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# Creating Social Justice Instructional Templates: Frameworks, Process, and Lessons Learned

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Although social justice and related critical pedagogies are rapidly growing areas of interest in language education, instructional materials for use across languages and levels and published as free and adaptable Open Educational Resources (OERs) are lacking. The purpose of this article is to describe the frameworks, process, and lessons learned related to the creation of three instructional planning templates that support social justice in language education and scaffold implementation of multiliteracies and social justice pedagogies. After defining social justice, the article summarizes the frameworks that inform the instructional templates, describes the process of creating, piloting, and revising the templates, and identifies the affordances and constraints discovered through this process.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social justice is a growing area of interest in language education and beyond. A Google search of the phrase “social justice language education” yields more than 6.34 million results, including scholarly publications, conferences, workshops, teaching resources, blog posts, and videos.

This growth has been spurred by several factors, paramount among them the national reckoning that resulted from the intersecting pandemics of 2020: racism and COVID-19. Indeed, 2020 was a pivotal year during which the transition to distance learning in March highlighted significant inequities in educational access, and the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer in May brought racial disparities to the forefront of our national consciousness. At the same time, language education has seen increased interest in critical pedagogies that develop learners' proficiency, empower them to question how language and culture embody, maintain, or challenge structural inequities and biases, and provide a structure for meaningfully integrating social and cultural issues into the language classroom.

Despite the increased focus on social justice and critical pedagogies in language education, there remains an important need for professional development and instructional materials. To fill these needs, resources should support teachers' use of critical approaches, be available in multiple languages and usable across levels, and be published as free and adaptable Open Educational Resources (OERs) (e.g., Randolph & Johnson, 2017; Wassell et al., 2019). Such resources increase teachers' equitable access to social justice materials and promote their agency as they use and modify materials to fit their needs. Although some social justice-oriented OER materials have appeared in recent years, they are often limited to one-off lesson examples, focused on a small range of social justice topics, available in few languages other than French, German, and Spanish, and specific to K-12 education (e.g., ACTFL, n.d.; Peñas & Quevedo-Webb, 2021; Spanish for Social Justice Teacher Network, 2022; Volkmer, 2018). Indeed, to date there is no one-stop repository of social justice materials for teachers across languages and levels. Moreover, commercially available language textbooks have not kept pace with current trends to integrate social justice and critical pedagogies: They often "provide a superficial understanding of the target cultures, [and] they also tend toward elitist, cisgender, heteronormative and other narrow, problematic views of language and culture that raise questions about access and equity" (Wassell & Glynn, 2022, p. 7).

Complicating the need for more social justice resources are the challenges educators face in enacting critical pedagogies, partly because these "approaches to the teaching of foreign languages remain uncommon, and are very much 'foreign territory' for most foreign language educators" (Reagan, 2016, p. 173). For example, due to various constraints, instructors may feel beholden to their textbook, making it difficult to question, adapt, or supplement often biased course materials, to incorporate social justice content, and to implement activities reflective of critical approaches (Reagan, 2016; Reagan & Osborn, 2021). Moreover, enacting critical approaches entails attending to students' linguistic development and cultural understanding, as well as their ability to reflect critically about language and culture and their role in society. Language educators must thus be adept at targeting multiple learning objectives—linguistic, cultural, critical—simultaneously and planning strategically, yet "targeting these multiple objectives at once simply cannot be done in traditional planning; it requires the use of planning protocols that make room for such vision and practice" (Reagan, 2016, p. 179).

In response to these challenges, the authoring team (henceforth "the team") developed the Social Justice in Language Education (SJLE) initiative, funded by a three-year International Research and Studies Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Projects funded through this grant program must strengthen instruction and curriculum development in U.S. language programs, respond to the national need for individuals with expertise and competence in world languages, contribute to a globally competent workforce, expand access to language learning through OERs, and support teaching of critical world languages and issues (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). To meet these aims, the goals of the SJLE initiative are to:

(1) develop students' oral and written language proficiency and prepare them to communicate in personal, academic, and professional contexts; (2) encourage complex intercultural understanding of social justice topics and how they are addressed through languages and across cultures; and (3) foster the career competencies of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, ethical reasoning and decision making, and engagement with diversity (CARLA, 2022). These goals are realized through creation of a suite of professional development materials including instructional planning templates, intermediate-level curricular units in nine languages (Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish), a searchable database of target language texts addressing social justice topics, and a social justice bibliography. All materials are being published as OERs on the website of the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota, thereby creating a one-stop repository of social justice resources.

The purpose of this article is to describe the frameworks, process, and lessons learned related to the creation of one component of the SJLE initiative: instructional planning templates. In so doing, we hope to empower language teachers, program directors, and curriculum developers to teach for social justice, author and share social justice-oriented materials, and ground their work in critical pedagogies. To provide context, we first define social justice and then acknowledge our positionality in relation to the project. Next, we explain the frameworks that inform the instructional templates, describe the process of creating, piloting, and revising the templates, and identify the affordances and constraints discovered through this process. We conclude by outlining future directions for the SJLE initiative.

## DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE

The work of several scholars informs our definition of social justice. According to Nieto (2010), *social justice* is “a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity” (p. 46). Enacted in language education, social justice involves “promoting positive cross-national and cross-cultural understanding” (Osborn, 2006, p. 17) and enabling “participants (students, teachers, and other stakeholders) [to] come to greater understanding of or [to] make progress towards equity in society” (Randolph & Johnson, 2017, p. 101). Together these definitions capture the importance of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in social justice education, and of the critical examination of issues of power and privilege. Drawing on the work of Glynn et al. (2018) and Reagan and Osborn (2021), we furthermore understand social justice to include not only topics of race, but also religion, disability, gender and sexuality, socio-economic status, immigration, the environment, politics, and the like.

We approach this work as white, cisgendered, heterosexual, middle-class, formally educated women living in the United States and working at a land grant university located on Dakota land. We also work—and some of us reside—in the city where the murder of George Floyd and associated uprising in 2020 set off a global conversation about race, racism, and police brutality. We all teach and speak languages of European colonizers; in addition to sharing English as a first language, Kate and Lauren teach French, Mandy teaches Spanish, and Helena teaches German. These aspects of our identities influence how we think about language education, how we approach social justice work, and how we craft instructional materials. Our positionality and privilege come with a set of built-in affordances and constraints: On the one hand, we work at a well-resourced university that provides, among other things, support to obtain grant funding and carry out research; on the other hand, we have not experienced the

oppression and marginalization of the communities we teach about and, because of our privilege, we have directly and indirectly contributed to and benefitted from systemic inequities in language education. We furthermore recognize that our social justice work is ongoing, that we still have much to learn, and that we will experience successes and failures along the way.

## PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR FRAMEWORKS

The instructional templates created for the SJLE initiative were informed by four frameworks: multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; New London Group, 1996), components of social justice education (Hackman, 2005), Social Justice Standards (Learning for Justice, 2021), and career readiness (College of Liberal Arts, 2020). Whereas the latter two frameworks define learning objectives and competencies relevant to students' participation in social, civic, and workplace lives, multiliteracies pedagogy and Hackman's components of social justice education are critical pedagogies.<sup>1</sup> *Critical pedagogies* have played an increasingly important role in language education beyond English as a second/foreign language since the end of the 20th century. Although many definitions of critical pedagogies exist, most prioritize the questioning of knowledge, justice, power, and equity to empower individuals and transform social structures (e.g., McLaren, 2003; Wink, 2000). According to Shor (1992), critical pedagogies involve

habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (p. 129)

Applied to language education, critical pedagogies further entail prioritizing “language development for the purposes of engaging with target language cultures and recognizing students’ multilingual and multicultural identities” (Paesani & Menke, in press) and problematizing “dominant assumptions about language, culture, language users, and social issues” (Kubota, 2016, p. 193). As a result, teachers and students become more aware of social injustices across cultures, question the role of language and language use in maintaining and reproducing power relations, and rethink the purpose and content of language instruction (Reagan, 2016; Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Critical pedagogies can thus be a pathway to language acquisition, critical language awareness, analysis of cultural content, and intercultural understanding, empathy, and action.

### Multiliteracies Pedagogy

The first critical approach informing the instructional templates is multiliteracies pedagogy. Developed in response to a rapidly changing world and observed educational inequities, multiliteracies pedagogy aims to prepare students for full and equitable participation in personal, academic, and workplace life, and to negotiate continuously evolving societies. While developing the framework, its creators asked:

How do we transform incrementally the achievable and apt outcomes of schooling?... We cannot remake the world through schooling, but we can instantiate a vision through pedagogy that creates in microcosm a transformed set of relationships and

possibilities for social futures, a vision that is lived in schools. This might involve activities such as...reclaiming the public space of school citizenship for diverse communities and discourses; and creating communities of learners that are diverse and respectful of the autonomy of lifeworlds. (New London Group, 1996, pp. 72-73)

Key to achieving these goals is students' critical engagement with target language texts of various genres and modalities, which entails the ability to interpret and create texts, identify and explain form-meaning connections expressed in texts, and analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives represented in texts. As part of this process, students also question knowledge and how it is constructed and shared. This critical pedagogy thus goes beyond the use of texts solely for language practice or the surface-level treatment of culture found in many commercially available textbooks. Instead, multiliteracies pedagogy encourages learners to explore meaning-making systems including but not limited to language, to "critically interrogate the interests of participants in the communication process" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 4), and to analyze the complex linguistic and cultural diversity of texts and the societies they represent. This approach thus simultaneously advances social justice through the exploration of discourse in social activity while attending to students' language proficiency development.

