ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, STORIES OF RESILIENCE: THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS FROM HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM, by MATHIAS GUERREIRO-AIRES, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Education, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

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STORIES OF RESILIENCE: THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS FROM HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

by

MATHIAS GUERREIRO-AIRES

Under the Direction of Paula Garrett-Rucks, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, higher education in the United States has experienced significant transformations, with universities increasingly prioritizing career readiness and integrating internships as a fundamental component of academic programs (National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2021). Moreover, the student population in U.S. universities has become more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023), which has drawn more attention to issues of equity and access to career readiness initiatives, such as internships (Greenman et al., 2022). However, limited research exists on the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, such as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students, particularly in world language programs. Grounded in

the principles of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board [NSCB], 2015), the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), LangCrit (Crump, 2014), and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), the present qualitative case study investigated the internship experiences of eight college graduates who self-identify as Black, Latinx, or Afro-Latinx. The participants completed internships at four different sites as part of their French major at a Southeastern and urban university with a predominantly Black institution (PBI) designation. The research focused on internship outcomes, challenges faced by interns, and the strategies they employed to navigate their internships effectively. Data collected through internship presentations, internship written reflections, individual interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire provides valuable insights into the internship experiences of world language students. The participants reported a wide range of outcomes as they relate to the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* and the *Career Readiness Competencies*, with some standards and competencies being emphasized more than others. Additionally, the participants experienced various challenges, some of which related to race, language, and identity, that were greatly informed by internship contexts. Finally, the study found that the participants were able to navigate their internships by using multiple forms of capital as outlined by Yosso (2005). Findings make unique contributions to the literature on internships and have important implications for internship stakeholders, offering recommendations for designing more accessible and equitable world language internships that cater to an increasingly diverse student population.

INDEX WORDS: Internships, Students from Historically Marginalized Racial and Ethnic Communities, World Languages, World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, Career Readiness Competencies, Community Cultural Wealth, Case Study

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2025

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the eight participants in the study. Your experiences, insights, and resilience have been invaluable to this research. This dissertation is also dedicated to my family members, most of whom never had the chance to go to college.

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I am profoundly grateful for my family, especially my husband, Todd. This dissertation would not have been possible without your unwavering support. Thank you for always believing in me, especially when I doubted myself. Thank you to my mom and my sister, whose support has been a constant source of strength throughout this journey. I also wish to acknowledge my father, whose upbringing was a driving force behind this work, as well as many of my family members who, like my father, never had the opportunity to go to college, faced xenophobia in school, and had to work a lot harder to arrive where they are today.

Lastly, to my dear nephew, Liam. I hope the stories of resilience told by the eight participants in this study will inspire you to rise above the challenges you may face, pursue your dreams, and believe in your limitless potential.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC&U	American Association of Colleges & Universities
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CRT	Critical Race Theory
GTA	Graduate Teaching Assistant
HBCU	Historically Black College and Institution
HIP	High-Impact Practice
HSI	Hispanic-serving institution
LSP	Language for Specific Purposes
MLA	Modern Language Association
MSI	Minority-Serving Institution
NACE	National Association of Colleges and Employers
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NSCB	National Standards Collaborative Board
PBI	Predominantly Black Institution
PWI	Predominantly White Institution
WBL	Work-Based Learning

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The United States has often been portrayed and perceived as a diverse and stable democracy. This perception is rooted in the country's founding principles of liberty, equality, and justice, as well as its long-standing democratic institutions and practices. The diversity of the U.S. population, which includes people from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, contributes to this image. However, it is important to recognize that the portrayal and perception can vary depending on different perspectives and historical contexts. For instance, inequities prevail in education, which has led some scholars to rank the U.S. school system as one of the most unequal in the industrialized world (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

This study is informed by two educational inequities observed in my teaching experience: racial disparities in world language studies and racial disparities in internship participation. Research demonstrates that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, such as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students, remain underrepresented in world language courses (Anya, 2011; Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Moore, 2005; Zárate-Sández, 2021) and participate in internships at lower rates than their White counterparts (Hora et al., 2021; National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2020). However, limited research exists on the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses (Anya, 2020) and internship programs (Hora et al., 2020), which can have enduring consequences.

Barriers to internships and world language studies can reduce learning and career opportunities for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and place

them at a disadvantage in the job market (Ali et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2020). Indeed, students who participate in internships develop multiple skills, have more chances to find jobs, and earn higher salaries (Finley, 2023; NACE, 2013; Rigsby et al., 2013). Moreover, in our increasingly globalized and interconnected world, proficiency in a world language and intercultural competence have become necessary skills, which explains why the demand for multilingual and interculturally competent graduates is unprecedentedly high (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2019). Therefore, unequal access to world language courses and internship programs is among the most pressing issues in the field of World Languages, as they contribute to keeping the U.S. education system and U.S. society at large inherently unequal. Making world language courses and internship programs more accessible to students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities can help reduce some of the inequities that still prevail in higher education and the workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present case study was to investigate and describe the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, specifically students who identify as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx, in a French program located at a Southeastern and urban university with a predominantly Black institution (PBI) designation. Specifically, through this study, I attempted to understand and describe the outcomes of their internships, the challenges they faced, and the strengths and assets they employed to navigate their internship experiences.

The study is grounded in four guiding theories. The *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (World-Readiness Standards)* (NSCB, 2015) and the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021) served as frameworks to investigate internship outcomes. LangCrit

(Crump, 2014), which draws from the principles of critical race theory (CRT) and focuses on the intersection of race, identity, and languages, was utilized as a guiding framework to investigate internship challenges. Finally, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), which identifies six forms of capital representing the assets of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, served as a guiding theory to investigate the strategies that these students employed to navigate their internships.

The overarching purpose of this study is to help make world language internships more accessible to all students. To achieve this goal, it is essential to investigate and understand the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities who have successfully completed internships as part of their world language studies. Gaining insights into their experiences can help internship stakeholders design more accessible and equitable internship opportunities that foster positive outcomes, address potential challenges, and support students in utilizing their unique assets. Learning about these students' internship experiences can also help world language programs better align their curricula with career readiness and offer more internships, which has the potential to increase student enrollment.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities who successfully completed world language internships at a large PBI. Special attention was given to internship outcomes as they related to the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), internship challenges, and participants' use of their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) so internship stakeholders can design more equitable and accessible internship opportunities for all students.

Research Questions

To achieve the goals of the present study, I developed the following three research questions:

1) How do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?
    a) How do reported outcomes relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*?
    b) How do reported outcomes relate to the NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies*?
2) What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?
    a) How do reported challenges relate to race, language, and identity?
    b) Which factors contribute to the reported internship challenges?
3) What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate an internship?

Significance of the Study

The present study addresses some of the research gaps found in the literature on internships, which can improve our understanding of the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Most of the existing data collected on internships has emerged from quantitative studies, specifically those using survey methods (e.g., Adamczyk et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2022; Baert et al., 2021; Crawford et al., 2024; Hurst et al., 2023; Jung & Lee, 2017; Lambert Snodgrass et al., 2021; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021;

Sauder et al., 2019). Findings that resulted from quantitative inquiries have provided data on large samples of participants and revealed that racial discrepancies in internship participation still exist (Ali et al., 2022; NACE, 2020), that internship experiences lead to increased job offers and graduation rates (Rigsby et al., 2013), that internship stakeholders, such as interns, employers, and faculty, have different needs and expectations (Sauder et al., 2019), and that internships have multiple positive outcomes for students (Ali et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2020; Lambert Snodgrass, 2021). However, more qualitative research is needed to enrich the literature on internships. Case studies with smaller samples of participants that use data collection methods other than surveys, such as document analysis, individual interviews, and focus groups, can provide a more comprehensive account of the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and improve our understanding of their experiences.

Moreover, most studies on internships have focused on participants from the general university student population without emphasis on students' majors (e.g., Adamczyk et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2022; Kinzie et al., 2021; Lambert Snodgrass et al., 2021; McHugh, 2017; Sauder et al., 2019). Although some studies have been conducted within specific disciplines, mostly in hospitality (Crawford et al., 2014; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018), the sciences (O'Connor et al., 2021; Stofer et al., 2021), engineering (Campero, 2023), accounting (Coetzee et al., 2014; Renschler et al., 2023; Rigsby et al., 2013), and business (Downs et al., 2024), few, if any, have been conducted on world language internships. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, no study has investigated the internship experiences of world language students. Historically, world language programs have not emphasized the career needs of students and the needs of employers (Simonsen, 2022). Therefore, there is an urgent need to study world language internships so academic programs can design more internship opportunities and increase students' career

readiness. Doing so can add unique insights into the literature and deepen our understanding of the complexities and unique features of world language internships.

More importantly, most studies conducted on internships have not focused on students' races and/or ethnicities (e.g., Crawford et al., 2014; D'abate et al., 2019; Hansen & Schmidt, 2017; Hurst et al., 2023; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021; Rigsby et al., 2013; Sauder et al., 2019; Stofer et al., 2021). Additionally, many researchers have investigated internships offered at institutions that do not serve a large number of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Studies have rarely been conducted in minority-serving institutions (MSIs) (Hora et al., 2020), and most studies on the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities have been conducted in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (e.g., Bradford, 2023; Lake, 2023). Although some studies have been conducted on internships in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (e.g., Strayhorn, 2020; Thompson et al., 2021) and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) (e.g., Hora et al., 2022), few, if any, were conducted in predominantly Black institutions (PBIs). More studies conducted on internships in institutions with a PBI denomination are needed because PBIs have unique features. Specifically, they serve a large percentage of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, yet those students do not necessarily represent the majority group as they usually do in HBCUs and HSIs. For this reason, the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in PBIs may differ from those of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in HBCUs and HSIs. Furthermore, research shows that individuals from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities remain unemployed at higher rates than their White counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023) and that students from

historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities participate in internships at lower rates than their White peers (NACE, 2020). Research also shows that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities often do not take advantage of internship opportunities and assistance (Chang et al., 2020), face financial hardship (Hora et al. 2020; Storlie et al., 2016), lack mentorship (Storlie et al., 2016), experience discrimination in hiring practices (Campero, 2023; Rivera, 2012), and are placed at a disadvantage on the job market when compared to their White counterparts (Ali et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2020). Therefore, more qualitative research is needed to understand the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities to help stakeholders increase internship participation for all students.

Although some studies have investigated the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, these inquiries usually combine internships with other *high-impact practices* (HIPs)—which are defined as learning experiences with significant educational benefits (American Association of Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], n.d.-a)—such as study abroad programs (e.g., Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023). Although these studies contribute to the understanding of the HIP experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, they lack specificity, providing a broader range of findings that relate to different types of HIP. Given that students may not have the same experience depending on the type of HIP in which they participate, conducting more studies specifically on internships is needed.

Moreover, few studies conducted on the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities have considered academic majors as factors informing their experiences (Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023; Phillips & Saxton, 2018;

Storlie et al., 2016). Students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities majoring in world language may have very different internship experiences, needs, and goals when compared to students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities pursuing a different major. For instance, research shows that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities can experience more communication apprehension (Coetzee et al., 2014), have difficulties finding role models and faculty with whom they can relate in world language programs (Anya, 2020), and consistently receive lower grades in world language courses than students from traditionally privileged groups (Zárate-Sández, 2021). Although some studies on internships, such as Hora et al. (2020), have provided data on students' racial or ethnic backgrounds and their academic majors, such studies usually use broader areas of study, such as *Arts and Humanities*, which do not provide enough information on students' academic majors to contribute to the field of World Languages.

In addition to filling research gaps, this study has unique implications for world language programs and internship stakeholders, which will be presented in Chapter 5. Research shows that college graduates often lack career readiness skills (Divan et al., 2019; Thorp & Goldstein, 2018), yet universities are increasingly held accountable for the extent to which they produce career-ready graduates (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018). Considering that internships have multiple positive outcomes on students' career readiness (Ali et al., 2022; Finley, 2023; Hora et al., 2020; Lambert Snodgrass, 2021), they are becoming an integral part of higher education and a popular avenue to foster career readiness. Research also shows that student populations in institutions of higher learning are increasingly diverse (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023) and that universities are increasingly held accountable for the extent to which they serve the needs of students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds (Greenman et al., 2022).

Therefore, the present study can help world language programs align with the career readiness goals set by universities and policymakers while meeting the unique needs of an increasingly diverse student population. By investigating the internship experiences of world language students, this study can help world language programs meet the unique learning needs and career goals of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities who major in a world language. Understanding their internship experiences and fostering their career readiness is critical at a time when most world language programs in the United States face decreased enrollments (Modern Language Association [MLA], 2022) and students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities remain underrepresented in world language courses (Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Zárate-Sández, 2021).

In conclusion, this study addresses important research gaps that limit our understanding of world language internships. By investigating the internship experiences of eight students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program, the study can help internship stakeholders design more equitable and accessible internships for all students and support world language programs in enhancing students' career readiness.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. It was conducted within one World Language program at a large public and urban PBI located in the Southeastern United States. Given the strong contextual factors that framed the study, the transferability of findings may be limited. Indeed, some of the findings might be informed by the structure of the department and program in which this study took place, as well as the unique features of the internship sites where the participants completed their internships. Because of the strong context-bound aspects of the phenomenon under study, some of the findings might not be transferable to student populations

and university settings that are significantly different. In Chapter 3, detailed information on the research setting and the participants was provided to ensure that readers can assess the transferability of the findings.

A second limitation pertains to the status of the participants who had already graduated when the study took place, which may have limited their ability to recall some details of their internship experiences. However, few studies (e.g., Jung & Lee, 2017) have investigated the long-term effect of internships on the careers of students, and the majority of studies were conducted on current interns or did not investigate the long-term effects of internships on students' careers (e.g., Crawford et al., 2014; Hurst et al., 2023; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021; Phillips & Saxton, 2018; Stofer et al., 2021). Although graduates may have difficulties remembering certain details of their internship experiences, their perspectives can add valuable insights into the long-term benefits of internships. To help participants remember the details of their internship experiences, I used stimulated recall, which has become a popular data collection technique in language studies (Gass & Mackey, 2017), during the individual interviews with participants. Specifically, I used excerpts from the written reflections and presentations that participants submitted upon completion of their internships to stimulate participants' responses.

A final limitation relates to the positionality of the researcher, which I would define as a combination of internal and external positionalities. From an internal standpoint, I served as the participants' former professor and internship director, which may have limited participants' willingness to share negative feedback about their internship experiences. However, participants had already graduated when the study was conducted, which may have helped remove potential fears of retribution. Additionally, an anonymous questionnaire was administered at the end of the

study so participants could share honest feedback on their internship experiences that they may not have been willing to share during individual interviews and focus groups. From an external standpoint, I do not identify as Black, Latinx, or Afro-Latinx, which may have limited my understanding of the participants' experiences, especially as those experiences relate to race and ethnicity. To counter this limitation, I used memoing to reflect on my positionality and identity throughout the study. I also engaged in peer debriefings with two researchers, one who identifies as Black and one who identifies as Latina, and I used member checking to ensure that I did not misrepresent the participants in the study.

Researcher's Background

Investigating one's identities and the ways in which they inform research studies is an important step in qualitative research (Esposito & Evans-Winter, 2021). Accordingly, in this section, I explain how I became interested in conducting critical and social justice-oriented research *with* students from historically marginalized communities, specifically on issues pertaining to internships and career readiness.

My interest in critical and social justice research is rooted in my personal life experiences and a family history made of various waves of migration. My maternal grandfather migrated to France from Italy in the early 1930s, and my father moved from Portugal to France in the late 1960s. After growing up in poverty in Portugal, my father received an education that could not be more linguistically and culturally irrelevant after he arrived in France. He did not speak French and suffered from xenophobia, which prevented him from learning. My father dropped out of school at age 16 because he felt that he could not succeed. Even though my father worked very hard to improve his situation, I often wonder what he could have accomplished had he stayed in school and had he felt welcomed and embraced in the school that he attended. If

schools truly serve as a social equalizer, why are so many students like my father overlooked and not provided with the same opportunities to succeed as traditionally privileged students? If democracies are truly founded on ideals of freedom and equality, why do their education systems remain inherently unequal? Those are some of the questions that often cross my mind when I reflect on my role as an educator and researcher and that have shaped the present study.

Though I identify as a White man from France, I never felt that I belonged to a privileged group in school. Portuguese immigrants and people of Portuguese descent continue to face discrimination in Europe, especially in the education system (de Amorim Alves, 2011). As mentioned previously, my father suffered from xenophobia while growing up, which resulted in him dropping out of school and rejecting his heritage for part of his life. Although I now feel very proud to be a French citizen of Portuguese descent, this was not always the case. I am also the first person in my family to go to college, so I know and value the positive outcomes that postsecondary education can have on one's life, granted that the college experience is empowering and relevant to students.

