latvian and Portuguese) reported receiving grants from (non-U.S.) branches of government that support language education abroad.
What kind of support do you receive from larger, non-language-specific organizations? How can non-language-specific partnerships bolster your program's mission and/or mitigate your program's costs?	When a large office building was purchased and renovated to house non-profits, a community Portuguese school benefitted from these local philanthropic efforts and gained access to centrally located classroom spaces.
Teacher Recruitment and Retention	
Where do your teachers and administrators (board members) come from?	One educator in a community Tibetan school established a long-term professional relationship with a teacher in Tibet. This

Which communities do you have access to for teacher recruitment? Could an expansion into local, regional, or global communities help your teacher recruitment?	teacher helps recruit more instructional staff for the school (which operates heavily online). While many schools recruit from among their students' parents, educators in Lithuanian, Portuguese, and Ukrainian programs mentioned heavy recruitment in local communities, via word of mouth and social media.
How are your teachers trained? Do they have any educational training or experience before coming to the program? What kind of program-specific training do they need? How do these needs change?	One Czech language school reported recruiting teachers from a pool of trained teachers in the Czech Republic, meaning that their teachers were already educated for many aspects of their work in the classroom. An educator in a Latvian language program mentioned pairing new teachers with more experienced mentor teachers to support them in the new role. Multiple programs, including for Telugu and Ukrainian language, reported offering regular training sessions before and throughout each school year. Having multiple training sessions meant that these programs were able to adjust training to meet instructors' needs as they evolved throughout the school year.
Beyond training, how does your program support its teachers?	An educator in a community Telugu program shared that his program's parent-organization organizes a bi-annual regional meet-up so that teachers can talk about issues specific to their region. Educators in multiple programs, including Portuguese and Ukrainian, shared that their teachers were paid to participate in training, meaning that their contributions were recognized and compensated.

Retaining and Working with Adolescent Learners	
How does your program retain learners as they go into the middle school and high school years?	A community language school for Portuguese maintained a small but dedicated enrollment among high-school-aged students by offering courses online and during the week. The flexible time and modality proved crucial in students' decisions to continue language study.
How does your program meet the needs of the pre-adolescent and adolescent learners that continue in the program?	For one Lithuanian school, adjusting class groupings and offering practical projects were key to keeping adolescent learners engaged in class.
What are ways to engage learners who age out of your program's course offerings?	At a Latvian school, cultural clubs around music and dance proved more effective at keeping adolescent learners involved with the school in some form, because they were specific interests and lower commitment.

Acknowledgments

Contact

This report is published by the National LCTL Resource Center (NLRC), based at Michigan State University. You can contact the NLRC via:

- Web: https://nlrc.msu.edu/contact/

- Email: nlrc@msu.edu

- X (Twitter): https://twitter.com/nlctlrc

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NationalLCTLResourceCenter/

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey Items

1. What is your language program (the school or organization) called?

   _____

2. Where is it located?

   _____

3. When was it established?

   _____

4. What language(s) are taught in your program? Please select all that apply.
   o Arabic
   o Brazilian Portuguese
   o Burmese
   o Chinese
   o Czech
   o Finnish
   o Greek
   o Hebrew
   o Hindi
   o Hungarian
   o Italian
   o Japanese
   o Korean
   o Latin
   o Latvian
   o Lithuanian
   o Nepali
   o Norwegian
   o Passamaquoddy
   o Persian/Farsi/Dari
   o Polish
   o Portuguese
   o Punjabi
   o Romanian
   o Russian
   o Serbian
   o Slovak
   o Swedish
   o Tamil
   o Telugu
   o Thai

- o Turkish
- o Ukrainian
- o Urdu
- o Vietnamese
- o Other _____

5. Is this language / are these languages spoken widely in the local/regional community? (If you selected more than one language above, please clarify which languages you refer to in your answer below.)

_____

6. Is your program affiliated with a national/international organization?
   - o No
   - o Yes (please list name/website) _____

7. Where are lessons/classes held?
   - o In the home
   - o In a church/temple/other religious facility
   - o In a library
   - o In a community center
   - o In an educational building (e.g. school/university/community college)
   - o Other _____

8. What sources of funding and support does your program receive? Select all that apply.
   - o Tuition
   - o Additional materials fees
   - o Donations (cash)
   - o Donations (resources such as books, supplies, etc.)
   - o Volunteer labor
   - o Other _____

9. How does your program offer classes? Please select all that apply.
   - o In-person
   - o Online
   - o Hybrid (mix of in-person & online instruction)
   - o Other _____

10. Please use the space below to add any additional information or comments about the background of your program.

_____

11. Which age groups does your program offer classes/programming for? Please select all that apply.

	Group Classes	One-on-One Tutoring
Kids 3-6 years old		
Kids 7-9 years old		
Kids 10-12 years old		
Teens 13-17 years old		
Adults (18+)		