Four activity types, or knowledge processes, comprise multiliteracies pedagogy and guide instructional planning: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying. *Experiencing* activities help students build knowledge by reflecting on what they already know and immersing themselves in new information. These activities develop students' literal understanding of target language texts and encourage them to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings about that understanding. In *conceptualizing* activities, students zoom in on the language, organizational, and genre features of texts to better understand how they work in context to express meaning. Through these activities, students build explicit knowledge of the tools needed to understand, replicate, or subvert the discourses used in various social contexts across diverse target language communities. *Analyzing* activities encourage students to question the meaning, importance, and consequences of what they learn through target language texts. They do so by exploring the bigger picture of textual meaning and critically interrogating its relationship to history, culture, ideologies, identities, and values. Finally, in *applying* activities students enact what they have learned by producing language and relaying cultural knowledge in new and creative ways. Taken together, the four knowledge processes enable learners to critically consider how language is used to reflect, uphold, and disrupt systems of power (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; New London Group, 1996).

## Social Justice Approaches

Social justice approaches aim to challenge, confront, and disrupt misconceptions, untruths and stereotypes that lead to structural inequalities; draw on students' unique talents and strengths; provide all students with the resources needed to maximize their learning; and prompt critical thinking and agency for social change (Nieto, 2010). To realize these goals in alignment with the definition of social justice presented earlier, two additional frameworks inform the instructional templates: Hackman's (2005) components of social justice education and Learning for Justice's (2021) Social Justice Standards.

Based on her synthesis of critical pedagogies that center social justice, Hackman (2005) proposed an approach to social justice education that includes five components: content mastery,

critical thinking and analysis, action and social change, personal reflection, and multicultural group dynamics. *Content mastery* provides learners with the opportunity to gather factual information, consider historical context, and understand micro-level (i.e., self, local) and macro-level (i.e., others, societal) implications of information learned. Content mastery thus provides a conceptual base for the other components of social justice education. To go beyond content mastery, *critical thinking and analysis* encourages students to use factual information to question systems of power and inequity and the beneficiaries of those systems. This component of social justice education requires focusing on multiple non-dominant perspectives, decentering students' frame of reference, analyzing the effects of systems of power and inequity, and considering alternatives to these systems. *Action and social change* helps students consider possibilities for changing the systems of oppression that come to the fore through content mastery and critical thinking and analysis activities. This component of social justice education thus empowers students to challenge the status quo and feel hopeful for the future, rather than to fall into despair through inaction. *Personal reflection* allows teachers and students to think critically about themselves and the impact of their thoughts, words, and actions. This component of social justice education is particularly important for individuals from dominant cultures, who often do not recognize their privilege or see it as the societal norm (McIntosh, 1988). Members of non-dominant cultures can use personal reflection to examine how systems of oppression have impacted their lives and identities. These four components of social justice education are only effective when teachers attend to the *multicultural group dynamics* of language classrooms. Awareness of these dynamics, and of students' socially constructed identities, informs how a teacher designs and implements activities focused on content mastery, critical thinking and analysis, action and social change, and personal reflection.

The Social Justice Standards (Learning for Justice, 2021) provide a second framework for centering social justice in language teaching materials and student learning outcomes. These standards span four domains: (1) *identity standards* consider students' and others' identities in relation to society; (2) *diversity standards* engage students with diverse peoples and perspectives in respectful, empathetic, and non-dominant ways; (3) *justice standards* foreground power, privilege, and systems, and their impact on individuals and societies; and (4) *action standards* encourage empathy, action, and principled decision-making related to bias and injustice. Although there is conceptual overlap between these standards and the components of social justice education, the former defines the "what" of social justice education by articulating learning outcomes across four domains, whereas the latter defines the "how" by providing a pedagogical framework for realizing those goals through instruction.

## Career Readiness

As postsecondary institutions seek to prepare students to enter the workplace, career readiness has emerged as a key educational outcome (Simonsen, 2022). The career readiness framework employed in this project was developed by the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota (2020). It defines ten career competencies that can be integrated into liberal arts courses and that are applicable to students' personal, academic, and workplace lives. The team selected four of these competencies to inform the creation of the instructional templates due to their alignment with principles of critical pedagogy and social justice: (1) *critical thinking* develops students' ability to explore issues, ideas, evidence, and values before accepting or formulating an opinion; (2) *applied problem solving* equips students with skills to design, evaluate, and implement a strategy to achieve a goal; (3) *ethical reasoning and decision making* helps students reflect on ethical and societal concerns around an issue and

choose a course of action based on that reflection; and (4) *engagement with diversity* cultivates students' awareness of their identities and those of others through exploration of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, age, religion, and the like. Ultimately, for reasons that came to light during piloting, which we discuss below, career readiness was eliminated from the list of frameworks informing the SJLE initiative.