Like my father and grandparents before me, I started my own migration journey when I moved to the United States by myself in 2014 for professional reasons. I am now a dual citizen of France and the United States, so I position myself in a third place (Kramsch, 1993/2004) between my two countries of citizenship, a feeling with which I was already familiar given that schoolmates often made me feel as though I was not entirely French growing up. Though my transnational identity gives me unique perspectives because I can navigate various cultural spaces, I have a complex relationship with nationality and identity. Indeed, I sometimes feel like a foreigner in both my countries of nationality, feeling more U.S. American when in France and more French when in the United States. I believe that my identity as a gay man who grew up in

conservative spaces and my journey as an immigrant who had to learn English and experience difficulties adapting to a new culture also contributed to my interest in critical research and issues of social justice and equity in education. These life experiences and identities also nurtured my interest in conducting research *with* participants from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities because I believe that all voices should be heard and that narratives should be decentered and decolonized.

My interest in critical and social justice research is also rooted in my teaching experience. I have taught at a predominantly Black institution (PBI) serving a diverse student population since 2016. Initially, I served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for two years, followed by a two-year appointment as a Limited-Term Faculty. In 2020, I was appointed as a permanent Lecturer. Since then, I have served as French Lower Division Coordinator and French for International Business Coordinator. As French Lower Division Coordinator, I oversee French beginning and intermediate courses and supervise instructors of French. As French for International Business Coordinator, I teach language for specific purposes (LSP) courses, specifically French for International Business, which aim to enhance students' career readiness for various fields, including humanitarian aid, international business, and global health.

Working with students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities has been the most rewarding aspect of my career. In my capacity as French Lower Division Coordinator, I have mentored a diverse teaching staff and designed curricula serving a significant number of students from these communities. In my role as French for International Business Coordinator, I have developed internship and networking opportunities for French majors and minors. These experiences helped me notice that racial disparities in world language studies and internship accessibility prevail, which led me to the present study. Observations from my nine

years at a PBI indicate that the enrollment of Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students in world language courses is significantly lower than that of White students, with a concerning decrease in intermediate and advanced courses. I also observed that students from historically marginalized communities often expressed more stress over the prospect of completing an internship and frequently doubted their potential.

Through the internships that I directed and the networking events that I attended with my students, I started noticing the value of these opportunities for my students. I vividly recall a prestigious gala organized by a local chamber of commerce that I attended with David (pseudonym), a student who identifies as Hispanic and who participated in this study. David interacted with executives and diplomats and expressed his disbelief and gratitude for attending this event, highlighting the transformative effect of this experience. I realized that the work that I do matters because it can have positive and life-changing outcomes for students like my father and David, who have often been overlooked by the education system and not given the same opportunities as their counterparts from traditionally privileged groups.

To conclude, my family history, identities, teaching experience, and interactions with students from historically marginalized communities who completed internships led me to this study. I believe that the participants' stories and resilience offer unique contributions to the literature on internships and can inspire future generations of students to pursue such opportunities.

Epistemology

My *epistemology*, which can be defined as the "individual lens, created through our worldview, that we use to understand knowledge" (Egbert & Sanden, 2014, p. 17), is rooted in social constructionism. Crotty (1998) argued that meaning is not discovered but constructed and

that “all reality, as meaningful reality, is socially constructed” (p. 54). Accordingly, I do not believe in one objective and ultimate Truth. Rather, I believe that multiple truths coexist and that knowledge is socially constructed based on the experiences of each individual. My intent with the present study was not to discover one Truth but to create a space wherein various perspectives and perceptions can be shared. In other words, the social construct of participants’ knowledge and experiences was a defining aspect of this research study.

According to Crotty (1998), culture informs our behaviors and our experiences and provides us with meaning. Crotty further argued that “culture is best seen as the source rather than the result of human thought and behaviour” (p. 53). Because culture shapes the ways in which we perceive and acquire knowledge, people interpret the world in which they live through their cultural lenses. Since this study is rooted in social constructionism, I acknowledge that participants may have different ways of knowing, value various forms of knowledge, have different interpretations of a given phenomenon, and possess different realities. For this reason, I approached this inquiry with the awareness that participants’ worldviews may be informed by their unique identities, cultural backgrounds, and life circumstances.

Grounded in my social constructionist epistemology, I understand that my identity as a researcher is shaped by my social experiences. Consequently, the interactions with the participants, which occurred primarily during individual interviews and focus groups, shaped my research approach. As a social constructionist, I acknowledge that participants may have perceived me as an outsider due to my former role as their professor and internship director, which could be intimidating. Moreover, establishing trust may have been challenging for some participants due to the differences in racial and ethnic backgrounds between the researcher and participants. Although the study did not focus on gender, I acknowledge that the participants’

gender identities may have influenced their perspectives. Esposito and Evans-Winters (2021) asserted that "intersectionality consistently engages in self-reflection as it relates to one's power and proximity to power" (p. 22). As a social constructionist, I recognize that my reality and worldview may differ from those of the participants. Therefore, I used critical reflectivity, defined as a "conscientious effort on the part of the researcher to examine their own personal biases, motives, beliefs, and thought processes in relationship to the research study" (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021, p. 17), to honor the participants' words and protect them from any potential harm or misrepresentation. Through this approach, I aimed to ensure that the participants' experiences were accurately represented in the study.

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms used in the study are:

Afro-Latinx Students

In this present study, *Afro-Latinx students* are defined as individuals who identify ethnically as Latinx or Hispanic and racially as Black (Román & Flores, 2010).

Black Students

In this study, the term *Black students* refers to individuals who identify racially as Black, Brown, or African American, regardless of their country of origin or nationality. Consequently, the study encompasses the voices of Black students who were born and educated in the United States, as well as those born and educated in other parts of the world (e.g., Black students born and raised in Africa). This term is not used to refer to Black students who identify ethnically as Latinx or Hispanic, for whom the term Afro-Latinx is used. Moreover, the terms African American and Brown were not used, as none of the participants in the study identified with these terms.

Career Readiness

Career readiness is defined as "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management" (NACE, 2021, p. 1). In the present study, career readiness is viewed through the lens of the NACE's (2021) eight *Career Readiness Competencies*, which are: (a) career and self-development, (b) communication, (c) critical thinking, (d) equity and inclusion, (e) leadership, (f) professionalism, (g) teamwork, and (h) technology.

Community Cultural Wealth

A model developed by Yosso (2005) that describes the unique assets that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities use to navigate school settings. Yosso categorized these assets into six forms of capital: (a) aspirational, (b) linguistic, (c) familial, (d) social, (e) navigational, and (f) resistant.

Employability

Employability is viewed as "the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 12).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to:

> A dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) allows people to identify or to be identified with groupings of people on the basis of presumed (and usually claimed) commonalities including language, history, nation or region of origin, customs, ways of being, religion, names, physical appearance, and/or genealogy or ancestry; (2) can be a source of meaning, action, and identity; and (3) confers a sense of belonging, pride, and motivation. (Markus, 2008, p. 654)

Identities

Identities are understood not only as social constructions that are fluid, hybrid, and multiple but also as fixed categories that are imposed on and negotiated by individuals (Crump, 2014).

Internship

An *internship* is defined as "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting" (NACE, 2023a, What is an internship section).

Internship Director

In the present study, an *internship director* is understood as the faculty member who oversees an internship and represents the university.

Internship Supervisor

An *internship supervisor* is the person who works at the internship site and supervises interns.

LangCrit

Theory developed by Crump (2014) in which tenets of critical race theory (CRT) are applied to language-related fields such as world language studies and applied linguistics. LangCrit investigates the intersection of race, identity, and languages.

Language

Language is viewed as a social activity that can be influenced by fixed ideologies and policies that shape the ways in which individuals use and negotiate languages to communicate (Crump, 2014).

Latinx Students

In this study, the term *Latinx* refers to students who identify ethnically as Latinx, Hispanic, Latino, or Latina. This term does not refer to Latinx students who identify racially as Black.

Instead, the term Afro-Latinx is used for such individuals. The terms Latino, Latina, and Hispanic are utilized when they are the preferred terms of specific participants in the study.

Predominantly Black Institution (PBI)

A U.S. institution of higher learning that has (1) at least 1,000 undergraduate students, (2) at least 50% of low-income or first-generation students, (3) at least 50% degree-seeking students, (4) a low spending per full-time undergraduate student compared to other institutions, and (5) at least 40% of Black students (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2024).

Race

In the present study, *race* is viewed through the lens of critical race theory and understood as a social construct rather than a biological one (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The term is defined as:

> A dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics; (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups; and (3) emerges (a) when groups are perceived to pose a threat (political, economic, or cultural) to each other's world view or way of life; and/or (b) to justify the denigration and exploitation (past, current, or future) of, and prejudice toward, other groups. (Markus, 2008, p. 654)

Students from Historically Marginalized Communities

People can be marginalized on the basis of various aspects of their identities, including their race, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or physical and cognitive abilities (Crenshaw, 1989). Historically, these forms of marginalization have contributed to systemic inequalities and social injustice. This study focuses on the race and

ethnicity of participants. This emphasis should not be interpreted as a lack of sensitivity to other identities, such as gender, religion, and sexual orientation, which also warrant further investigation. Additionally, the inclusion of students who identify as Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx does not imply that these students are seen as identical or homogenous in any way. As a social constructionist committed to equity-minded and critical qualitative research, I recognize the importance of intersectionality in capturing the diverse and complex identities of students. It is also important to note that marginalization should not be confused with minority status or underrepresentation. Indeed, this study was conducted at a large PBI, where Black students constitute the largest racial group.

World Languages

In the context of the present study, *world languages* refer to the teaching and learning of languages other than English in the United States, as well as their associated field of study. This terminology, therefore, excludes English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). The present study focuses on French as a foreign language.

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

The *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (*World-Readiness Standards*) are national goal areas and standards for world language studies developed by the ACTFL. They are composed of five goal areas, also known as the 5Cs, which are divided into 11 standards (NSCB, 2015).

Goal Area 1: Communication
- Standard 1.1: Interpersonal Communication
- Standard 1.2: Interpretive Communication
- Standard 1.3: Presentational Communication

Goal Area 2: Cultures
- Standard 2.1: Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives
- Standard 2.2: Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives

Goal Area 3: Connections
- Standard 3.1: Making Connections
- Standard 3.2: Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives

Goal Area 4: Comparisons
- Standard 4.1: Language Comparisons
- Standard 4.2: Cultural Comparisons

Goal Area 5: Community
- Standard 5.1: School and Global Communities
- Standard 5.2: Lifelong Learning

Overview of the Study

This first chapter introduced the foundations of the study, the issues on which it is grounded, its significance and limitations, as well as the researcher's background and epistemological perspective. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing literature on the current state of world language programs, internships, and students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Chapter 3 details the methodology used in the study. In Chapter 4, the findings related to three research questions are presented. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses these findings in relation to the existing literature, highlights implications for world language programs and internship stakeholders, and provides suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The second chapter of this dissertation includes a review of the relevant literature and is informed by three bodies of literature. The first section provides an overview of the current state of world language programs in U.S. colleges and universities with an emphasis on the competencies that have been traditionally emphasized in world language programs. The second section presents existing empirical research on internships, with a focus on internship outcomes and challenges. The final section of the review of literature centers on students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and provides an overview of research findings on their experiences in college, world language courses, and internships.

The Current State of World Language Courses in Higher Education

Studies on internships are becoming more common, but after reviewing the literature, I could not find any empirical research on internships in the context of world language studies. I hypothesize that world language internships differ from internships in other fields, mostly because they are conducted in a language different from the interns' native language; therefore, investigating the current state of university world language programs and the skills and competencies they emphasize is a necessary preliminary step as part of the present literature review. Indeed, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2023a), internships are an extension of classroom learning, so investigating students' internship experiences in world language programs without analyzing the current state of world language courses might not provide a complete and accurate account of internship experiences in world language programs. Accordingly, in the first section of this review of literature, I will discuss the standards that have been traditionally emphasized in world language courses as well as the extent

to which world language programs align with the career readiness competencies set by U.S. colleges and universities.

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

In the early 1990s, a group of U.S. language organizations, including the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the American Association of Teachers of French, received funding to develop national standards for world language K-12 learning, which became known as the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. These standards served as the foundation for the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (*World-Readiness Standards*), which "stress the application of learning a language beyond the instructional setting … and prepare learners to apply the skills and understandings measured by the standards, to bring a global competence to their future careers and experiences" (National Standards Collaborative Board [NSCB], 2015, p. 2). These national standards are widely used in world language courses today and have been adopted by many state-level departments of education and higher education programs (NSCB, 2015). They consist of five goal areas, commonly known as the 5Cs—*Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities*—and 11 standards, which are presented in Table 1. Although the *World-Readiness Standards* were funded as a K-12 initiative and universities are not mandated to adopt them, they are relevant to higher education because they provide an effective framework to assess college students' world language competencies and help build an articulated sequence for language learning (Abbott & Phillips, 2011).

Table 1

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

Goal Area	Standards		
1. Communication Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes	**1.1 Interpersonal Communication:** Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	**1.2 Interpretive Communication:** Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.	**1.3 Presentational Communication:** Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers
2. Cultures Interact with cultural competence and understanding	**2.1 Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.	**2.2 Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.	
3. Connections Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations	**3.1 Making Connections:** Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.	**3.2 Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives:** Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.	
4. Comparisons Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence	**4.1 Language Comparisons:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own	**4.2 Cultural Comparisons:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
5. Communities Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world	**5.1 School and Global Communities:** Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world	**5.2 Lifelong Learning:** Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.	

Note. Adapted from the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (NSCB, 2015).

Communication

The overarching goal of world language learning is for students to reach proficiency in the target language (ACTFL, 2012). *Proficiency* can be defined as learners' ability to "use language in real-world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context and a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language" (ACTFL, 2012, p. 4). Accordingly, the first goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards* is *Communication*, which is understood as learners' ability to "communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and multiple purposes" (NSCB, 2015, Communication section). This first goal area is divided into three standards: *Interpersonal Communication*, which evaluates learners' ability to "interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions" (NSCB, 2015, Communication section), *Interpretive Communication*, which assesses learners' capability to "understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics" (NSCB, 2015, Communication section), and *Presentational Communication*, which aims to measure learners' capacity to "present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers" (NSCB, 2015, Communication section).

The *World-Readiness Standards* present a new approach to communication that moves away from the four traditionally emphasized language skills (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and, instead, focuses on three modes of communication that address the context and purpose of communication (Cutshall, 2012a). In other words, the communicative nature of language has now become the primary focus of world language learning, and language skills are no longer taught in isolation. Various teaching approaches to communication in world language

courses were used during the 20th century, such as the grammar-translation approach and the audiovisual method, but communicative language teaching (CLT), also known as the communicative approach, has gained in popularity in U.S. world language courses today and is widely accepted as the most effective approach to world language learning (Brown, 2001). The approach focuses on the communicative function of the language to develop communicative competence, a term coined by Hymes (1972), and has influenced the *Communication* standards. Canale and Swain (1980) posited that communicative competence is a combination of linguistic competence (i.e., the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary), sociolinguistic competence (i.e., the ability to use the language appropriately in social contexts), discourse competence (i.e., the ability to carry conversations), and strategic competence (i.e., the ability to communicate effectively). Moreover, Doughty and Long (2003) defined eight core principles of CLT: using tasks as organizational principles, promoting learning by doing, input needs to be rich, input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated, promoting cooperative and collaborative learning, focusing on form, providing error corrective feedback, and recognizing and respecting affective factors of learning.

With the emergence of CLT, the role of the instructor shifted from a leader to a communication facilitator, providing authentic, relevant, and meaningful communication opportunities to students. The role of students also changed from passively repeating information to producing the language for communication purposes. Yet, the implementation of CLT is not without limitations. Butler (2011) grouped these limitations into three categories: conceptual constraints, classroom-level constraints, and societal-institutional constraints. Conceptual constraints pertain to teachers' values and beliefs about CLT, classroom-level constraints relate to challenges experienced by teachers and students in the classroom, and societal-institutional

constraints refer to challenges that emerge from assessments and curricula. Nam (2023) distinguished non-teacher-related external factors, which include a heavy teacher workload, large class size, students' low motivation to communicate in the target language, and teacher-related internal factors, which include the lack of teachers' proficiency in the target language and misconceptions or lack of knowledge of CLT.

Limited research exists on the use and effectiveness of the *World-Readiness Standards*. The few studies conducted on the topic have demonstrated that *Communication* is, by far, the goal area that is emphasized the most in world language courses (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Magnan et al., 2012; Magnan et al., 2014). Indeed, research suggests that courses tend to focus almost entirely on the *Communication* goal area and that the other four goal areas of language learning are not emphasized (Miller, 2019). The over-emphasis on communication in world language courses has been attributed to the fact that professional development for world language teachers focuses almost exclusively on communication, with 90% of professional development geared toward communication (Abbott & Phillips, 2011). Scholars have also found that teacher beliefs inform the emphasis on *Communication*, with many world language instructors considering that their primary responsibility is to provide students with the tools needed to communicate in the target language (Cutshall, 2012e). However, scholars (e.g., Magnan, 2008) have questioned the prevalence of the *Communication* goal area and advocated for other goal areas, such as *Cultures* and *Communities*, to become the primary areas on which world language courses focus.