12. How often do classes take place?
   o 1-2 times per month
   o 1-2 times per week
   o On-demand
   o Other _____

13. How long do your classes last?
   o 4-6 weeks
   o 1 semester (about 14 weeks)
   o 1 academic year (often September through May in the US)
   o 1 calendar year
   o Other _____

14. What is the duration of classes?
   o Less than 1 hour
   o 1 hour
   o 1.5 hours
   o 2 hours
   o More than 2 hours
   o Other _____

15. How would you describe the typical age breakdown of your students? Select approximately how many learners there are in the age brackets listed below.
   o Kids 3-6 years old
       o Less than 10 students
       o 10-20 students
       o 20-30 students
       o 30-40 students
       o 40-50 students
       o More than 50 students
   o Kids 7-9 years old
       o Less than 10 students
       o 10-20 students
       o 20-30 students
       o 30-40 students

- o 40-50 students
- o More than 50 students
- o Kids 10-12 years old
    - o Less than 10 students
    - o 10-20 students
    - o 20-30 students
    - o 30-40 students
    - o 40-50 students
    - o More than 50 students
- o Teens 13-17 years old
    - o Less than 10 students
    - o 10-20 students
    - o 20-30 students
    - o 30-40 students
    - o 40-50 students
    - o More than 50 students
- o Adults (18+)
    - o Less than 10 students
    - o 10-20 students
    - o 20-30 students
    - o 30-40 students
    - o 40-50 students
    - o More than 50 students

16. What percentage (approximately) of your students speak/hear the language of instruction at home?
    - o 90-100%
    - o 70-90%
    - o 50-70%
    - o Less than 50%
    - o Less than 25%
    - o Not sure

17. Please use the space below to add any additional information or comments about learners in your program.

    _____

In this section, we'd like to learn about the teachers, curriculum, and content in your program.

18. Approximately how many main teachers (not including assistants) work in your program?
    - o 1-5
    - o 6-10
    - o 11-15

- 16-20
- More than 20

19. Do you know how your program recruits teachers? If so, please explain briefly below.

_____

20. Approximately how many of the teachers in your program have a degree in language education or teacher education?
- All or almost all
- Some (about half)
- Few
- None
- Not sure

21. We have some additional questions about teachers, curriculum, and content which we would like to discuss with you in an interview: How does your program train teachers? What are your program's biggest challenges in training its teachers? What can you tell us about curriculum development/designing course content in your program? What is your program's biggest challenge in curriculum/course content development?   What can you tell us about your program's experience with engaging pre-teen and teen learners? Would you be willing to meet with someone from our research team to discuss these questions?
- Yes, I am willing to meet and discuss these questions in an interview.
- No, I would prefer to answer these questions by continuing this survey.

22. How does your program train teachers? (For example, if someone wants to teach in your program, how does the program get people ready to teach? How long does the training take? When does it occur?)

_____

23. What are your program's biggest challenges in training its teachers?

_____

24. What can you tell us about curriculum development/designing course content in your program? (For example, who is involved? How do they decide what is part of the curriculum/course content?)

_____

25. What is your program's biggest challenge in curriculum/course content development?

_____

26. We are working on a resource guide for community instructors who teach pre-teens and teenagers. What are your ideas about engaging learners in these age groups? What has

worked well for you or your colleagues in the past? What topics do you / do your colleagues talk about with pre-teen and teen learners?

_____

27. Please use the space below to add any additional information or comments about teachers, curriculum, and content in your program.

_____

28. If you know anyone else who might have insight on your program, who you think we should reach out to, please list their name and contact information below.

_____

29. Are there any final comments you would like to share?

_____

Appendix B – Sample Interview Protocol

Recap of Role in Community LCTL Education Program
- Which community LCTL education programs are you associated with/have you been associated with?
- What is/was your role in that program?

Teacher Training
What do you know about teacher training in your program? For example:
- How are teachers trained?
- How long and when does this take place?
- Do you know anything about how teacher training has changed in your program?
- What are your program's biggest challenges in training its teachers?

Curriculum and Course Content
Does your program have an overarching curriculum? Or does each class have its own curriculum?
If yes to either or both options above:
What can you say about how these curricula are made? For example:
- Who is involved in making curricula?
- How do those people decide what is part of curricula?
- Do you know anything about how curricula have historically been developed in your program (e.g., have there been big changes in this area)?
- What is your program's biggest challenge in curriculum development?

If no/I don't know to the question of curricula:
What can you say about how course content is designed? For example:
- Who is involved in making course content?
- How do those people decide what should be in course content?
- Do you know anything about how course content has historically been developed in your program (e.g., have there been big changes in this area)?
- What is your program's biggest challenge in developing course content?

Working with Adolescent Learners
What is your experience or your program's experience with pre-teen or teen learners (10-17 years of age)? For example:
- What are your ideas about engaging learners in these age groups?
- What has worked well for you, your colleagues, or educators from your program in the past?
- Are there any challenges with engaging this group of learners?
- Are there any topics that you suggest *not* including in this age group?
- What topics do you / do your colleagues talk about with pre-teen and teen learners?