## **PROCESS: TEMPLATE CREATION, FEEDBACK, AND REVISION**

The three instructional templates (unit overview, lesson plan, action-oriented summative assessment) created for the SJLE initiative provide scaffolded support to help language teachers apply multiliteracies pedagogy, social justice approaches, and career readiness to the teaching of social justice themes. In the process of creating these templates, the team wished to both provide adequate structure for instructional planning and ensure effective use of the frameworks undergirding the project. To meet these goals, we iteratively discussed the following questions during our process:

- How do we effectively connect all four frameworks in the templates?
- How do we ensure that users understand key concepts from these frameworks?
- How do we incorporate backward design planning principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) into the templates?
- How can the templates be sufficiently flexible and usable by all teachers, regardless of instructional context and student learning needs, and also provide a conceptual structure that reflects the tenets of all four frameworks?
- What types of content (textual, linguistic, cultural, etc.) should be incorporated into units, lessons, and assessments?
- What assessment structures facilitate meeting multiliteracies, social justice, and career readiness goals?
- What curricular and instructional sequencing is most logical?
- How detailed should individual lessons and activities be so that they are accessible to a general audience?
- How do we provide users with opportunities to reflect on the materials created?

To address these questions, we followed a five-stage process to create the instructional planning templates: (1) align project frameworks; (2) adapt existing templates; (3) gather feedback and revise; (4) design and pilot curricular units; and (5) revise and finalize.<sup>2</sup>

### **Align Project Frameworks**

The work of aligning project frameworks began with self-education. Although the team was already well-versed in multiliteracies pedagogy and career readiness, we were less knowledgeable about social justice approaches. Individually, we learned about social justice and its application to language education through workshops, scholarly readings, and professional learning communities, and we continue this learning today. As a group, we attended a day-long workshop on social justice pedagogy for the project's curriculum developers, led by the grant consultants in December 2020.<sup>3</sup> The team also held two "book club" sessions in January and February 2021: In the first, we read and discussed three chapters from *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages Through the Lens of Social Justice* (Glynn et



al., 2018); in the second we read and discussed Hackman’s (2005) five components of social justice education and the Learning for Justice (2021) standards.

Based on this self-education, we explored intersections among the project’s pedagogical and curricular frameworks—multiliteracies pedagogy, components of social justice education, the Social Justice Standards, and career readiness—with the goal of developing a crosswalk to illustrate points of alignment among all four. This crosswalk served as a conceptual tool and a record of our thinking. We began the work of identifying intersections individually before creating a combined crosswalk that reflected our collective ideas and used the four knowledge processes of multiliteracies pedagogy (experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, applying) as a point of departure. For instance, in language education the knowledge process of conceptualizing involves identifying how language forms (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, sounds) and conventions (e.g., organization, formatting, spatial arrangement) contribute to textual meaning, and developing a metalanguage for understanding these form-meaning connections. We determined that conceptualizing aligns with the critical thinking and analysis component of Hackman’s (2005) social justice model because it can help learners understand how language and text features reflect different perspectives and can contribute to oppression and marginalization. We further saw overlap between conceptualizing and two Social Justice Standards—one each from the identity and diversity domains—that focus on knowledge of language, the role language plays in group membership, and the use of language to respectfully describe similarities and differences across individuals. Conceptualizing also aligns with the career readiness competencies of engagement with diversity and ethical reasoning and decision making as students develop frameworks to understand how culture intersects with worldviews, how systems contribute to marginalization, and how ethical principles impact situations and individuals. Table 1 illustrates the result of this thinking process and one portion of the crosswalk we developed.

Table 1. *Conceptualizing Crosswalk*

<b>Multiliteracies Pedagogy</b>	<b>Social Justice Education</b>	<b>Social Justice Standards</b>	<b>Career Readiness</b>
Conceptualizing	Critical Thinking and Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How language, conventions, and texts reflect perspectives, contribute to oppression and marginalization</li> </ul>	Identity 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and describe their membership in multiple identity groups</li> </ul> Diversity 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop language and knowledge to accurately and</li> </ul>	Engagement with Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how culture affects perceptions, attitudes, values, behaviors</li> <li>Recognize how social structures and systems create and perpetuate inequities</li> </ul> Ethical Reasoning & Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess personal</li> </ul>

		respectfully describe how people are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups	and moral values and those of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider intentions, consequences of actions, and ethical principles that apply in the situation before making decisions</li> </ul>
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We repeated this process for each of the four knowledge processes of multiliteracies pedagogy to arrive at a final crosswalk. By engaging in this work, we were able to succinctly connect multiliteracies and social justice pedagogies and narrow our focus to those Social Justice Standards and career readiness competencies that most closely align with the goals of language teaching and learning. The crosswalk thus allowed us to see synergies across frameworks and goals, which we could then articulate in the instructional planning templates.