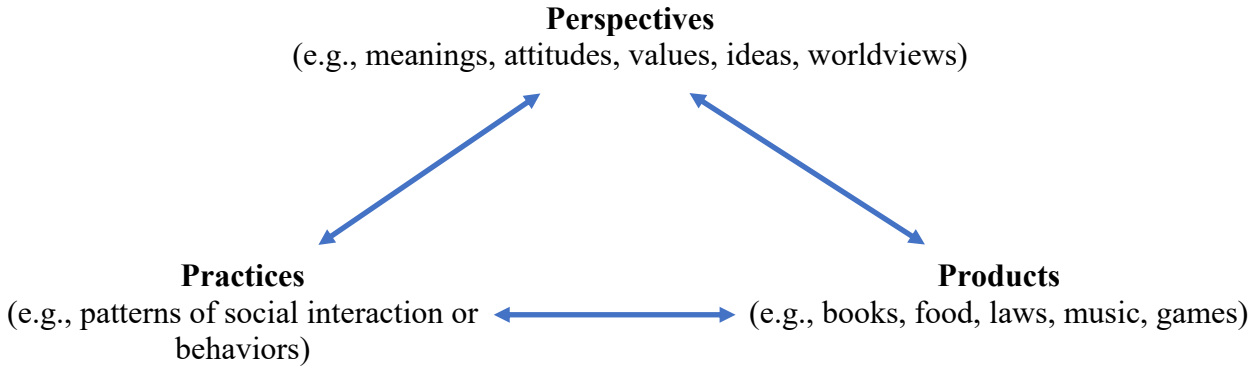
Cultures

Cultures, the second goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards*, assesses learners' ability to "interact with cultural competence and understanding" (NSCB, 2015, Cultures section).

The *Cultures* goal area is divided into two standards: *Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives*, which evaluates learners' ability to "use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied" (NSCB, 2015, Cultures section) and *Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives*, which assesses learners' capacity to "use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied" (NSCB, 2015, Cultures section). The intersection between cultural practices, products, and perspectives, also known as the 3Ps of cultures, is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Three Components of Cultures



Note. Adapted from the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015).

Until the mid-20th century, world language courses emphasized linguistic skills, and cultural content was limited to the study of literature (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Since the end of World War II, globalization has increased multilingual and multicultural interactions, which has

drawn more attention to the extent to which world language courses prepare students for successful intercultural communication. Research shows that cultures and languages are intrinsically linked (Brown, 2007; Kramsch, 1998) and are best learned jointly (Schulz, 2007). Cutshall (2012b) argued that "in the best language education happening today, the study of another language is synonymous with the study of another culture" (p. 32). Similarly, Brown (2007) posited that "a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language: the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 189). Research also suggests that students who learn a world language demonstrate higher levels of intercultural competence (Hoyt, 2016), cultural empathy (Jiang & Wang, 2018), understanding of their own culture (Trimnell, 2005), and have more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and world languages (Coelho et al., 2018). Therefore, the field of World Languages has placed more emphasis on preparing students for an increasingly global and interconnected world through the acquisition of global skills (NSCB, 2015).

Despite the inclusion of *Cultures* as a goal area in the *World-Readiness Standards,* cultural instruction remains underdeveloped in world language courses, which is well documented in the literature (Chun & Evans, 2016; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Kearney, 2009). Indeed, although the *World-Readiness Standards* provide a framework to facilitate the inclusion of cultural content in world language classrooms (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016), they do not provide or suggest specific course materials, which leaves the important and complex task of designing lessons and selecting cultural content to instructors (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). Moreover, research shows that cultural products tend to dominate cultural content in world language courses, as they are more easily

observable and accessible to students with lower proficiency in the target language, and that cultural practices and perspectives are rarely discussed (Glisan & Donato, 2017).

University instructors, especially in beginning and intermediate language courses, often struggle to include cultural content because courses are condensed with extensive grammatical features to cover (Galeano & Torres, 2014; Soler & Tecedor, 2018). Moreover, the ACTFL (2010) position statement on target language use recommends that instructors use the target language during 90% of class time despite students' limited linguistic mastery, further complicating meaningful cultural instruction for beginning language learners (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). Given that cultures are "heterogeneous, fluid, conflictual" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 247) and that they are made of complex skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Byram, 1997), instructors often find it difficult to design cultural activities that students can comprehend, particularly when such activities ought to be in the target language (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). The inclusion of culture is also challenging because *intercultural competence*, which can be defined as "the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to successfully interact in an intercultural setting" (Barrow, 2023, p. 2), is difficult to define and assess (Chun & Evans, 2016). Additionally, the criteria used to assess intercultural competence are broad and subjective, and culture rarely accounts for a large portion of students' grades. Therefore, the study of cultures often stands at the periphery of introductory world language courses (Galeano & Torres, 2014) and remains the focus of advanced world language courses (Kearney, 2009).

Connections

Connections, the third goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards*, assesses world language learners' ability to "connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations"

(NSCB, 2015, Connections section). The *Connections* goal area is divided into two standards, namely *Making Connections*, which measures learners' capability to "build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively" (NSCB, 2015, Connections section), and *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives*, which assesses learners' capability to "access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures" (NSCB, 2015, Connections section).

In other words, the *Connections* goal area assesses students' abilities to engage in interdisciplinary learning and build upon the knowledge they acquire in various subject areas (Cutshall, 2012c). Making connections between world languages and other disciplines can foster student engagement and motivation to learn and use the target language because these connections can help students create synergies between their various areas of interest (Cutshall, 2012c; Magnan et al., 2014), which leads to learning autonomy (Ghaith & Awada, 2022) and increased language retention (Blaz, 2013). By making connections with other disciplines, language learners can also notice that proficiency in a world language has real-world implications as it allows them to communicate with various speakers of the target language who work in a wide range of fields and disciplines (Cutshall, 2012c). The logic behind the articulation of *Connections* as the third goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards* was for language study to be elevated to language use and for language students to become lifelong language learners (Cutshall, 2012c). Although World Language scholars recognize the value of the *Connections* goal area (Cutshall, 2012c), World Language educators do not often emphasize it in their lessons, and language learners rarely express it as a learning goal (Miller, 2019).

Comparisons

Comparisons, the fourth goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards*, is defined as students' ability to "develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence" (NSCB, 2015, Comparisons section). The *Comparisons* goal area consists of two standards: *Making Connections,* which assesses learners' ability to *"*build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively" (NSCB, 2015, Comparisons section) and *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives,* which assesses learners' ability to "access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures (NSCB, 2015, Comparisons section). In other words, the *Comparisons* standards encourage educators to foster an environment in which learners compare their native language(s) and culture(s) to the target language and its associated cultures.

By learning to express concepts and ideas in another language, students develop an awareness of the nature of language and cultures (Cutshall, 2012d). Indeed, making comparisons across languages and cultures can help world language learners develop a better understanding of their native language(s) and culture(s) while gaining knowledge of the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of groups and communities who differ from them (Ghaith & Awada, 2022). However, like the *Connections* goal area, research shows that the *Comparisons* standards are often absent in world language courses (Cutshall, 2012d). This lack of emphasis has been attributed to teachers' lack of confidence or knowledge on how to engage their students in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons (Cutshall, 2012d). When the *Comparisons* goal area is addressed, it is often through the use of explicit comparisons in English since students with lower proficiency levels may not be able to understand nuances and complex ideas in the target

language (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). However, using English as the medium of instruction can be perceived as a contradiction to the ACTFL's (2010) recommendation to use the target language for 90% of instruction time. Moreover, the *Comparisons* goal area is intended to be incorporated throughout courses, in each lesson, which can be time-consuming and challenging for instructors who have a condensed curriculum in which there is little room for cultural and language comparisons (Cutshall, 2012d).

Communities

The last goal area, *Communities*, assesses learners' ability to "communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world" (NSCB, 2015, Communities section). The *Communities* goal area is divided into two standards, namely *School and Global Communities*, which measures learners' capacity to "use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world" (NSCB, 2015, Communities section), and *Lifelong Learning*, which evaluates learners' capability to "set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement" (NSCB, 2015, Communities section).

The ACTFL views the *Communities* goal area as the culmination of the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015). Several scholars also consider this goal area to be particularly important. Ghaith and Awada (2022) argued that the *Communities* goal area is "the culmination of applying and integrating the 5C goals and standards to enable learners to use the target language for academic and social functions as well as for personal enrichment, enjoyment, and lifelong learning" (p. 108). Yet, as is the case for the previous two goal areas, it has rarely been emphasized in world language courses and has even been called the Lost C (Abbott & Phillips, 2011). The lack of emphasis on the *Communities* goal area is problematic because it is the goal

area that enables learners to apply their linguistic and cultural knowledge in real-world contexts and communicate with various communities of speakers of the target language (Cutshall, 2012e).

The lack of emphasis on the *Communities* goal area has been attributed to teacher beliefs. Research suggests that teachers' perceptions of their job responsibilities can limit the incorporation of the *Communities* standards because world language educators tend to consider that their job entails providing the tools required to use the target language, but not providing community experience (Cutshall, 2012e). Research also indicates that world language instructors often think that aligning their courses with the *Communities* goal area requires them to take students on field trips to meet the local communities or take students abroad (Abbott & Phillips, 2011). Doing so can be both expensive and time-consuming, especially in institutions of higher learning serving students who cannot travel because they work full-time or have children. However, research shows that instructors can find strategies to incorporate the *Communities* goal area without traveling abroad, which include service-learning projects, volunteering experiences, interactions with native speakers of the language, and visiting restaurants (Cutshall, 2012e).

The 5Cs in Practice

The *World-Readiness Standards* are designed to be integrated and applied concurrently (NSCB, 2015). However, as the scant literature suggests, its five goal areas are not all incorporated into world language courses equally. In one of the only surveys conducted on teachers' perceptions of the *World-Readiness Standards*, Abbott and Phillips (2011) found that 58% of participants were not aware of the *World-Readiness Standards*. Among the participants who were familiar with them, 79% ranked *Communication* as the goal area that received the most emphasis during professional development and training. *Cultures* was ranked second with

22%, *Comparisons* third with 12%, *Connections* fourth with 11%, and *Communities* last with 8% (Abbott & Phillips, 2011).

Moreover, few studies have investigated the factors that prevent instructors from adopting the *World-Readiness Standards*. In a survey administered to world language instructors and administrators in K-12 settings, Abbott and Phillips (2011) investigated the constraints to the implementation of the *World-Readiness Standard*. Although this study was conducted over a decade ago, it provides insights into the reasons behind the lack of focus on the *World-Readiness Standards* in world language courses. Specifically, Abbott and Phillips found that the most cited reasons were the underfunding of world language programs in schools and the lack of administrative support, time, and language-specific professional development. They also found that teacher turnover and teachers' reluctance to change were factors informing the adoption of the *World-Readiness Standards*. Specifically, participants in the study expressed concerns about moving away from a grammar-focused curriculum and from textbooks, with some participants even perceiving the *World-Readiness Standards* as a waste of time.

Limited research has been conducted on the perceptions and adoption of the *World-Readiness Standards* in higher education. In the only study I could find on faculty beliefs in higher education, Berry (2016) investigated the challenges that prevented faculty members from adopting the *World-Readiness Standards* in their courses. The most cited challenges were difficulties when attempting to apply the standards (16%), lack of time (16%), students' background and lack of motivation to apply the standards (16%), lack of teacher training (7%), the mandated use of a textbook and syllabus that do not follow the standards (7%), and the difficulty to connect the language to the outside world (7%). However, participants in Berry's (2016) study reported that the standards provided guidelines (34%), prepared students to become

global citizens (16%), facilitated the introduction of culture in the classroom (14%), and helped assess students' progress (11%).

Even fewer studies have investigated students' perceptions of the *World-Readiness Standards*. In a study conducted with 1,467 university students, Magnan et al. (2012) found that the *World-Readiness Standards* aligned with students' learning goals. The researchers also discovered that the goal areas that students valued the most were *Communities* (with 83% of participants referring to it as a learning goal), *Communication* (79%), *Cultures* (75%), *Comparisons* (72%), and *Connections* (61%). Specifically, they found that the *Interpretive Communication*, *School and Global Communities*, and *Interpersonal Communication* standards were the three standards that students valued the most. They also found that *Presentational Communication, Making Connections*, and *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives* were the standards that students valued the least.

In another survey study conducted with more than 16,000 participants, Magnan et al. (2014) discovered that the standards that related the most with students' learning goals were *School and Global Communities*, *Interpersonal Communication*, *Interpretive Communication*, and *Lifelong Learning*, which corroborated the fact that college students value the *Communication* and *Communities* standards more than the other standards. The standards that related the least to their learning goals were *Presentational Communication*, *Making Connections*, *Language Comparisons*, and *Cultural Comparisons*, which confirmed that college students do not seem to value the *Connections* and *Comparisons* standards as much as the *Communication* and *Communities* standards. Magnan et al.'s (2014) study also suggests that not all standards within each goal area are valued equally, with *Communication* having significant discrepancies between *Presentational Communication*—which has consistently been found to be

the standard that college students value the least—and the other two *Communication* standards—*Interpersonal Communication* and *Interpretive Communication*—which have been found to be among the standards that college students value the most. The value placed by students on the *Communities* standards is particularly problematic given that previous studies have shown that it is the goal area with the least emphasis in world language courses (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Cutshall, 2012e). Therefore, the literature suggests that there is a significant misalignment between what students expect from their world language courses and the content of their courses, specifically concerning the *Communities* goal area and the extent to which world language courses provide community experience and opportunities to engage with native speakers.

Because limited research exists on the *World-Readiness Standards* in higher education and few studies that have investigated their application were conducted over a decade ago (e.g., Abbott and Phillips, 2011; Magnan et al., 2012; Magnan et al., 2014), more research is needed to explore the extent to which world language college courses, which includes internships, align with the *World-Readiness Standards*. Moreover, no previous empirical research exists on the internship experiences of students in world language programs, so studies investigating the extent to which world language internships foster students' world language competencies as they relate to the *World-Readiness Standards* are needed.

Career Readiness

Although the *World-Readiness Standards* provide an effective framework to assess world language students' ability to use the target language in different social functions and contexts (NSCB, 2015), they do not emphasize career readiness (Simonsen, 2022), which has grown in popularity in higher education. In the following section, I define career readiness, provide some

background information on its emergence as a key concept in higher education, and review the literature on career readiness in the field of World Languages.

Background and Definition of Career Readiness

Since the end of World War II, liberal education, which can be defined as "an approach to undergraduate education that promotes the integration of learning across the curriculum and cocurriculum, and between academic and experiential learning, in order to develop specific learning outcomes that are essential for work, citizenship, and life" (American Association of Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], n.d.-b, What Is Liberal Education section) has prevailed in the United States. With the rise of tuition costs and student debt over the past 20 years, universities in the United States are increasingly held accountable for the extent to which they prepare students for future careers and increase their *employability* (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018), which can be defined as "the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 12). To foster their employability in an increasingly liberal, global, and competitive job market, students expect to develop their career readiness, also known as work readiness, while in college (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018).

Although career readiness has grown in popularity in U.S. universities, this concept is rarely described in specific terms, so students often do not have a clear understanding of what career readiness entails or how to attain it (Simonsen, 2022). The NACE (2021) defined *career readiness* as "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management" (p. 1) and identified eight *Career Readiness Competencies*, which are presented in Table 2. These

competencies are: (a) *Career and Self-Development*, (b) *Communication*, (c) *Critical Thinking*, (d) *Equity and Inclusion*, (e) *Leadership*, (f) *Professionalism*, (g) *Teamwork*, and (h) *Technology*.

Table 2

The NACE's Career Readiness Competencies

Competency	Definition
Career and Self-Development	Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.
Communication	Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
Critical Thinking	Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
Equity and Inclusion	Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.
Leadership	Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
Professionalism	Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
Teamwork	Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.
Technology	Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Note. Adapted from the NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies*

Despite the prevalence of career readiness and employability initiatives in higher education, universities often fail to prepare students for their intended careers (Divan et al., 2019). One reason behind this issue is the fact that the job market evolves fast, so universities are expected to prepare students for jobs and fields that do not yet exist (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018).

Most importantly, universities often do not address issues of equity when developing career readiness initiatives despite the NACE's (2021) inclusion of *Equity and Inclusion* as one of eight *Career Readiness Competencies*. Ignoring equity in career-readiness initiatives can perpetuate inequity in education and the corporate world (Greenman et al., 2022). Indeed, failing to emphasize equity in career readiness initiatives may prevent students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from accessing and benefiting from professional opportunities to the same extent as White students, thus perpetuating an unequal educational system in which students cannot increase their *social mobility*, which can be defined as a "change in a person's socio-economic situation, either in relation to their parents (inter-generational mobility) or throughout their lifetime (intra-generational mobility)" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], n.d., What is social mobility section).

Career Readiness in World Language Studies

Career readiness has grown in popularity in the field of World Languages. The ACTFL's (2012) proficiency guidelines state that students learning a world language who reach an advanced proficiency level should be able to communicate in professional contexts using the target language. Moreover, the ACTFL (2020) posited that the overarching goal of world language instruction should be to help students reach an advanced proficiency level and provide career readiness preparation. Although the *World-Readiness Standards* can help world language instructors design courses that align with the five goal areas and 11 standards of the *World-Readiness Standards* (Abbott & Phillips, 2011), they lack specificity, and their sole use is not sufficient to prepare students for the professional world (Simonsen, 2022). The vagueness found in the *World-Readiness Standards* regarding career readiness can also be misleading and give the false and unrealistic impression that advanced proficiency in the target language leads to career

readiness (Simonsen, 2022). Although the *Communication* goal area is emphasized in the *World-Readiness Standards* and the *Communities* goal area assesses learners' ability to use the language in different settings, such as academic and career-related contexts, the *World-Readiness Standards* do not emphasize some of the skills included in the *Career Readiness Competencies*. Specifically, they do not place enough focus on career development, critical thinking, leadership, professionalism, and technology.

Historically, world language programs in U.S. universities have focused on literary studies and have not facilitated the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for the most common careers (Duggan, 2009; Simonsen, 2022). This trend is problematic at a time when most world language programs face decreasing enrollments (MLA, 2022), and students may perceive that world language programs cannot adequately prepare them for a career, which may deter them from majoring in a world language. Simonsen (2022) argued that language programs generally do not adequately prepare students for the job market because of a lack of language for specific purposes (LSP) classes, such as French for International Business. He proposed that language programs reduce their emphasis on literary and cultural studies to emphasize LSP courses.

Despite decreased enrollment in world language courses, a report conducted for the ACTFL (2019) found that 90% of U.S. employers rely on employees with skills in a world language, with one-third of employers reporting a high dependency. The majority of employers reported that their need for world language proficient employees had increased in the past five years and will continue to grow in the future. Specifically, the report identified translation as the most common language skill that employers lack and outsource. Similarly, a report by the New American Economy (2017) found that the number of online job listings targeting bilingual

employees more than doubled between 2010 and 2015. Shapiro et al. (2017) found that translator/interpreter was the top emerging career for U.S. university alumni and predicted that this profession would grow by 31% between 2016 and 2026. These results align with Simonsen's (2022) argument that most jobs for bilinguals require skills and knowledge in business and healthcare and that world language programs should focus on preparing students for these professions. Indeed, these skills are rarely the focus of world language programs and only occur at the periphery of such programs, in LSP courses, which are still emerging and that students often take as electives (Doyle, 2017).

Various reports (ACTFL, 2019; New American Economy, 2017) found that many companies in the United States lacked bilingual employees and had to outsource to receive critical services such as translation and interpretation. Outsourcing is both expensive and unreliable because third-party language services do not possess the knowledge of technology, processes, products, and relationships with clients (Duggan, 2009), which are crucial to successful multilingual and multicultural communications. Research also shows that miscommunication and cultural misunderstandings cost U.S. companies nearly two billion dollars each year (New American Economy, 2017), which shows that world language programs can attract students if they align their curricula with the career goals of students and the operational needs of employers. For instance, the report by the New American Economy found that companies had different needs based on the language spoken by employees. Specifically, French and Arabic are in high demand in humanitarian aid, Spanish in financial services, Chinese in luxury retail and hospitality, and Korean in pharmaceuticals, education, and telecommunications. These results demonstrate that language programs in the United States can

bridge the gap between theory and practice by developing LSP courses that align with the skills needed in each field and language.

As discussed in the first section of this review of literature, world language courses often overemphasize the *Communication* goal area of the *World-Readiness Standard* and neglect the other four goal areas (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Magnan, 2008). Notably, the *Communities* goal area, which has been found to be the goal area that college students value the most (Magnan et al., 2012; Magnan et al., 2014), has received little attention. Moreover, career readiness is seldom the focus of world language courses (Colina & Lafford, 2017; Duggan, 2009; Simonsen, 2022), despite the wealth of career opportunities available to multilingual graduates (ACTFL, 2019; New American Economy, 2017). Now that the state of university world language programs has been introduced, the next step in this review of literature is to examine empirical research on internships.

Internships

Employability serves as a significant motivator for students pursuing higher education, and colleges and universities are under growing pressure to produce career-ready graduates (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018). As a result, internships have become an integral means of preparing college students for their future careers, leading to an increase in research on internships. The second section of this literature review defines internships and offers a comprehensive overview of key empirical research findings on internships, with special attention to internship outcomes and challenges.

Defining Internships

Since the early 2000s, internships have become an important aspect of higher education after being designated as a *high-impact practice* (HIP), which are defined as learning experiences

with significant educational benefits (AAC&U, n.d.-a). Even though the increase in the number of internships has led to more research on internships, the existing literature is limited by its ambiguity as researchers rarely define internships in specific terms (Hora et al., 2020) or tend to use a wider angle to frame their inquiry by adding insights from students who participate in other HIPs such as study abroad programs, exchange programs, practica, co-ops, and externships (e.g., Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023).

In the present study, internships are defined as "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting" (NACE, 2023a, What is an internship section). Specifically, the defining features of internships are as follows:

- A learning experience with a real-world opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or replace the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- Learned skills and knowledge that are transferable to other employment settings.
- A defined beginning and end that is mutually agreed upon and consistent with institutional sponsor guidelines and schedules.
- A position description with clear responsibilities and required/desired qualifications.
- Clearly defined learning objectives/goals supportive of the student's academic program goals and institutional requirements.
- Direct supervision by a professional(s) with relevant expertise and educational and/or professional experience who provides productive feedback, guidance, and the resources and equipment necessary to successfully complete the assignment. (NACE, 2023a, What is an internship section)

Internships are often viewed as a form of work-based learning (WBL), which has grown in popularity since the 1990s (Bailey et al., 2004). However, scholars have advocated for more clarity, as internships differ from other WBL experiences, such as co-ops, apprenticeships, and practica, which are presented in Table 3. Hora et al. (2017) argued that one core difference between internships and other WBL experiences is the fact that internships are less regulated and standardized. Indeed, co-ops, apprenticeships, and practica are strictly regulated by federal and state standards and have clearly defined criteria and objectives. Conversely, internships rarely include clearly defined objectives and are not regulated as much as other types of WBL (Hora et al., 2017).

Table 3

Definitions of Work-Based Learning Experiences

Work-Based Learning Experience	Definition
Internship	A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting.
Co-op	A formal academic program where students work full-time for a significant duration at a firm while still being considered a student. Work is standardized, structured, and project-based. Most co-ops function via a contractual agreement between a university and an employer, who cooperate in 'educating' the student.
Apprenticeship	A structured academic program where students "learn and earn" by working at a job site while taking a limited number of academic courses. Apprenticeships can take between 3-4 years, often require on-the-job-training and can lead to professional certification and often full-time employment at the job site.
Practicum	A component of some educational programs where students are placed in a job site (e.g., classroom, hospital) and observe the work of professionals while also spending some time performing tasks themselves. Typically, students are also enrolled in a course connected to the practicum for deeper understanding and meaningful facilitation of what is being learned during the experience.

Note. Adapted from Hora et al. (2017).

Experiential Learning

Internships are rooted in experiential learning, which emerged as a theory in the early 20th century with the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Kurt Lewin (Kolb, 1984). Dewey's (1938/1997) theory of experiential learning, which is widely accepted as the foundation of experiential learning as we know it today, is based on the concepts of social environment, knowledge, content organization, experience, teacher's role, learner readiness, and learning outcomes. Dewey argued that all human experiences occur within a social environment and that education is a social process that should go beyond the school or teacher and encompass the entire social system. In other words, the social environment affects all aspects of the educational process. He posited that the nature of knowledge in experiential learning differs significantly from knowledge in traditional education. In the former, knowledge is perceived as a social construction that originates within the experiences of learners, whereas in the latter, knowledge is viewed as a body of information and skills that are memorized by and imposed on students who do not have control over the learning process.

Dewey (1938/1997) further argued that content should be presented in context to enable students to create connections between content and real-life situations. He also posited that students learn in various ways and need different levels of freedom and guidance. Teachers should not only know their content area but also their learners so they can select the most beneficial experiences for them. In Dewey's view, the learner can become a leader in the learning process, and the teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge. Another important aspect of Dewey's theory of experiential learning is the learners' readiness to learn. He argued that learning should occur within the context of learners' ordinary experiences and be grounded in their previous experiences. Indeed, the connection between experience and education is

fundamental to Dewey's theory. In his view, past experiences serve as the foundation for learning and influence future experiences, which should be somewhat new or unfamiliar to create a learning opportunity. A final aspect of Dewey's theory is the importance of learning outcomes. He made a distinction between *educative experiences,* which confer the ability to transfer knowledge to new situations, and *miseducative experiences*, which interrupt or distort future learning. More specifically, educative experiences have clear learning outcomes and provide opportunities for reflection and connections between experiences and knowledge while enabling students to become lifelong learners.

In the 1960s and 1970s, students increasingly became the central part of the learning process. The emergence of Knowles's (1980) adult learning theory of andragogy contributed to the development of student-centered pedagogies and a better understanding of adult learning. Knowles claimed that adult learners differ from children and made four assumptions about the former. Specifically, as adults mature, they become increasingly independent and self-directed learners, they accumulate experiences that become a basis for learning, their readiness to learn increasingly focuses on developmental tasks of their social roles, and they develop a preference for the immediacy of application rather than postponed application of knowledge. Knowles (1984) later added a fifth assumption, which stipulates that as adult learners mature, their motivation becomes increasingly internal.

Drawing from the works of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget, Kolb (1984) developed his experiential learning model, in which learning is defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 41). According to Kolb, "knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). His concept of the experiential learning cycle posits that learning occurs in four stages: concrete

experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Learners first engage in concrete experiences, or the feeling stage, during which they assimilate information. These experiences serve as the foundation for reflective reflections, or the watching stage, during which learners process information. Reflective reflections are then assimilated into abstract conceptualizations, or the thinking stage, during which learners conceptualize information. Learners then apply what they have learned during active experimentation, also known as the active stage. This last stage is the culmination of learning because learners can apply their knowledge in real-life settings.

These various theories on experiential learning have shaped our understanding of internships and contributed to making them a key aspect of higher education today, primarily because they have been found to foster career readiness and increase employability (Ali et al., 2022; Finley, 2023; Hora et al., 2020; Lambert Snodgrass, 2021).

Limitations of Studies on Internships

The number of students who pursue internships in world language programs is unknown, and no empirical research has been conducted specifically on the internship experiences of world language students. However, previous studies give some general and broad information about students completing internships in the Arts and Humanities and show that those students complete internships at lower rates than students in other fields. In a survey study, Hora et al. (2021) found that students with majors in the Arts and Humanities reported the highest lack of internships, and Thompson et al. (2021) found that they experienced the highest difficulties in finding internships that were relevant to their fields, with students often giving up their search. Because the Arts and Humanities comprise many disciplines, such as World Languages, more

discipline-specific studies are needed to understand the unique internship experiences of students within specific fields.

In addition to the lack of research studies on internships in world language programs, several issues have been reported in the literature on internships. First, many studies on internships combine the perspectives of participants from various fields, which can reduce the consistency and relevance of the research findings (Hora et al., 2017). Since realities and expectations vary greatly between disciplines, drawing comparisons and identifying trends can be difficult. Furthermore, the literature on internships often lacks the perspectives of scholars and is dominated by survey studies conducted by practitioners (Hora et al., 2017). Indeed, most data on internship accessibility, participation, and satisfaction resulted from reports published by university career services and professionals from the corporate world, which are seldom published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals (Hora et al., 2017). In the field of World Languages specifically, this trend may stem from the relatively small number of scholars specializing in language for the professions or language for specific purposes (Doyle, 2017), as well as the dominance of literary and cultural studies (Simonsen, 2022). Although practitioner perspectives are valuable, the literature on internships lacks rigorous empirical research, particularly regarding internship outcomes and challenges (Hora et al., 2017; Hora et al., 2023).

Internship Outcomes

Although limited research studies have been conducted on internship outcomes in the Arts and Humanities, and few, if any, have been conducted in World Languages, findings from other disciplines and general student populations offer valuable insights into internship outcomes.

Professional Outcomes

Longitudinal studies have shown that internships have many positive effects on professional and career-related outcomes. Specifically, students with internship experience have a higher probability of getting job interviews (Baert et al., 2021), with Nunley et al. (2016) finding that internship experience increased job interview rates by 14%. In a survey conducted for the AAC&U, Finley (2023) found that 70% of employers would be 'much more likely' to consider a job candidate who had completed an internship, and 71% reported being 'much more likely' to consider a job candidate who held a job or work-study position. Research also shows that students with internship experience are less likely to be unemployed (Silva et al., 2016) and are four times more likely to receive employment that aligns with their career goals (Callanan & Benzing, 2004). Additionally, previous studies indicate that former interns have higher incomes when entering the workforce (Margaryan et al., 2022) and spend less time searching for their first job after graduation (Oswald-Egg & Renold, 2021). Longitudinal studies have also demonstrated that participation in an internship increases employment retention, with former interns being more likely to remain in a position five years after graduation (Di Meglio et al., 2022).

Internships have also been found to have positive outcomes on *career adaptability*, which is defined as "a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas" (Savickas, 2005, p. 51). Savickas (2005) argued that career adaptability is made of four psychological dimensions—also known as the 4Cs of adaptability—which are career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. *Career concern* refers to students' focus on their vocational future, while *career control* is the awareness that they are

responsible for building their careers. *Career curiosity* refers to students' interest in exploring career opportunities, and *career confidence* is the ability to address challenges and obstacles to achieve success. Ocampo et al. (2020) reported that internship participation increased all four aspects of career adaptability and that students who did not participate in internships only increased the career concern dimension, indicating that students who do not participate in internships may not grow their career control, career curiosity, and career confidence.

Hora et al. (2020) found that the most cited outcomes of an internship were its practicality (i.e., hands-on experience and real-world experience), the opportunity to try different career paths that may or may not interest students, and the opportunity to enter a field or specific company in which students want to work. Similarly, O'Connor et al. (2021) discovered that internships in a kinetics program positively informed students' learning because they provided students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in practical ways, network, engage in professional development, and develop professional skills such as resiliency, time management, and critical thinking. However, a few studies have shown that voluntary internships have higher professional outcomes than internships that are required for graduation. Jung and Lee (2017) conducted a quantitative study on the effect of internship experience on the job performance of South Korean graduates and found that participants who had completed a voluntary internship reported higher professional outcomes and internship satisfaction.

Academics and Skill-Building

Research demonstrates that internships have academic benefits. Binder et al. (2015) found in a large survey study conducted with 15,732 college students in the United Kingdom that internships had positive effects on students' grades and GPAs. Internships have also been linked to higher degrees of learning, with higher quality of work and tasks leading to increased work

engagement and organizational commitment (Drewery et al., 2019). Similarly, D'abate et al. (2009) found that interns reported higher levels of satisfaction when they felt that their internship contributed to their learning. In a study conducted with 154 undergraduate interns, Downs et al. (2024) found that internships foster three meta-competencies: self-regulation (i.e., adaptability and coping skills), self-awareness (i.e., a sense of self or identity), and self-direction (i.e., responsibility-taking behavior and meta-learning). Moreover, Kilgo et al.'s (2015) survey with 2,212 students from 17 different universities across the United States indicated that internship participation had significant positive outcomes on critical thinking, moral reasoning, intercultural engagement, and socially responsible leadership.

Research also shows that internships can bolster students' confidence. Renschler et al. (2023) found that students participating in an internship reported greater confidence in their résumés and significantly greater confidence when representing themselves during a job interview. Previous research also indicates that internships increase leadership skills. Crawford et al. (2014) conducted a study on the effect of internships on students' engagement in leadership experience. They recruited 111 participants enrolled in an introductory hospitality course, which served as a control group, and 219 participants enrolled in a senior-level internship course, which served as the experimental group. They analyzed the ways in which internships affected students' leadership skills in five key behaviors: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. The researchers found that students enrolled in the internship course scored higher in these five key behaviors than students in the control group, suggesting that internships increase students' leadership skills.