### Adapt Existing Curricular, Lesson Plan, and Assessment Templates

The second stage in developing the instructional planning templates was to review existing curricular, lesson plan, and assessment materials, including multiliteracies lesson plans and templates from Paesani et al. (2016); social justice curricular, lesson plan, and assessment materials from Glynn et al. (2018); assessment materials from CARLA’s Virtual Assessment Center (CARLA, 2021); and scholarship on Integrated Performance Assessments (Adair-Hauck et al., 2013). Analysis of these materials allowed us to respond to several of the questions posed earlier, particularly in relation to backward design planning, assessment structures, instructional sequencing, and level of detail. For instance, the lesson plan templates we reviewed each had a series of instructional stages for engaging students with target language texts and social justice content. There were also different templates depending on the communicative mode being developed (e.g., presentational writing, interpretive reading). We thus discussed at length the number and type of instructional stages needed and whether to create one or multiple templates. To decide, we created a second crosswalk of lesson plan stages used in existing templates, again looking for areas of overlap and difference. The result was one lesson plan template composed of seven stages to be used across communicative modes: (1) preparing to interact with texts; (2) building global comprehension; (3) understanding meaningful details; (4) making form-meaning connections; (5) analyzing and contextualizing textual meaning; (6) applying knowledge; and (7) summarizing and reflecting. Finally, we described the purpose of each stage and suggested multiliteracies knowledge processes and social justice components that enable the stage’s purpose to be realized. These were identified using the pedagogical framework crosswalk described in the previous section and exemplified in Table 1. Table 2 describes Stage 4 of the lesson plan template, including its purpose and pedagogical focus (see a description of all lesson stages at <https://carla.umn.edu/socialjustice/templates.html>).

Table 2. *Lesson Plan Template: Stage 4*

Stage	Purpose	Pedagogical Focus
4	Making form-meaning connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and understand how a text is constructed and expresses meaning</li> <li>• Focus on grammar, vocabulary, genre conventions, organizational features</li> <li>• Hypothesize about language use in a text</li> </ul>	Suggested Knowledge Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptualizing</li> <li>• Analyzing</li> </ul> Suggested Social Justice Education Components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking and analysis</li> </ul>

The analysis of existing materials also helped us identify key information to include in the unit overview, lesson plan, and assessment templates, such as instructional context, essential questions, learning objectives, textual, cultural, and linguistic content, assessment details, activity descriptions, and classroom implementation structures. Based on this work, we drafted three templates that incorporated the pedagogical and curricular frameworks described above: a unit overview template, a lesson plan template, and a summative assessment template.

An ongoing challenge in the creation of these templates was providing sufficient flexibility for users while also supporting their application of the conceptual frameworks without being top-down or prescriptive in nature. We recognized the need to create templates that would be easily adaptable to different instructional levels, contexts, teachers, and learners, but struggled with providing enough scaffolding for working with multiple conceptually dense critical approaches. Knowing, for example, that some instructors struggle to design multiliteracies instructional materials that incorporate the full range of knowledge processes (Menke & Paesani, 2019), we wanted to ensure that the templates encouraged appropriate application of each framework. To balance these dual demands, we created a reflection checklist as a final step in unit, lesson, and assessment planning. The checklists help users determine whether the materials they have created adequately incorporate multiliteracies and social justice principles, meet learning objectives, and scaffold instructional activities. For instance, the lesson plan template asks users to determine whether the following components are present in their lesson and to make any necessary adjustments:

- The lesson actively acknowledges and cultivates the multicultural group dynamics (Hackman, 2005) of the intended classroom context: It considers students' and teacher's identities and perspectives, how they interact, and how they impact instruction.
- The multiliteracies knowledge processes of experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) are present in the lesson, as appropriate for stated learning objectives.
- The components of social justice education—content mastery, personal reflection, critical analysis, action and social change (Hackman, 2005)—are present in the lesson, as appropriate for stated social justice standards.
- Instructional activities and assessments help students meet lesson learning objectives and social justice standards.
- Instructional activities are scaffolded in a way that leads to critical engagement with social justice themes.

- Lesson assessments are well integrated with instructional activities and coherently incorporate multiliteracies pedagogy and components of social justice education.
- The lesson is well aligned with the overall unit plan, including its essential questions, learning objectives, social justice standards, content, and assessment plan.

### Gather Feedback and Revise

Once the templates were drafted, they were shared with the SJLE initiative consultants, who provided feedback on their clarity, ease of use, and integration of the pedagogical and curricular frameworks, particularly social justice approaches. The comments we received focused on strengthening ease of use and fidelity to the five components of social justice education. In response, the team revised the templates to achieve greater consistency in terminology used across the three templates, a more coherent description of the unit's content, a stronger focus on learners' multicultural identities, and a more robust set of reflection questions. For example, the original version of the unit overview template included a section called Learning Context, in which users indicate the target language taught, instructional level, targeted language forms, targeted cultural and social justice themes, and unit duration. The consultants made two suggestions that prompted us to revise this section of the template. First, they suggested that language forms and cultural and social justice themes are more closely tied to the target language texts of the lesson and would be more appropriate to include with a list of the unit's content. Second, the consultants encouraged us to more deliberately integrate prompts that would lead users to consider the multicultural group dynamics (Hackman, 2005) of their classrooms while planning. Based on these suggestions, we revised the Learning Context section of the template to include the following categories: language, level, student population, relevant student knowledge base, and unit duration. In addition, we created a new section of the template called Unit Content where users include a list of the target language texts, language forms (grammar, vocabulary, conventions), and social justice and cultural themes comprising the unit. Finally, we added an item to the reflective checklist in the unit and lesson templates that encourages users to consider whether and how the materials developed consider students' and teacher's identities and perspectives and the impact of these identities and perspectives on instruction (see full template at <https://carla.umn.edu/socialjustice/templates.html>).