Factors Informing Outcomes and Satisfaction

Research shows that internship attributes can affect internship outcomes. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that job characteristics (e.g., the variety of skills and activities in the internship program), responsibilities and independence given to interns, organizational factors (e.g., supervisor's support, encouragement from coworkers), gain of practical and theoretical knowledge, professional growth, and contextual factors (e.g., flexible working hours and internship location) contributed to increased internship satisfaction. Interestingly, they discovered that task significance and credit requirements did not affect internship satisfaction and outcomes. Hora et al. (2017) also provided valuable insights into internship factors that increase students' learning and perceived internship outcomes. Using survey methods, they found that participants assigned high ratings to the relationship between their internship and academic program, the clarity of task-related goals, and their degree of work autonomy. Additional findings emerged from focus groups in this study, especially regarding the importance of alignment between academic programs and internships, suggesting that internships should allow students to apply the concepts they learn in class. In other words, the study highlighted some internship attributes that can increase intern satisfaction, such as clear goals, autonomy, and relatedness to academic programs. These findings indicate that internship stakeholders can increase intern satisfaction by considering important demographic, organizational, and contextual factors when designing internship opportunities.

The role of internship mentors and supervisors has been the focus of extensive research and has been found to increase interns' level of satisfaction with their internships. Ali et al. (2022) conducted a study with 6,802 recent graduates across 200 colleges and universities in the United States and found that supervisor support contributed to learning, internship satisfaction,

and post-internship job offer acceptance. The researchers also discovered that students who had mentors or supervisors with whom they could share fears and concerns reported better internship outcomes, which underscores the importance of having good mentor-mentee relationships. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that university support factors, such as guidance from internship directors and internship offices, also contributed to internship satisfaction.

Several studies have investigated the ways in which students' characteristics inform internship outcomes and satisfaction. Hussien and La Lopa (2018) found that gender, age, positive attitude, and self-initiative contributed to interns' level of satisfaction with their internships. They learned that women were more satisfied with their supervisors and task clarity than men, interns who were younger than 20 years old were more satisfied with the support from their internship office, supervisor, task clarity, learning opportunity, and work hours than interns who were older than 20 years old, and interns who had positive expectations and higher self-initiative reported greater satisfaction. However, few studies (e.g., Lake, 2023) have investigated internship outcomes in relation to race and ethnicity, which will be discussed further in the final section of this literature review.

Internship Challenges

The existing literature on internships sheds some light on the challenges associated with internship participation as well as the obstacles that can prevent students from participating in an internship. The following section presents an overview of some of the empirical research findings on internship challenges and barriers for the general university student population. Specific challenges and barriers for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities will be discussed in the third section of this literature review.

Structural Barriers

Various structural barriers reduce internship participation in the United States. In the most recent *National Survey of College Internships*, Hora et al. (2021) found that 67% of non-interns reported wanting to complete an internship but could not because of various obstacles. The most cited barriers were the lack of knowledge on how to find an internship (59%), a heavy course load (56%), cancellation of internships due to the COVID-19 pandemic (44%), lack of internship opportunities (41%), and the need to work a paid job (40%). In a longitudinal study conducted over four years, Hora et al. (2023) discovered additional obstacles to internship participation, such as insufficient internship pay, the lack of transportation to get to the internship site, and family-related responsibilities such as childcare. The duration of internships has also been found to be problematic. Specifically, college internships last for 18 weeks on average (Hora et al., 2021), which may not provide enough time for interns to develop skills and become acquainted with the field and the internship site. Indeed, the structure of internships often reduces learning opportunities. O'Connor et al. (2021) found that the small number of work hours and the long commute time were among the structural barriers that reduced learning opportunities during internship experiences.

According to Gosh et al. (2023), participation in internships varies significantly across fields of study, with the Arts and Humanities having the lowest ratio of internship participation for senior students (42%). Their survey also revealed that gaps between interest and participation exist in all fields. However, the largest gaps were found in the fields of the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Social Service Professions, which may indicate that not enough internship opportunities exist in these fields or that there is a lack of outreach initiatives between universities and professionals working in those fields. These findings can also explain the limited

literature on internships in the Arts and Humanities and the absence of studies on internships in World Languages.

One of the obstacles to internship participation that has received the most attention in the literature on internships relates to financial resources. Students' financial status and need to work a paid job often reduce their ability to participate in an internship. Although unpaid internships have positive outcomes on students (Hurst et al., 2023), compensation has been found to increase students' level of satisfaction with their internships (McHugh, 2017), and unpaid interns have reported feeling exploited (Siebert & Wilson, 2013). Research also shows that compensation has a positive effect on the number of job offers that former interns receive, as well as their starting salaries (NACE, 2013; Rigsby et al., 2013). Scholars and national organizations have criticized the increasing number of unpaid internships because, in their view, uncompensated internships can perpetuate inequity since students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities are less likely to complete paid internships (NACE, 2023b).

Various Stakeholders with Different Needs

Internships involve various stakeholders, such as students, employers (i.e., internship supervisors), and faculty members (i.e., internship directors), and the literature indicates that these stakeholders have different needs and expectations. O'Connor et al. (2021) found that internships were often used as a work placement rather than a learning opportunity, which suggests that internships often emphasize the organizations' needs over those of students.

The most recent *Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey* by the Higher Education Research Institute (2020) indicated that 82% of freshmen wanted to go to college to get a better job, and 76% to be prepared for a specific career. Yet, a study conducted for the AAC&U found that only 44% of employers strongly agreed that recent college graduates

were prepared to succeed in entry-level positions, and 39% somewhat agreed (Finley, 2023). The study also provided data on the discrepancies between the skills that employers need and students' self-reported level of preparedness for those skills. The highest discrepancies pertained to oral communication (81% of employers reported the skills as very important but only 49% of students felt prepared for the skill), adaptability and flexibility (81% and 51% respectively), critical thinking (79% and 49%), problem-solving (74% and 50%), written communication (77% and 54%), and creative and innovative thinking (76% and 53%). Employers ranked critical thinking, oral communication, adaptability and flexibility, and problem-solving as the four skills they would like colleges to emphasize. Overall, research shows that employers need college students to possess more soft skills (Thorp & Goldstein, 2018).

Few studies have investigated the perceptions and expectations of each internship stakeholder concurrently. In a survey study conducted with 132 students, 148 employers, and 41 faculty members, Sauder et al. (2019) identified 33 significant differences between the perceptions held by students, employers, and faculty members. Specifically, 11 differences in perception of the value of internships were found, 10 of which were reported between students and the other two stakeholders. Students ranked the value of internships higher than the other two stakeholders on all survey items, meaning that they had higher expectations from their internship experience. Interestingly, the only item that they ranked lower than the other two stakeholders was the expectation that the internship would be a collaborative effort between all three stakeholders. Differences were identified between students and employers on all but one item, indicating a divide between employer and student expectations regarding skill development, acquisition and application of knowledge, and post-graduation job opportunities. The intensity of the internship was the only significant difference found between employers and

faculty, with employers preferring full-time internships while faculty expressed a preference for part-time internships.

Sauder et al. (2019) also identified differences in the perceptions of the responsibilities of internship sites. As with perceptions of the value of internships, students had higher expectations than the other two stakeholders. They had higher expectations than employers in terms of supervision, exposure to multiple aspects of the organization, pay, reimbursement of expenses, and development of full-time positions after completion of the internship—which were the same expectations that faculty ranked higher than employers—and higher expectations than faculty regarding the need to have a detailed internship description, work on an individualized project, and receive references and referrals for jobs after the internship. The only expectation that employers ranked higher than faculty was the expectation to provide a reference or referral after the internship. Faculty members expressed a stronger desire to have a dedicated on-site internship supervisor, but employers expressed a preference for faculty mentors to conduct site visits. Additional studies have highlighted the different needs of internship stakeholders. Vélez and Giner (2015) found that interns reported a strong need for supervision and mentoring, but Yiu and Law (2012) posited that faculty members had limited time to mentor interns. Overall, research shows that internship stakeholders have significantly different needs and expectations.

Addressing Challenges

The existing literature on internships provides limited suggestions to counter some of the barriers to internship participation and address the most common internship challenges. O'Connor et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate students' level of satisfaction with their internship experience. The participants in the study were asked to provide suggestions on strategies to increase interns' preparedness for internships. The researchers found that

participants' suggestions focused on four strategies: gaining more knowledge of the field before pursuing an internship, having more practical training within the first three years of their degree, fully understanding the nature and expectations of the internship before accepting the position, and ensuring that all stakeholders—employer, intern, and faculty member—agree on expectations of the intern's role. These findings indicate that internship stakeholders can increase students' internship readiness by preparing students for an internship in the early stages of their college studies and providing them with clear guidelines and expectations.

In sum, empirical research on internships is limited by the lack of data on internship experiences in the Arts and Humanities, particularly in the field of World Languages, and its lack of focus on students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. For this reason, the last section of the present review of literature will provide an overview of empirical research on the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in college, world language programs, and internships.

Students from Historically Marginalized Racial and Ethnic Communities

The U.S. education system has been ranked as one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, with significant disparities rooted in historical and systemic factors (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Recent racial issues in the United States, such as the death of George Floyd and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, have brought increased attention to the persistent inequities in U.S. society, including within higher education (Wesley et al., 2021). Empirical research has revealed that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities continue to face unique challenges, including underrepresentation in world language studies and internships. In the concluding section of this review of literature, I will provide an overview of empirical research findings on

the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in college, world language courses, and internship programs.

Students from Historically Marginalized Communities in College

To understand the overall experience of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, I will present some of the research findings that have shown that they face unique challenges while attending college, which include financial hardship, lack of support, and discrimination, as well as research findings that have shown how these challenges can be addressed.

The Wealth Gap and Financial Hardship

According to the most recent Survey of Income and Program Participation conducted by the United States Census Bureau, households with a Black householder are more likely to have unsecured debt than households with a White householder (Sullivan et al., 2024). The survey also found that households with a White-non-Hispanic householder were 10 times wealthier than those with a Black householder and less likely to have student loans and medical debt. A report from the Institute for College Access and Success (2019) corroborated these findings by identifying racial disparities in student loans, with 89% of Black students and 69% of White students reporting having student loans.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation also revealed that White households made up 65% of households in the United States in 2021 and that they possessed 80% of all wealth (i.e., the value of assets owned minus the value of debts owned). In contrast, Black households made up 13% of households but held only 4% of all wealth (Sullivan et al., 2024). These inequities in terms of resources and wealth reduce college accessibility for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, especially as tuition costs have been

increasing over the past two decades (Sylvia, 2020). Similar wealth disparities exist among Latinx communities (Kochhar & Arditi, 2023), further highlighting the systemic nature of these issues. The long-term implications of the wealth gap on educational success and career readiness underscore the urgent need for comprehensive policies to address these inequities and promote social justice.

Lack of Representation and Support

The increasing number of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in college does not mean that inequities are no longer relevant. Indeed, research shows that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities still face a lack of representation in college, which can affect their sense of belonging (Anya, 2020). According to Ellsworth et al. (2022), only 8% of college students in the United States attend an institution that has equitable racial representation (i.e., the student body reflects the racial demographics among 18-24-year-olds in the state) and provides support to help them graduate within six years.

Students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities also drop out of college at higher rates than their White counterparts. According to the most recent Gallup and Lumina Foundation's (2024) *State of Higher Education* report, the top reasons for which Black and Latinx students consider dropping out of college are emotional stress (54%), personal mental health (43%), cost of degree (31%), difficulty of coursework (24%), and feelings that they do not belong (24%). Arredondo et al. (2014) found that Latina students in the United States are often first-generation college students, which means that they may have difficulties navigating college life because of language barriers, lack of support from their families, and low self-esteem. Similarly, Storlie et al. (2016) found that Latina students experienced a wide range of challenges when attending college, including a struggle when balancing their family lives and their

academic lives, difficulties in finding someone who knew how to navigate the college environment, and a disconnect with their families, which made them feel like outsiders in their own families. Similarly, Thompson et al. (2021) found that Black college students can struggle to find support in their families, especially when they are the first person in their families to attend college.

Discrimination and Exclusion

Students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities face significant discrimination while attending college. The 2016 Pew Center Survey revealed that 81% of Black students in U.S. colleges and universities reported experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment (Anderson, 2016). In contrast, 59% of Black individuals who never attended college reported experiencing discrimination, suggesting that higher education is a notable site of marginalization. The 2016 Pew Center Survey also indicated that 55% of Black college graduates reported having interacted with individuals who acted suspiciously toward them because of their race or ethnicity, and 52% reported feeling that people viewed them as unintelligent (Anderson, 2016). Moreover, 49% of respondents with a college education indicated that their race had made it harder for them to succeed in college. Although the survey does not provide data on predominantly Black institutions (PBIs)— the designation of the university where the present study was conducted—results indicate that students experienced more discrimination in predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) than in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). This finding suggests that the designation of a college or university can influence the level of discrimination faced by students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

Previous research also shows that stress, imposter syndrome, and feelings of inadequacy are linked to race and ethnicity (Anya, 2020). Cokley et al. (2013) found that among 240 participants in college, Black students reported the highest levels of stress. Furthermore, Storlie et al. (2016) discovered that Latina students often experience trauma, culture shocks, and micro-aggressions in college, with some feeling pressured to reject their heritage and lie about their ethnicity to secure job interviews.

Community Cultural Wealth

A growing body of literature exists on the ways in which students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities navigate school settings and address the challenges they face. Although most of these studies were conducted in high school contexts (e.g., Liou et al., 2016; Straubhaar, 2013), they have important implications for higher education stakeholders. Rooted in critical race theory (CRT), Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth proposes an asset-based framework to investigate the community cultural wealth that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, to which Yosso refers as students of color, possess and use to navigate school environments. This model includes six forms of capital, which are: (a) *aspirational*, (b) *linguistic*, (c) *familial*, (d) *social*, (e) *navigational*, and (f) *resistant*. Some studies (e.g., Liou et al., 2016; Pérez, 2014; Storlie et al., 2016; Straubhaar, 2013) found that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities possess all forms of capital and use them to address racism and marginalization when attending schools and universities. In a study conducted in two PWIs, Pérez (2014) found that *familial capital* was particularly important for Latinx students to cope with racism and increase their confidence and sense of pride. Liou et al. (2016) found that informational capital, which they situated within *navigational capital*, was pivotal to students' academic success. In Staubhaar's (2013) study in a

two-year English immersion high school, *aspirational capital*, *linguistic capital*, and *social capital* were found to be particularly helpful for Latinx students to address the challenges they faced, especially students with limited proficiency in English who used Spanish as a form of resistance. As previously mentioned, the majority of studies on students' community cultural wealth have been conducted in high school contexts, which suggests that more research is needed on the ways in which students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities navigate higher education settings.

Students from Historically Marginalized Communities in World Language Courses

Because internships are an extension of classroom learning (NACE, 2023a), reviewing the literature on the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses is an important step to understanding their internship experiences. As we will see in the following subsection, the enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses is significantly lower than the enrollment of their White counterparts, which suggests that the field of World Languages is not accessible to all students equally. After contextualizing the issue of unequal access to world language studies, I will detail the factors that have been found to contribute to unequal access to world language studies and their consequences on students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

Underrepresentation in World Language Courses

Studying world languages in the United States remains an elitist endeavor (Anya, 2020; Glynn & Wassell, 2018). The scant literature on the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses shows that they are underrepresented in world language programs, especially Black students (Anya, 2011; Anya,

2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Moore, 2005; Zárate-Sández, 2021). Indeed, only 4% of undergraduate degrees in world languages are held by Black students (Carnevale et al., 2016), and Black students hold 11% of all undergraduate degrees (NCES, 2018). Even in colleges and universities designed to serve Black students, such as HBCUs, world languages remain understudied. Specifically, the United States has 107 HBCUs, but only 27 of them offer programs in world languages (HBCU Colleges, 2022).

Moreover, world language programs face not only the challenge of attracting students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities but also the challenge of retaining these students in their courses. In a study conducted with 7,069 high school students, Pratt (2012) found that most students, regardless of their racial and ethnic backgrounds, had similar initial motivation to learn world languages, and Black students even began taking Spanish at higher rates than their White counterparts. However, he found that many Black students dropped out in the fourth- and fifth-year Spanish, indicating that Black students are more likely to interrupt their study of world languages than their White counterparts. This trend has a direct effect on enrollments in world language university courses, as students who drop out of their language courses in high school may not want to take language courses in college.

A lack of interest in world languages cannot explain the low enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language programs. Indeed, their motivation to learn world languages has been well documented in the literature, starting several decades ago. In a large study conducted with 770 Black students from 53 HBCUs, Davis and Markham (1991) found that 80% of the participants had positive feelings about world languages. More recent research studies (Gatlin, 2013; Pollock, 2018) gathered similar results and showed that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities value

world language studies. Given that the low enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses is not due to a lack of interest on their part, it can be argued that pedagogical and systemic factors restrict their access to world language studies.

Policies and Systemic Exclusion

First and foremost, world language studies are limited by the absence of national and state-level policies mandating the study of world languages, which can be explained by the prevalence of a monolingual ideology in the United States (Endo & Reece-Miller, 2010). The most recent *National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey* by the ACTFL (2017) showed that 19.6% of the total school-age population in the United States is enrolled in a world language course. These numbers are far below the enrollment numbers in Europe, where 96.1% of students in primary education, 98.4% of students in lower secondary education, and 90.3% of students in upper secondary education study at least one world language (Eurostat, 2022). The ACTFL's (2017) survey also indicated that 16 U.S. states do not have a world language requirement for high school graduation, and 24 U.S. states have a graduation requirement that can be fulfilled by subjects other than world languages. Although few states require the study of a world language for high school graduation, 26% of colleges and universities in the United States require previous study of a world language for admission (Barnwell, 2008). The fact that few high schools have a world language requirement for graduation and that more than a quarter of colleges and universities require the study of a world language for admission demonstrates that higher education is not equally accessible to all students.

In addition to the absence of national and state mandates, access to world language education remains restricted by systemic exclusion, particularly for students who do not have

easy access to world language education in high school, such as students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Anya (2020) posited that the underrepresentation of Black students in world language courses is the consequence of a "history of systemic exclusion and marginalization in U.S. education" (p. 98). She argued that Black students are more likely to attend schools located in underserved communities where world language courses are not available. Consequently, Black students receive the fewest number of high school credits in world languages (Schoener & McKenzie, 2016), which means they are less likely to take world language courses in college and attend universities that have a world language requirement for admission.

Culturally Irrelevant Education

Various studies have found that the content presented in world language courses is not relevant to the lives and experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Anya, 2011; Gatlin, 2013; Pollock, 2018). This lack of relevance is partly due to the absence or underdevelopment of cultural content. Although culture is an important component of world language studies (NSCB, 2015), the literature documents the underdevelopment of cultural content in world language courses (Chun & Evans, 2016; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Kearney, 2009).

As discussed in the first section of this review of literature, world language educators in the United States are expected to follow the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015), also known as the Five Cs, which are *Communication*, *Cultures*, *Communities*, *Comparisons*, and *Connections*. However, university instructors, particularly in beginning and intermediate language courses, rarely focus on cultural content because of the condensed format of courses (Galeano & Torres, 2014; Soler & Tecedor, 2018), the ACTFL (2010)

recommendation to use the target language during 90% of class time despite students' limited linguistic mastery (Garrett-Rucks, 2016), and the complexity of cultures, which makes them difficult to assess (Byram, 1997; Chun & Evans, 2016).

The lack of emphasis on culture in lower-level courses is problematic because most students do not advance to higher-level courses, especially students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Anya, 2020). Research shows that cultural content can motivate students to learn a world language (Aysu, 2022). Thus, avoiding cultural content may prevent students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from developing a long-term interest in the language and studying it at more advanced levels.

World language instructors often focus on superficial aspects of the target cultures, leading to stereotypical and superficial views (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). Research indicates that language classrooms frequently emphasize the most superficial and exotic aspects of the target cultures because they are more appealing to foreign eyes (Kramsch, 2006). This approach may be perceived as insensitive by students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Garrett-Rucks (2013) explained that world language instructors "often objectify the target culture and present members of the target culture as monolithic entities with marked cultural differences" (p. 862). In a study conducted in a French course, Drewelow (2011) found that more than half of her participants held stereotypical and erroneous views of French people, arguing that stereotypes are reinforced by restrictive approaches to teaching cultural content and students' preconceived views on cultural groups.

The literature also suggests that the lack of diversity among faculty in world language programs further contributes to the irrelevance of world language courses for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. In 2022, only 7% of faculty members in

the United States were Black (NCES, 2024), and world language programs have very few Black faculty members (Anya, 2020). Consequently, students from these communities may not feel represented in world language programs and may struggle to find role models (Zárate-Sández, 2021). The lack of faculty diversity in world language programs also translates into limited research on the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses, limiting our understanding of their experiences (Anya, 2020).

Colonized Curricula

The United States education system has a long history of curriculum colonization, which can be traced back to the prevalence of Eurocentric views found in influential educational policies enacted in the 19th century. The National Education Association of the United States Committee of Ten on Secondary Education (1893) and its Conference on Other Modern Languages made recommendations that shaped U.S. world language studies. All 90 members of the committee were White men working in privileged schools who suggested that education focus on ancient European languages and values, such as Greek and Roman cultures. Kendy (2017) posited that racist ideology in the United States originated precisely in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, more specifically in their views on slavery, which influenced British settlers in colonial North America and continues to shape the U.S. education system today.

Colonialism's historical context has had a lasting effect on educational systems worldwide, perpetuating Eurocentric curricula and marginalizing non-European perspectives (Spiegelman, 2022). Although limited research exists on race and ethnicity in world language studies, scholars using critical race theory (CRT) and critical race pedagogy (CRP) as guiding theories have found that world language courses tend to erase students' racial and ethnic

identities (Anya, 2020; Anya, 2021), preventing them from developing positive feelings about the target language and cultures. European nations, such as France and Spain, often serve as the norm and dominant cultures in world language courses, but non-European territories and countries are frequently overlooked or erased (Spiegelman, 2022).

In a study on preconceived notions held by students in a French class, Drewelow (2011) found that most students learning French held colonized and monolithic views about the French language and Francophone countries. Specifically, 48% of the participants associated the French language with Paris and France, but none connected it to any of the 28 other countries where French is an official language, most of which are in Africa. Freire (1970/2017) asserted that all teaching is a political act, so omitting non-European nations from world language curricula may contribute to crystallizing Eurocentric views and a neocolonial system in which former colonial powers remain at the core of the curriculum and may be perceived as superior (Spiegelman, 2022).

Previous research also shows that teaching materials in world language courses rarely embrace diversity, which may prevent students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from feeling included (Moore, 2005). Scholars have found that world language textbooks tend to represent mostly White people (Uzum et al., 2021) and either erase or misrepresent historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities by portraying them in stereotypical manners (Gray, 2013). In a critical discourse analysis, Uzum et al. (2021) found that the three language textbooks under study showed diversity superficially and presented cultural groups as homogeneous. These textbooks emphasized obvious cultural aspects, such as food and holidays, and positioned students as tourists or voyeurs because they did not give them opportunities to critically analyze cultural content. Specifically, these textbooks erased non-

mainstream communities within the target cultures by failing to represent individuals from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. These findings align with Spiegelman's (2022) argument that French textbooks tend to racialize Francophone communities by using deficit views to represent them.

Centering world language curricula on whiteness can be detrimental to students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Anya, 2020, 2021). Given that world language programs face decreased enrollment (MLA, 2022), curriculum colonization is concerning as it perpetuates the disconnect between these students and world language programs, reducing their presence in world language courses. Students from these communities may not develop positive views of the target language and cultures and may refrain from taking world language courses if they cannot relate to the people represented in teaching resources and if they perceive dynamics of hegemony in these courses (Anya, 2020).

Addressing these issues requires targeted pedagogical changes. Integrating culturally relevant content, diversifying faculty, and developing inclusive teaching materials are essential steps toward decolonizing world language curricula (Anya, 2020). Empirical data from successful decolonized curricula can provide evidence of effective teaching practices. For instance, incorporating diverse perspectives can enhance student engagement and foster a more inclusive learning environment (Anya, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The broader effect of colonized curricula on student motivation, engagement, and long-term educational outcomes underscores the urgent need for comprehensive solutions to create equitable education experiences.

Low Self-Esteem, Imposter Syndrome, and Deficit Views

Research suggests that race and ethnicity can be linked to higher communication apprehension (Coetzee et al., 2014). Moreover, stress, imposter syndrome, and feelings of inadequacy have been linked to racial and ethnic status (Anya, 2020). Cokley et al. (2013) found that among 240 students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, Black students reported the highest level of stress related to racial status. Additionally, Charle Poza (2013) found that Black college students perceived themselves as less competent to learn world languages than their White peers and had higher levels of anxiety over their grades. The literature also suggests that teachers and counselors with deficit notions of Black students' linguistic abilities, to whom Anya (2020) refers as "institutional gatekeepers" (p. 98), often discourage Black students from pursuing the study of a world language (Anya, 2020; Davis & Markham, 1991; Moore, 2005; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016).

Research studies have found an achievement gap between students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and White students (Hung et al., 2020; Walpole, 2008). In a longitudinal study investigating the effect that race has on grades in world language courses, Zárate-Sández (2021) found that Black students in a Spanish program consistently received lower grades than their peers in the six course levels under study and across six academic years. Zárate-Sández also learned that the achievement gap increased in advanced world language courses. This disparity further elucidates the low enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language programs, as these students may be reluctant to enroll in courses where their chances of success appear limited.

Consequences of Restricted Access to World Language Studies

Various systemic and pedagogical factors explain the low enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language courses, which have enduring consequences. Indeed, the benefits associated with world language learning are well documented in the literature, and, as we will see in the following subsection, barriers to world language studies for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities translate into unequal access to a set of essential skills needed in today's world.

As we discussed in the first section of this literature review, proficiency in a world language is becoming a necessary skill in today's world, and the NSCB (2015) recognized *Communication* as one of the five goal areas of the *World-Readiness Standards.* The ACTFL's (2019) *Making Languages Our Business* report found that 90% of employers in a study reported a reliance on bilingual employees, with one-third of employers reporting a high dependency. The majority of employers reported that their need for world language proficient employees had increased in the past five years and will continue to grow in the future. A report by the New American Economy (2017) also revealed that the number of online job listings targeting bilingual employees more than doubled between 2010 and 2015, and Shapiro et al. (2017) found that translator/interpreter was the top emerging career for U.S. university alumni and that this profession would grow by 31% between 2016 and 2026. Various reports also found that many companies lack bilingual employees and must outsource to receive translation and interpretation services (ACTFL, 2019; New American Economy, 2017). Therefore, there is an urgent need to better prepare university students to engage in successful interactions in world languages so they can find jobs and increase their social and economic mobility. The fact that U.S. companies need employees who are proficient in a world language demonstrates the value of world language

studies, but also the sense of urgency to address the issue of inequitable access to world language education. Indeed, the low enrollments of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language programs suggest that these students do not have the same opportunities as their White peers to develop proficiency in a world language and are placed at a disadvantage in an increasingly global, competitive, and multilingual job market (Anya, 2020).

Culture has become a key aspect of world language education (NSCB, 2015), and intercultural competence has become the subject of extensive research (Byram, 1997; Garrett-Rucks, 2016). Research shows that students who learn a world language demonstrate higher levels of intercultural competence (Hoyt, 2016), cultural empathy (Jiang & Wang, 2018), understanding of one's own culture (Trimnell, 2005), and have more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and world languages (Coelho et al., 2018). In the globalized world in which we live, being able to engage in multicultural interactions has become a key aspect of our society and today's job market. Unequal access to world language education translates into unequal access to intercultural competence and career opportunities that require global skills. Indeed, world language courses can expose students to rich cultural traditions, values, codes, and modes of expression (Byram, 1997), so students who do not take world language courses may not have access to the same opportunities to learn about world cultures and be prepared to use world languages in successful intercultural interactions.

In addition to language proficiency and intercultural competence, research indicates that the study of a world language allows students to acquire and develop various skills. Trimnell (2005) found that learning a world language increases native language abilities, chances to be accepted into college and graduate school, connections with others, and ability to travel. Moreover, students who are proficient in a world language demonstrate higher levels of

creativity (Stephan, 2017), literacy skills (Aldosari & Alsultan, 2017), cognitive skills (Weber et al., 2016), and metalinguistic awareness (Bien-Miller et al., 2017). Given the abundance of benefits associated with the study of world languages, students who are proficient in a world language have higher employability (Belpoliti & Pérez, 2019). In one of the few longitudinal studies conducted on the long-term outcomes of world language studies, Uber Grosse (2004) surveyed 581 alumni who graduated from a school in international management and found that 82% reported that world language skills had benefited them in their careers and 89% reported that cultural skills had benefited them. Therefore, restricting access to world language studies to students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities means that they do not have equitable chances to develop the skills and competencies needed in today's global job market.

Students from Historically Marginalized Communities in Internships

Research demonstrates that internships are valuable for students, especially for college students with low income, first-generation college students, and students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, because internships can increase students' social mobility (Hora et al., 2023). Despite well-documented positive outcomes, research shows that a significant number of students want to participate in internships but do not, and only 30% of students participate in internships (NCES, 2022). Even more concerning is the persistence of racial disparities in internship participation (Finley & McNair, 2013; Hora et al., 2017, Hora et al., 2020), raising questions about the true accessibility of internships and the systemic barriers that prevent students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from participating in internships. Although few studies have investigated internships in relation to race and ethnicity, these studies provide valuable insights into the internship experience of students

from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, specifically regarding internship outcomes and challenges.

Internship Outcomes

Studies investigating internship outcomes, specifically for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, remain scarce. The studies on the topic have found that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities report similar outcomes as White students, specifically in terms of skill-building. In a mixed-method study conducted in an HBCU located in Georgia, Wolfgram et al. (2021) reported that internships contributed to Black students' learning and skill development. Thompson et al. (2021) reached similar results and found that participating in an internship enabled Black students to apply their knowledge and build various skills, including mastering software and equipment. Internships have also been found to help students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities explore fields and careers of interest, network, and build their résumés (Thompson et al., 2021).

Internships have also been found to boost the confidence of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Storlie et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2021). Specifically, Storlie et al. (2016) highlighted that internships can help students trust themselves and challenge their self-deficit views. Participating in internships also helps students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities build a support system made of peers and mentors with whom they can relate. Participants in Thompson et al.'s (2021) study reported that meeting fellow interns and networking with professionals, especially when they were from the same racial and ethnic backgrounds, helped them feel more confident.

Limited research has investigated strategies to make internships more accessible to students from historically racial and ethnic communities. Greenman et al. (2022) found that universities usually respond in three ways to address issues of access and equity in high-impact practices (HIPs), such as internships. Specifically, they offered modified HIPs, curricular restructuring, and increased resources. Modified HIPs involve designing HIPs of various durations, costs, and modalities. Curricular restructuring has been accomplished by requiring students to participate in HIPs and faculty to offer HIPs (Hansen & Schmidt, 2017), exposing students to HIPs during the early stages of their academic studies (Finley & McNair, 2013), and increasing HIP offerings across institution types such as community colleges (Laursen et al., 2012). To increase resources for students, faculty, and staff, universities have offered workshops as well as time release and promotion opportunities for faculty and staff who develop HIPs (Finley & McNair, 2013).

Research also shows that flexible internships are beneficial to students, especially students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Renschler et al., 2023). Indeed, students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities are more likely to work paid jobs, face financial hardship, and support their families financially (Storlie et al., 2016). Moreover, they are more likely to benefit from internships if they interact with professionals to whom they can relate (Kinzie et al., 2021; Lake, 2023; Murillo et al., 2017; Phillips & Saxton, 2018). Kinzie et al. (2021) found that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities who participated in internships appreciated the opportunity to help others and make a difference in their community while gaining control, agency, and autonomy in their work. These findings align with a study conducted by Thompson et al. (2021), who reported that Black students' backgrounds and life experiences informed their internship experiences.

Their motivation to pursue an internship included the desire to make a positive difference in their communities and support their community members. These testimonies show that reciprocity can be an important need for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Therefore, offering internship opportunities in which students interact with and learn from local communities is an important consideration when designing internship opportunities serving the needs of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

Internship Challenges

Research suggests that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities continue to face various internship challenges. Previous studies have investigated issues of internship accessibility, the obstacles to internship participation, and the unique challenges that students face when participating in internships.

Accessibility and Racial Disparities. Scholars have argued that the changes in student demographics require universities to investigate issues of access and equity in internship programs (Finley & McNair, 2013). Yet, little research has been conducted on the relationship between internship participation and students' racial and ethnic backgrounds (Wolfgram et al., 2021). Moreover, many studies on internships have focused on the general student population at institutions of higher learning without consideration of important demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and first-generation status (e.g., Crawford et al., 2014; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021; Sauder et al., 2019; Stofer et al., 2021).

The few studies that have considered the race and ethnicity of interns have revealed that internship participation varies significantly based on students' racial and ethnic backgrounds and that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities remain underrepresented in internship programs (Gosh et al., 2023; Hora et al., 2021; Hora et al., 2022;

Wolfram et al., 2021). According to the *National Survey of College Internships*, 23.6% of White students reported having participated in an internship, but only 13% of Black students and 14.2% of Latinx students reported having completed an internship (Hora et al., 2021). Although 11% of undergraduate degrees are held by Black students in the United States (NCES, 2018), the NACE (2020) found in a survey administered to 22,371 students that only 6% of students who had participated in an internship were Black and 71% were White, confirming the fact that Black students participate in internships at significantly lower rates than their White counterparts. The NACE survey also indicated that Latinx students are more likely to never participate in an internship.