### Design and Pilot Curricular Units

The next stage in creating the social justice instructional templates was to use them to draft and pilot curricular units. Although the templates were designed to support creation of social justice curricular units, lesson plans, and assessments across levels and languages, in the SJLE initiative they have been used to design materials for the specific context of intermediate-level postsecondary language courses in nine languages. In summer 2021, five curriculum developers—one in French, two in German, and two in Spanish—used the unit overview, lesson plan, and assessment templates to create curricular units for the project. The themes of these units are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. *Summary of Curricular Unit Themes*

Unit Title	Social Justice Themes	Language
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Proud to be Franco-Louisianian!	Dominant vs. minoritized languages Linguistic oppression Role of language in personal identity and expression Importance and promotion of linguistic security	French
Green Cities	Impact of environment and climate change on living conditions Benefits of green spaces in urban environments Disparity between neighborhoods and access to infrastructure for healthy living Sustainable and justice-oriented re-development of cities	German
Framing the Discussion around Migration to Germany: Enriching or Threatening?	Migration history in relation to diversity Use of framing in media and its negative consequences Bias in various news sources	German
Artistic Expressions of Individual and Cultural Identity	Dominant vs. marginalized identities Individual vs. collective identities Legacies of historical injustices in Latin America Art as a means of raising awareness and subverting injustices	Spanish
Stereotypes, Representation, and Marginalized Groups	Stereotypes and marginalization in the Spanish-speaking world Institutional and structural discrimination Cultural appropriation Activism	Spanish

Two activities-oriented curriculum developers to the templates prior to creating the curricular units in Table 3. The first was an anonymous questionnaire asking them to review the three templates and indicate what was most and least clear about each one. This initial feedback is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. *Instructional Planning Templates: Initial Feedback from Curriculum Developers*

Template	Most Clear	Least Clear
Unit Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning context</li> <li>• Checkboxes</li> <li>• Integration of multiple frameworks</li> <li>• Progression from big picture to details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping frameworks clear and manageable for all</li> <li>• Defining target audience for national dissemination</li> <li>• Level of detail required</li> <li>• Integrating multiliteracies principles into learning outcomes</li> <li>• Number of boxes to</li> </ul>

		check for each category <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining multicultural group dynamics</li> </ul>
Lesson Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checkboxes</li> <li>Purpose and sequence of steps</li> <li>Reference to frameworks</li> <li>Analysis of target language texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning to this level of detail</li> <li>Assessments portion</li> </ul>
Summative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization and flow</li> <li>Target language texts portion</li> <li>Range of possibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scaffolding within each stage</li> <li>Connection between language and action</li> <li>Assessment versus lesson stages</li> </ul>

The second activity was a kick-off meeting on Zoom with the team and the curriculum developers during which we overviewed the purpose and deliverables of the SJLE initiative; defined project roles, responsibilities, and timeline; and discussed the initial feedback received on the templates (see Table 4). We also organized a breakout room activity in which curriculum developers worked with one document (unit overview, lesson plan, or summative assessment) from a sample intermediate-level French curricular unit titled Multicultural Paris (see unit at <https://carla.umn.edu/socialjustice/units.html>). The purpose of this activity was to show curriculum developers how the templates had been used, to discuss how the frameworks were represented in the materials, and to have curriculum developers consider their own needs as they used the templates to plan.

To support curriculum developers as they created a curricular unit using the templates during summer 2021, they met one-on-one with a language-specific coordinator from the team (Lauren for French, Helena for German, and Mandy for Spanish) to discuss ideas, questions, and roadblocks. At the request of the curriculum developers, the team also organized three half-day, in-person group work sessions. These sessions served two purposes: to provide structured work time in a shared space and to talk through ideas and questions. Finally, after curriculum developers had turned in a draft of their completed unit, they received written feedback on the social justice content of the lesson from the project consultants and on the use of multiliteracies pedagogy from the SJLE initiative director (Kate).

During the 2021-2022 academic year, all five curriculum developers piloted the units they had created in intermediate-level language classes. The SJLE initiative director and a language-specific coordinator observed at least two class periods of each curricular unit. At the conclusion of in-class piloting, the director and language-specific coordinator conducted a one-hour debriefing interview with each curriculum developer to discuss, among other things, their impressions of the curricular unit and the successes and challenges they experienced during its design and piloting. Additionally, each curriculum developer met one-on-one with their language-specific coordinator to discuss specific piloting feedback.