Obstacles to Internship Participation. Little is known about the barriers that prevent students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from participating in internships, but we know that their lower internship participation rates cannot be attributed to a lack of motivation to pursue an internship. Indeed, Hora et al. (2020) conducted a mixed-methods survey and focus group study to investigate internship access, design, and outcomes. They compared data from three U.S. colleges—one predominantly White institution (PWI), one technical college, and one historically Black college and university (HBCU)—and found that internship participation varied significantly based on demographics, academic, life circumstances, and employment status. They discovered that race was a factor determining access to internships. Specifically, they found that 64% of the 797 participants had wanted to pursue an internship but did not. These findings align with Wolfgram et al. (2021), who conducted a mixed-methods study in an HBCU located in the state of Georgia. They found that 46% (n = 151) of the participants did not participate in an internship, 91% of whom had wanted to participate in an internship but could not. Gosh et al. (2023) gathered similar results and found

that Black students had the highest gap between internship intent and internship participation in five out of 10 fields of study, but White students faced the highest gaps in none. In the fields of Arts and Humanities, the gap was measured as -34% for Black students against -22% for White students, which indicates that Black students in the fields of Arts and Humanities are less likely to participate in internships than their White peers. When analyzing the factors that prevented internship participation from Black students at an HBCU, Wolfgram et al. (2021) found that the most cited obstacles were a heavy course load (68,6%), a lack of internship opportunities (57,7%), the need to work a paid job (49,6%), a lack of transportation (42,3%), insufficient internship pay (39,4%), and lack of childcare (20,4%). Interview data in their study revealed additional obstacles, such as a competitive application process and a lack of time due to work and academic responsibilities.

Research also indicates that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities face discrimination in hiring practices. In a survey study conducted with 1,250 Latinx participants attending a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI), Hora et al. (2022) found that obstacles to internship participation intersected with each other. Specifically, the most cited combinations of obstacles included heavy course loads and need to work (46.15%), heavy course loads and lack of internship opportunities (38.46%), insufficient pay and heavy course loads (29.06%), and heavy course loads, need to work, and lack of opportunities (28.21%). Storlie et al. (2016) reported that the lack of internship opportunities was particularly problematic for Latina studies, many of whom reported a lack of internships available in their fields. Even more alarming, research shows that employers are more likely to hire interns who are White and come from families with a higher socioeconomic status (Campero et al., 2023; Rivera, 2012), which

indicates that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities face discrimination in hiring practices and that racism is an obstacle to internship participation.

In one of the only comparative studies conducted on the barriers to internship participation across racial and ethnic groups, Hora et al. (2021) found that the most cited self-reported barriers for Black students were: unsure how to find an internship (36.4%), a heavy course load (29.4%), need to work a current paid job (26.5%), lack of internship opportunities (23%), internship cancelation because of the COVID-19 pandemic (21.7%), was not selected when applied (19.4%), insufficient pay (18.6%), and lack of transportation (17%). Latinx participants reported similar factors: unsure how to find an internship (40.3%), a heavy course load (33%), need to work a current paid job (28.5%), lack of internship opportunities (19.8%), internship cancelation because of the COVID-19 pandemic (22%), insufficient pay (17.7%), was not selected when applied (17.6%), and lack of transportation (16.6%). The most significant differences between students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and White students were the need to work a paid job (28.5% for Black students, 28.5 for Latinx students, and only 19.9% for White students) and unsure how to find an internship (36.4% for Black students, 40.3% for Latinx students and only 27.8% for White students). These findings indicate that working a paid job and the lack of knowledge or confidence on how to find an internship seem to be more problematic for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities than White students.

Studies have also discovered that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities face financial hardship, which affects their ability to participate in internships (Hora et al., 2020; Phillips & Saxon, 2018; Storlie et al., 2016). Phillips and Saxon (2018) found that Black students participating in internships at a PWI reported various issues

related to finances, which included the lack of financial resources to relocate near their internship sites, the prevalence of unpaid internships, and the lack of grants and scholarships to reduce the cost of internships. Moreover, research shows that Black students are more likely to take out student loans and accumulate student debt. Specifically, a report from the Institute for College Access and Success (2019) found that 89% of Black students and 69% of White students had student loans, with Black students having higher amounts of debt. This increased financial burden can lead to a greater need to work a paid job, which limits Black students' ability to participate in internships, especially when they are unpaid.

Internship participation also varies significantly based on students' employment status. Hora et al. (2020) found that students who worked fewer hours outside of school were more likely to participate in internships. Similarly, in a study conducted in an HBCU in Georgia, Wolfgram et al. (2021) discovered that 61.2% (n = 104) of students with no employment participated in an internship while only 45,2% (n = 14) of students with full-time employment and 47,2% (n = 60) of students with part-time employment participated in an internship. As previously discussed, Black and Latinx students are more likely to work a paid job while attending college, so they are less likely to participate in internships. These findings are concerning, given the increased number of students who must work outside of school due to inflation and the rising cost of tuition (Sylvia, 2020).

Empirical research shows that there is a significant relationship between GPA and internship participation and that students with lower GPAs need additional support in obtaining internships (Hora et al., 2020; Wolfgram et al., 2021). Since research indicates that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities are more likely to receive lower grades

than their White counterparts, including in world language programs (Zárate-Sández, 2021), they may not have the same chances to be accepted into an internship.

Students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities also face challenges in securing internships due to insufficient support from their universities. In a study conducted with Black students attending a PWI, Phillips and Saxon (2018) found that the students reported a lack of knowledge about internship availability and a lack of support from their university career services in securing internships. They also found that these students needed a greater understanding of internship requirements, more consistent and reliable support from their universities, increased financial resources, such as grants and scholarships, and social networks to help them find internship opportunities. Renschler et al. (2023) found that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities applying to internship programs need additional support to effectively present their previous work experiences during interviews, answer common interview questions, and conduct research on the companies to which they apply.

Lower internship participation has also been attributed to issues with confidence and low self-esteem. Phillips and Saxon (2018) found that Black students at a PWI expressed a lack of confidence and feelings of not being competitive enough when considering applying for internships. Lake (2023), who explored the experiences of Black students with high-impact practices (HIPs), such as internships, found that Black students at a PWI often felt discouraged from participating in internships when no Black individuals were working at an organization. She also found that the opportunity to interact with Black mentors and fellow Black interns can reduce the apprehension associated with internship participation.

Challenges Associated with Internship Participation. More attention has been drawn to the challenges that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities experience while participating in an internship. First and foremost, the NACE (2020) found that White students are more likely to be in paid internships, and Black and multi-racial students are more likely to be in unpaid internships. This trend was confirmed by Ali et al. (2022), who conducted a study on 6,802 recent graduates across 200 colleges and universities in the United States, 73% of whom were White. They found that White students were more likely to be in paid internships than students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and reported higher learning and satisfaction with their internships.

Lake (2023) found that Black students at a PWI needed more support, particularly from Black mentors, when navigating internships. Similarly, Thomson et al. (2021) found that Black students experienced various challenges when navigating the different stages of the internship application process. Participants reported a lack of internship opportunities for certain majors, geographic limitations, and the perceived competitiveness of the available internships. They also found that Black students felt overwhelmed, embarrassed, disappointed, and rejected when they were not offered internships. Thomson et al. also found that some Black students received mixed reactions from their families, especially when they were the first person in their families to attend college. Some participants reported that their families did not understand the complexities of the internship process and the reasoning behind working without pay.

Although studies have investigated the discrimination faced by students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in hiring practices, little is known about the discrimination they face during their internships. Scholars have argued that internships are often designed by White faculty for White students and that they are not culturally relevant to students

from other racial and ethnic groups (Finley & McNair, 2013). Yet, research shows that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities need to participate in internships more than their White counterparts (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kinzie et al., 2021; Kuh, 2008). However, the literature on internship challenges is still dominated by studies that do not center on race and ethnicity, so more research investigating the challenges faced by students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities during their internships is needed.

Navigating Internship Experiences

Limited research exists on the strategies that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities employ to navigate their internship experiences, and internships have not been investigated through the lens of Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth. However, the literature suggests some steps that internship stakeholders can follow to ensure that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities have a positive internship experience. Specifically, Williams et al. (2020) provided five steps to support Black interns. In the first step, *enhance supervisor support*, they recommend that internship supervisors provide support to interns directly and regularly, acknowledge and validate distress related to police brutality and civil unrest, educate interns on support available to them, help interns voice their concerns, and recognize that Black internship supervisors may also face distress. Regarding the second step, *maintaining engagement*, they posit that internship organizations should nurture trust by recognizing that racial traumas are often delayed and manifest themselves as experience grows, that racism affects Black students daily, and that many Black students have built resilience and mechanisms to cope with racism, which means that they may not ask for help when needed. Organizations should also share the actions they are taking to support change and promote empathy, affirmation, and reciprocal values. In the third step, *offer flexibility*, they

suggest that Black interns be provided with flexible work schedules and work deadlines so they can attend to family and community obligations. In the fourth step, *avoid making assumptions about Black student interns and avoid workplace discrimination*, they argue that organizations should eliminate racial microaggressions, avoid singling Black interns out, understand that not all Black interns are the same, commit to fighting racism, and avoid recruiting Black interns to portray the organization as diverse. In the final step, *encouraging self-care and resilience*, they recommend that organizations educate themselves on racial issues so they can better support and empower Black interns.

Conclusion

In summary, although the existing literature on world language programs, internships, and students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities provides valuable insights, it remains limited in its exploration of the unique internship experiences of these students within world language programs. This gap in the literature underscores the need for further research, particularly regarding internship outcomes, internship challenges, and interns' strategies for navigating internships. To address this research gap and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these students' internship experiences, I formulated the following three research questions:

1. How do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?
    a) How do reported outcomes relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*?
    b) How do reported outcomes relate to the NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies*?

2. What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?
    a) How do reported challenges relate to race, language, and identity?
    b) Which factors contribute to the reported internship challenges?
3. What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate their internships?

To answer these research questions, I designed and conducted a qualitative case study to investigate and describe the internship experiences of eight students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program. Special attention was given to internship outcomes, challenges, and the strategies employed by the participants to navigate their internships. The subsequent chapter presents a detailed account of the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As the Coordinator of the French for International Business program at the research site, I am tasked with overseeing semester-long internships for students in the French Program. Since the fall of 2022, I have overseen 30 internships, which were completed by 19 students, nine of whom identify as Black, Latinx, or Afro-Latinx. The historical development of the internship program reflects an ongoing commitment to providing practical experiences that enhance students' language skills and career readiness.

Simultaneously, I began exploring critical issues in education and became increasingly attuned to the concerns of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in this internship program and their descriptions of their internship experiences. When I reviewed the literature for guidance on supporting these students, I was surprised to find that this important topic had not been adequately addressed. Investigating the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities at the research site, especially in terms of internship outcomes, internship challenges, and students' strategies to navigate their internships, can make significant contributions to the field of World Languages and increase accessibility to world language internships for all students.

Accordingly, the three primary research questions investigated in this study are: (1) *How do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?* (2) *What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?* and (3) *What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate an internship?*

The process of investigating the strategies to better serve advanced language learners in target language internships entails a methodology focused on rich descriptions of the internship experiences and how these internships might help learners achieve the language learning goals outlined in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (World-Readiness Standards)* (NSCB, 2015) and *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), which were utilized to investigate internship outcomes. Due to the complex nature of language, culture, and identity, especially when working with students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, I grounded this study in LangCrit (Crump, 2014), which focuses on the intersection of race, language, and identity, to investigate internship challenges. Additionally, I situated this study within the framework of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), which identifies six forms of capital representing the assets of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, to explore the strategies employed by students to navigate their internships.

To capture the complexity of the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language programs, I chose a qualitative approach. As a result, I adopted a case study design, a methodology commonly used to gain an in-depth understanding of a bounded phenomenon (Merriam, 1998), which, in this study, involved the internship experiences of eight students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program located at a predominantly Black institution (PBI).

To address the research questions, I used five data collection methods: (a) video-recorded internship presentations (internship course requirement), (b) participants' written reflections on their internship experiences (internship course requirement), (c) individual interviews, (d) focus

groups, and (e) questionnaire. I analyzed presentation, reflection, interview, and focus group data using a thematic analysis with two cycles of coding (Saldaña, 2016). I also analyzed focus group data using an interactional analysis. Finally, I analyzed the results of the questionnaire using descriptive statistics. The present chapter provides more information about the methodology used in the study, including its theoretical framework, research design, research setting, sampling, participants, data collection and analysis, and the researcher's positionality.

Theoretical Framework

After reviewing the literature on the state of world language programs, internships, and the experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in college, world language courses, and internships, I built a theoretical framework grounded in four core guiding theories: the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015), the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), LangCrit (Crump, 2014), and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). The interconnection between these four guiding theories is presented in Figure 2.

Denzin (1970/2017) developed the concept of triangulation in the 1970s and described *theoretical triangulation* as follows:

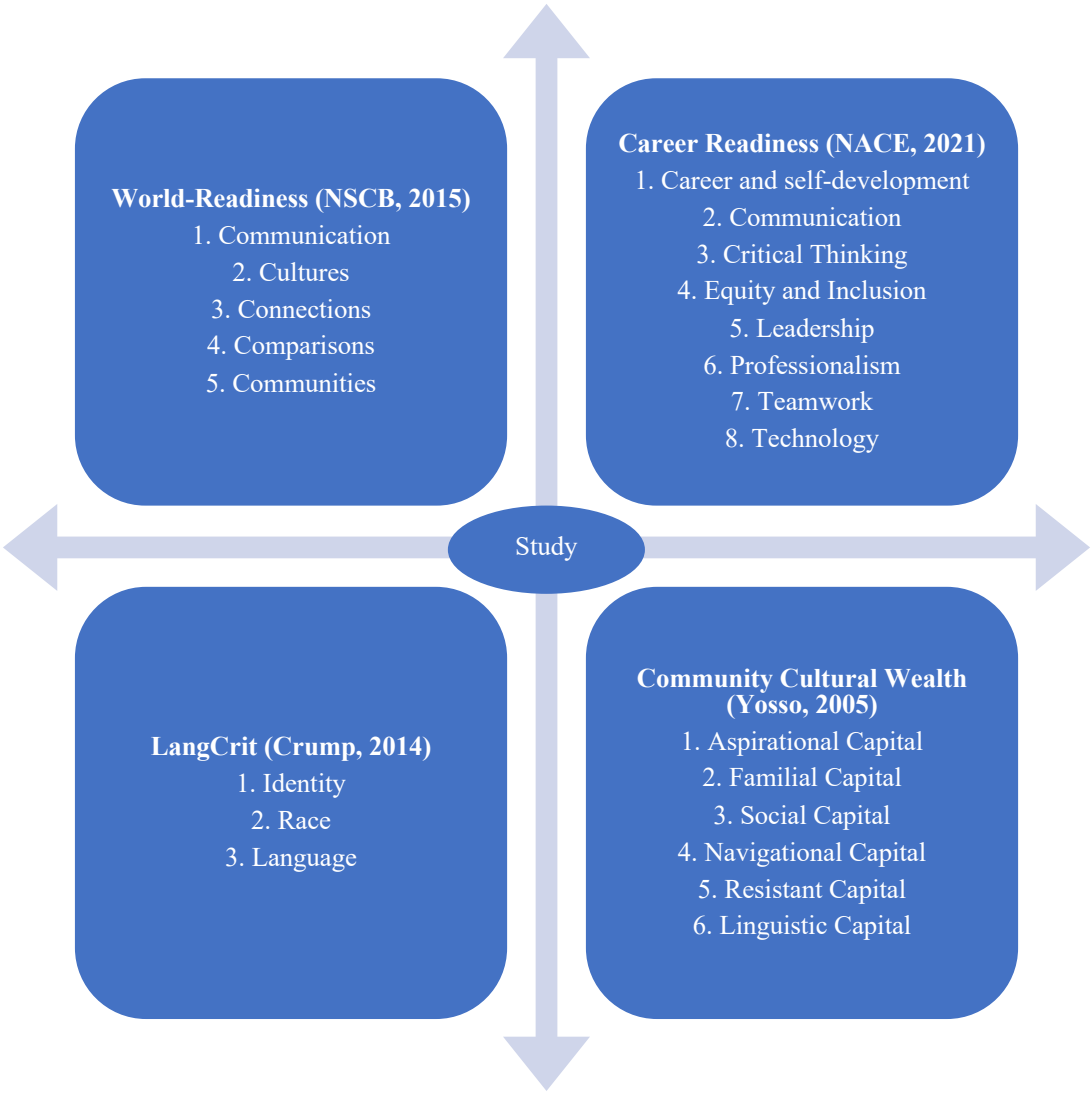
> The use of multiple theories or hypotheses when examining a situation or phenomenon. The idea is to look at a situation/phenomenon from different perspectives, through different lenses, with different questions in mind. The different theories or hypotheses do not have to be similar or compatible; in fact, the more divergent they are, the more likely they are to identify different issues and/or concerns. (p. 16)

In the present study, theoretical triangulation was used not only to increase the trustworthiness of the study, which will be described in more detail at the end of this chapter, but also because no existing theoretical framework encompasses the complexity and specificity of the phenomenon

under investigation, namely the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program.