Information about the templates gathered during the design and pilot phase revealed some common areas of frustration across curriculum developers. Most importantly, we

learned that the templates were not as flexible as we had intended them to be. In particular, curriculum developers felt constrained by the number and order of stages in the lesson plan template, uncertain about how to distribute lesson plan stages across instructional days, and obligated to identify a social justice focus for each activity. We also observed that career readiness felt like an add-on rather than a fully integrated part of the templates, in part because the targeted competencies (critical thinking, applied problem solving, ethical reasoning and decision making, engagement with diversity) overlapped significantly with aspects of multiliteracies pedagogy and social justice approaches. Finally, given that curriculum developers did not always associate an instructional activity with the appropriate knowledge process from multiliteracies pedagogy, we understood that the templates did not adequately embed ways to build conceptual understanding.

## Revise and Finalize

The templates were revised a second time in May 2022 to address the information gathered during the design and piloting of curricular units. The most important change was to create a user's guide for each template that explains its purpose and structure and provides suggestions for its effective use. The user's guide for the lesson plan and summative assessment templates also provides information about how to apply the knowledge processes of multiliteracies pedagogy and the five components of social justice education, including links to descriptions of each that complement the links already embedded into the templates. To increase flexibility, we eliminated the explanation of instructional stages in the blank lesson plan and assessment templates (see example in Table 2). These were instead added to the user's guide with some explanatory text and links to the Multicultural Paris curricular unit to show various combinations of lesson plan stages and different lesson plan lengths. Our aim in doing so was to provide users with the agency to decide which stage to implement when, and to avoid having them feel obliged to implement all stages in each lesson. Finally, to reduce redundancy and increase cohesion across the frameworks adopted, we eliminated career readiness from all three templates. The components of the finalized templates are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. *Components of Finalized Instructional Templates*

	<b>User's Guide</b>	<b>Blank Template</b>
Curricular Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview</li> <li>• Using the Template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Context &amp; Content (learning context, essential questions, learning objectives, Social Justice Standards, target language texts, language forms, cultural and social justice themes)</li> <li>• Assessment Plan (formative and summative assessments)</li> <li>• Lesson Plan Overview (number of instructional days, brief description, link to lesson)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection Checklist</li> </ul>
Lesson Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview</li> <li>• Using the Template</li> <li>• Understanding the Lesson Plan Stages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson Context &amp; Content (learning objectives, Social Justice Standards, target language texts, assessments)</li> <li>• Instructional Sequence (activity description, lesson plan stage, multiliteracies and social justice foci, implementation details)</li> <li>• Reflection Checklist</li> </ul>
Summative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview</li> <li>• Using the Template</li> <li>• Understanding the Assessment Stages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Context (overview, Social Justice Standards, project/product type, essential questions, learning objectives)</li> <li>• Instructional Sequence (activity description, assessment stage, multiliteracies and social justice foci, implementation details)</li> <li>• Reflection Checklist</li> </ul>

To finalize the user's guides and templates, we added a Creative Commons license to support their publication as OERs. Each user's guide has a CC-BY-NC-ND license, which means that users can share a user's guide as long as they give appropriate credit, do not use it for commercial purposes, and do not distribute a modified version. Each template has a CC-BY-NC-SA license, which means that users can share and adapt a template as long as they give appropriate credit, do not use it for commercial purposes, and distribute any remixed or transformed versions under the same license as the original (Creative Commons, n.d.). We chose a more restrictive license for the user's guides to ensure fidelity to the intent of the templates and the pedagogical and curricular frameworks used in them; we chose a less restrictive license for the templates to allow more flexibility in their use and encourage teachers to publish their own creations as OERs (see all user's guides and templates at <https://carla.umn.edu/socialjustice/templates.html>).

## LESSONS LEARNED

The collaborative and iterative process used to create the SJLE initiative templates ensured that multiple voices and perspectives were involved in their design. The expert consultants and curriculum developers provided two very different perspectives on these materials, which enhanced their usability. Moreover, each member of the team brought different levels of expertise, knowledge, and experience to the overall process. The result is a set of pedagogically sound and, we hope, nimble templates that meet teachers' needs and are applicable across instructional contexts, levels, and languages. Publishing the user's guides



and templates as OERs enhances this flexibility while also increasing teachers' agency as social justice experts.

Despite the successes of the design process, we encountered several challenges in addition to those documented in the previous section, most of which centered around the level of detail required to plan while using the lesson plan template. For instance, some curriculum developers were overwhelmed by the number of details they had to provide for each instructional activity, which included a description of its implementation, links to supporting documents, an indication of the knowledge process and social justice component addressed, and information about in-class versus out-of-class implementation. Curriculum developers also felt that some parts of the lesson plan template were repetitive, such as including a list of texts with links in the Lesson Context & Content section and including those links again when referring to texts in the description of instructional activities. With time, this detailed work became easier for the curriculum developers and the result was carefully planned instructional units that can be easily used by other teachers. This latter point is important: Because the curricular units are disseminated nationally via CARLA's website to a general audience who will not have direct access to the author, detail, clarity, and usability were essential.

Relatedly, part of using each template involved checking boxes to indicate which knowledge processes, social justice components, Social Justice Standards, and career readiness competencies were addressed. Checkboxes were used to ensure that the pedagogical and curricular frameworks would be implemented fully and that all learning objectives would be met. Additionally, the checkboxes were intended to scaffold the conceptual development of future users who may not be familiar with the various frameworks that had informed them. We wrestled with whether this feature of the templates reinforced a reductionist view of social justice education as a series of boxes to be checked, yet during curricular unit development we observed that the act of identifying knowledge processes, social justice components, Social Justice Standards, and career competencies encouraged curriculum developers to be intentional in their pedagogical choices. Indeed, some of the most fruitful discussions during the one-on-one meetings between curriculum developers and language-specific coordinators occurred in relation to these choices. Consequently, we opted to maintain the checkboxes in all three templates.

A final challenge related to the level of detail in the templates was framework overload. We were careful to scaffold pedagogical concepts into the templates (and, during revisions, into the user's guides) because many teachers will use them without having had any professional development on critical pedagogies and curricular frameworks. We recognize, however, that this scaffolding may have contributed to the framework overload evidenced during curriculum developers' preliminary review of the templates (see Table 4) and throughout the design and piloting process. As the sample crosswalk in Table 1 demonstrates, there is overlap across the four frameworks we adopted for this project, but there are also important differences among them, particularly multiliteracies pedagogy and the components of social justice education. In addition to removing career readiness from the templates, we also added language to the user's guides to mitigate feelings of framework overload. Specifically, we explained that not every lesson will target each knowledge process or component of social justice education and that not every activity is required to have a social justice focus. We also included resources (via links and a bibliography) for learning more about each of the frameworks. Finally, as described earlier, we included reflection checklists at the end of each template to encourage fidelity to the guiding frameworks.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The user's guides and templates are the result of an 18-month iterative and collaborative process of self-education, drafting, feedback, piloting, and revision. These instructional materials are just one component of a larger project that has already resulted in an extensive bibliography of scholarly and practical resources on social justice education (CARLA, 2022). To complement the user's guides and templates, the team offered a webinar in December 2022 on how teachers can effectively use these materials. In spring 2023, CARLA will publish the French, German, and Spanish curricular units described herein and the team will offer a second webinar on integrating the curricular units into language courses. Six more curricular units in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish will be published in fall 2023, as will a thematically organized, searchable database of target language texts from the nine languages of the SJLE initiative.

Many teachers of various languages and levels are seeking guidance on how to incorporate critical pedagogies into curriculum and instruction. The SJLE initiative responds to this need by providing professional development and instructional materials that will empower teachers to adopt these pedagogies. Using the templates described in this article, teachers can support students' critical language awareness and their deep engagement with the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of home and target cultures, thereby contributing to a more just, equitable, and inclusive world. Social justice work requires continual self-reflection and learning, two activities the team engaged in regularly as we sought to understand our collaborators' diverse experiences, knowledge, and needs. Our goal with these materials is not to prescribe "*the pedagogical approach*" (Knisely & Pais, 2021, p. 29), but rather to provide tools and resources that can support language teachers as they learn about and implement critical pedagogies. By offering these materials as OERs, we look forward to seeing how teachers adapt and reuse them in their own instructional planning and contribute to ongoing conversations around social justice in language education. We know that the SJLE initiative cannot sufficiently respond to the needs of all teachers and classrooms, and we acknowledge that the outcomes of this project are limited by our current understandings and biases. Nonetheless, it is our sincere hope that these materials will advance our ongoing, collaborative work as the field strives to develop equitable and inclusive teaching practices that empower all learners to work for social change.

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## NOTES

1. We recognize that none of the critical approaches we adopt are centered specifically on race, even though racial inequities prompted the urgency of our project. An area of future work will thus be to consider ways to integrate critical, race-centered pedagogies (e.g., Anya, 2021) into our research and practice.
2. Throughout the discussion, we present illustrative data documenting our process. Some of these data were gathered during a longitudinal study we are conducting with the project's curriculum developers about their cognition and identity construction related to social justice in language education. As presented herein, these data provide descriptive support for the process of template creation.
3. Cassandra Glynn and Beth Wassell were selected as grant consultants based on their extensive expertise in social justice in language education, which includes authoring multiple, highly cited publications (e.g., Glynn et al., 2018; Wassell & Glynn, 2022; Wassell et al., 2019), teaching an annual CARLA summer institute, and delivering workshops to teachers in the United States and abroad.

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