Figure 2

Theories Guiding the Study



World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

In the present study, internship outcomes were investigated through the lens of the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015). As discussed in Chapter 2, these standards are

comprised of five goal areas (*Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities*) and 11 standards, which are outlined in Table 1. After a thorough review of the literature on internships, I noticed the absence of previous studies on internships in world language programs. Therefore, a guiding framework to investigate internships in world language programs was needed. Although the *World-Readiness Standards* have seldom been used as a framework (e.g., Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Magnan et al., 2012; Magnan et al., 2014) and have never been used to investigate internships, they provide a solid guiding theory to analyze world language internship outcomes. Indeed, the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards* are the most commonly used standards in the field of World Languages in the United States (NSCB, 2015) and they have shaped various aspects of world language studies, such as assessments, curricula, instruction, textbook content, and policies (Cox et al., 2018). In the present study, this framework was used primarily to investigate internship outcomes (Research Question 1), but it was also used to investigate internship challenges (Research Question 2) and students' strategies to navigate their internships (Research Question 3).

Career Readiness Competencies

During the review of the literature on the state of world language programs, I found that the *World-Readiness Standards* do not emphasize career readiness (Duggan, 2009; Simonsen, 2022) and that world language courses rarely align with students' career goals (Colina & Lafford, 2017; Simonsen, 2022). For this reason, I needed a second guiding theory that could complement the *World-Readiness Standards* by emphasizing career readiness. For this reason, career readiness was used as a second framework to investigate the participants' internship experiences.

In the present study, career readiness is viewed through the lens of the NACE' (2021) eight *Career Readiness Competencies*, which are: (a) *Career and Self-Development*, (b) *Communication*, (c) *Critical Thinking*, (d) *Equity and Inclusion*, (e) *Leadership*, (f) *Professionalism*, (g) *Teamwork*, and (h) *Technology*. Although career readiness has been used as a guiding framework in studies investigating internships (e.g., Lake, 2023; Newell & Ulrich, 2022), such studies have rarely utilized the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), especially in the field of World Languages. Yet, career readiness has become one of the most important aspects of higher education (NACE, 2021; Thorp & Goldstein, 2018), so more studies investigating internships through the lens of career readiness are needed, especially in world language programs and with participants from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. In the present study, the *Career Readiness Competencies* were used primarily as a guiding framework to investigate internship outcomes (Research Question 1), but they were also utilized to explore internship challenges (Research Question 2) and students' strategies to navigate their internships (Research Question 3).

LangCrit

Neither the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) nor the *Career Readiness Competencies* (2021) center on race, ethnicity, and identity. Although *Equity and Inclusion* is one of the eight *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021) and the *World-Readiness Standards* emphasize intercultural competence, these frameworks do not emphasize race, ethnicity, and equity. For this reason, I used LangCrit, also known as critical language and race theory, to investigate the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

A Framework Grounded in Critical Race Theory

LangCrit emerged from critical race theory (CRT) and its six tenets. The first tenet of CRT is that racism is embedded into every aspect of society and that White privilege remains mostly unchallenged. The second tenet questions traditionally accepted liberal myths, such as objectivity, meritocracy, and race neutrality (Anya, 2021). Whiteness as property, the third tenet of CRT, means that being White comes with a set of privileges that remain mostly unchallenged. The fourth tenet relates to interest convergence, which refers to the fact that privileged groups tend to advocate for equity across racial groups only when it benefits them. The fifth tenet posits that researchers must decenter narratives and shed light on the counternarratives of historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. The final tenet of CRT underscores the role of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), which can be understood as the multiple and cumulative forms of discrimination faced by individuals based on various aspects of their identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

Anya (2021) argued that racial inequities prevail in world language studies, yet little attention has been given to racial issues in world language programs. Therefore, it is not surprising that few world language scholars have applied the principles of CRT to investigate racial issues in world language studies. Nonetheless, the studies that used CRT as a guiding framework have provided valuable insights into the unequal access to world language courses and the underlying reasons for the underrepresentation of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in world language programs (Anya, 2020), the dynamics of racism and anti-Blackness in world language curricula, instruction practices, and teaching materials (Anya, 2021), the racism and anti-Blackness in study abroad programs (Anya, 2017), and anti-Blackness and linguistic imperialism in world language teacher preparation programs (Austin,

2022). However, CRT has rarely been used as a framework to investigate the internship experiences of students.

Given the scant literature on racial issues in world language education and the lack of focus on language in CRT, LangCrit emerged as a framework with the work of Crump (2014), who argued that LangCrit draws from three tenets of CRT. Firstly, the idea that racism prevails in our society and remains mostly unchallenged (Delgado, 2000). For this reason, Crump (2014) urged world language scholars to address racial issues in world language courses. Secondly, intersectionality, which views identities as fluid, multiple, and informed by various dynamics of power (Crenshaw, 1989), is an important aspect of LangCrit. Indeed, Crump (2014) posited that language, in addition to gender and race, can shape identities. Thirdly, studies using a LangCrit framework often use counternarratives, which challenge dominant narratives (Delgado, 2000).

A Framework Grounded in Critical Race Pedagogy

Since the mid-1990s, CRT has been applied in the field of education after the seminal work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who theorized the concept of race to understand the inequities found in U.S. schools. More scholars have contributed to the application of CRT principles in the field of education and the emergence of critical race pedagogy (CRP). According to Lac (2017), CRP can be viewed as the "liberatory teaching practices of critical pedagogy with the tenets of CRT" (p. 3). Lynn (2004) developed a CRP framework around four tenets of CRT: (a) racism is present in all aspects of education and must be investigated further, (b) education recreates social and racial hierarchies found in society, (c) education scholars must engage in reflexibility, and (d) teaching should be emancipatory. CRP has most commonly been used to investigate and question the inequities found in curricula, instruction, assessments, school funding, and desegregation (Ladson-Billings, 1998). However, according to Anya (2021),

CRP is not a framework that proposes specific curricula or guidelines but rather promotes liberating teaching practices, which include elevating the counternarratives of marginalized racial groups. Accordingly, the present study attempted to honor voices that are rarely heard and provide a deeper understanding of the perspectives of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities who participate in world language internships.

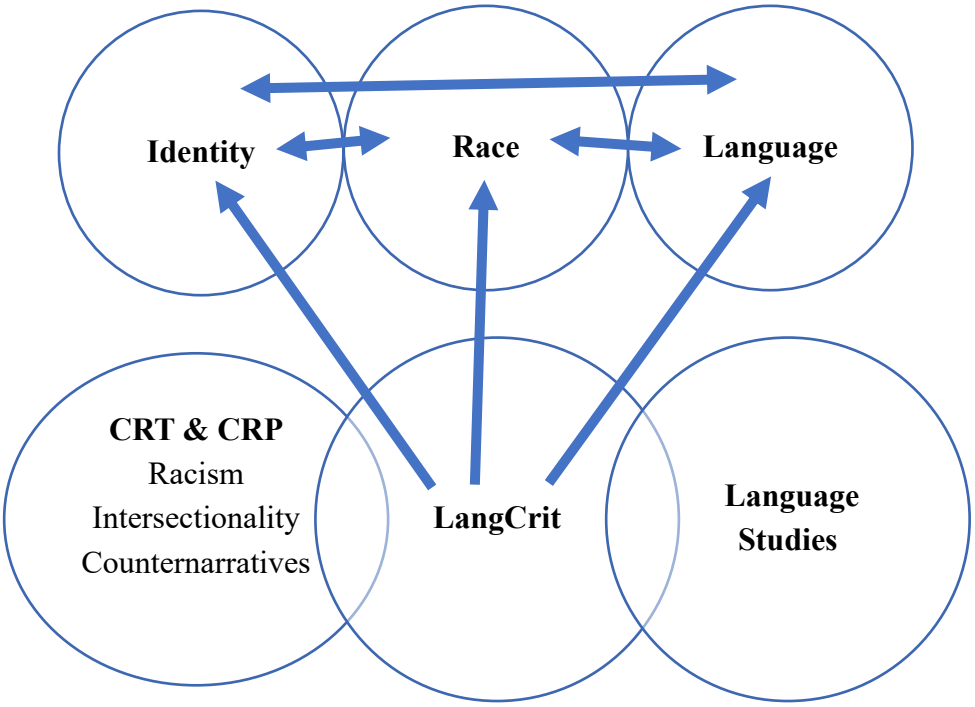
LangCrit: Three Constructs

LangCrit can be defined as a "lens that allows for an examination of how individual social practices and identity performances are connected to a larger ecosocial system of discourses, policies, and practices" (Crump, 2014, p. 219). LangCrit emerged as a framework because critical scholars in the fields of world language education, English as a second language (ESOL), and applied linguistics argued that CRT and CRP did not place enough emphasis on language. Moreover, LangCrit emerged as a framework due to the lack of focus on CRT and CRP in language studies and because race and languages are now viewed as intrinsically linked (Anya, 2021; Baker-Bell, 2020; Rosa, 2019). Pennycook (2021) argued that language and politics are intrinsically linked and that language is inherently political. He advocated for the field of applied linguistics to become more critical and for students, teachers, and scholars to develop their criticality when analyzing the world around them. Kubota and Miller (2017) posited that various critical theories are now being incorporated into language studies, including postcolonial, feminist, queer, and critical race theories. LangCrit also shares similarities with the field of raciolinguistics, which focuses on the "socially cyclical relationship between race, racialization, and language" (Swift, 2020, p. 61), but LangCrit theorists consider that various spaces, both physical and social, inform racialized discourses and the ways in which individuals

use the language to perform their identities. LangCrit centers on three constructs: identity, language, and race.

Figure 3

LangCrit's Intersection with CRT and Language Studies



Note. Adapted from Crump (2014)

Identity. The first construct in LangCrit is *identity*, which, according to LangCrit theorists, exists on a spectrum. Identities are not only viewed as social constructions that are fluid, hybrid, and multiple but also as fixed categories that are imposed on and negotiated by individuals. In other words, LangCrit addresses a wider spectrum of identity categories, whether they are imposed, assumed, or negotiated (Crump, 2014).

Language. *Language* is the second construct of LangCrit, which provides a framework to analyze the dynamics of power and barriers that have been socially constructed around languages (Crump, 2014). In this framework, languages are not viewed as fixed and exclusive from one another but rather as interconnected. LangCrit places the focus on the speakers of the language as well as their actions with the language rather than on the language itself. In other words, LangCrit theorists view language as a social practice rather than a system that is imposed on its speakers (Pennycook, 2010). However, LangCrit theorists also recognize that fixed ideologies and policies prevail and shape the ways in which individuals negotiate languages (Crump, 2014).

Race. The final construct of LangCrit, *race*, is viewed as a social construct. Compared to CRT theorists, LangCrit theorists refute the idea of race as a biological concept, which, in their view, was used to create, maintain, and justify racial hierarchies, colonial systems, and slavery (Crump, 2014).

LangCrit: Principles

LangCrit is a "critical theory of language and race that challenges fixed assumptions related to categories such as language, identity, and race and argues that these categories are socially and locally constructed" (Crump, 2014, p. 220). Although LangCrit challenges fixed assumptions on language, identity, and race, it also acknowledges that fixed assumptions play a part in identity construction, which is placed in a continuum (Crump, 2014). Crump summarized the principles of this framework and argued that LangCrit:

> (1) acknowledges that racism is a real part of everyday society, (2) accounts for socially constructed and negotiated hierarchies and boundaries among social categories, such as language, identity, and race, which constitute a continuum of possibilities from fixed to fluid, (3) embraces and seeks out the intersectionality of different dimensions of identity,

> and (4) emphasizes how local language practices and individual stories are connected to broader social, political, and historical practices and discourses through nested relationships that are woven together through webs of social relations. (p. 220)

In other words, LangCrit is a "framework for theorizing how the axes of seen and heard intersect to shape individual possibilities for becoming" (Crump, 2014, p. 220). Although the fields of Applied Linguistics and World languages are going through a "social justice turn" (Anya, 2021, p. 1067), race and racial inequities remain understudied. The present study is designed to contribute to filling this gap by applying the principles of LangCrit to investigate the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Specifically, it was used as the primary framework to investigate internship challenges (Research Question 2), but was also utilized to analyze participants' strategies to navigate their internships (Research Question 3).

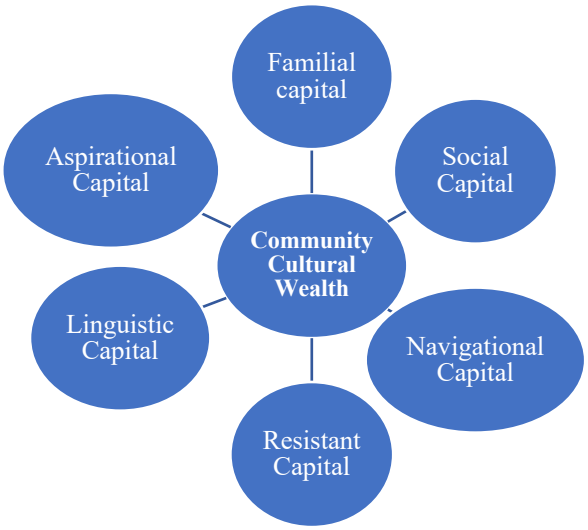
Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso (2005) posited that deficit thinking is one of the most prevalent forms of racism in U.S. education today. She further argued that cultural capital theory, which emerged from the work of Bourdieu (1985), is defined by the perspectives and values of White people and does not center on the perspectives of people from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Therefore, Yosso (2005) proposed an asset-based framework rooted in CRT to analyze the community cultural wealth that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities possess and utilize to navigate school environments. She argued that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities possess six forms of capital, which are represented in Figure 4. These capitals are: (a) aspirational, (b) familial, (c) social, (d) navigational, (e) resistant, and (f) linguistic. She defined *aspirational capital* as

students' ability to maintain hopes and dreams, especially under difficult circumstances, *social capital* as their ability to use their social network, *linguistic capital* as their capacity to develop communication skills, *familial capital* as their ability to draw from one's familial and community networks, *navigational capital* as their capacity to navigate social institutions, including predominantly White spaces, and *resistant capital* as their ability to advocate for their equal rights and collective freedom.

Figure 4

Community Cultural Wealth Model



Note. Adapted from Yosso (2005).

Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model has often been used as a guiding theory, but few scholars (e.g., Murillo et al., 2017; Kinzie et al., 2021) have used it to investigate students' internship experiences. In the present study, community cultural wealth was used primarily to investigate the strategies employed by students to navigate their internships

(Research Question 3). I selected this final guiding theory to investigate the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities from an asset-based perspective, rather than a deficit-oriented approach.

Research Design

As discussed in Chapter 2, the existing literature on internships provides valuable insights into internship outcomes (Ali et al., 2022; Finley, 2023; Hora et al., 2020; Lambert Snodgrass, 2021; Rigsby et al., 2013; Sauder et al., 2019), challenges (Bradford, 2023; Chang et al., 2020; Hora et al. 2020; Hora et al., 2022; Lake 2023; Storlie et al., 2016; Strayhorn, 2020; Thompson et al., 2021), and, to some extent, interns' strategies to navigate their internships (e.g., Murillo et al., 2017; Kinzie et al., 2021). However, previous research has not focused on the Arts and Humanities and students' racial and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, the literature is limited by the absence of studies on internships in world language programs. To address these limitations, I designed and conducted a qualitative case study to investigate the ways in which students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities describe their internship experience in a French program, with special attention to their internship outcomes, internship challenges, and strategies to navigate their internships.

Case study methodology can be defined as:

> A qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (Creswell, 2013, p. 97)

Merriam (1998) posited that the bounding of the case (i.e., identifying its boundaries) is the defining feature of the case study methodology. She went on to argue that a case is a "bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii). In the present study, the bounded phenomenon was the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a French program located at a large public university with a predominantly Black institution (PBI) designation.

Few studies on internships (e.g., Lake, 2023) have used case study designs. Indeed, most data collected on internships emerged from quantitative survey studies (e.g., Adamczyk et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2022; Baert et al., 2021; Crawford et al., 2014; Hurst et al., 2023; Jung & Lee, 2017; Lambert Snodgrass et al., 2021; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021; Sauder et al., 2019). For this reason, the present study contributes to filling this methodological gap. I chose a case study design to understand and describe a phenomenon (i.e., the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities) within its context (i.e., a French program at a large PBI). Given the uniqueness of the research context and setting, as well as the strong contextual factors that may have informed the participants' experiences, a case study design was ideal. Indeed, more qualitative research is needed on the ways in which contextual factors, such as university settings and internship sites, inform students' internship experiences. Case studies provide a thorough investigation of participants' experiences and detailed insights into the context in which a phenomenon takes place (Thomas, 2016). They also provide information on the contextual factors that may inform a phenomenon, such as the university setting, the academic program, the demographic characteristics of students, as well as their academic majors. In other words, a case study is the most appropriate design when conducting research on strong context-bound phenomena.

Merriam (1998) argued that case studies have unique attributes and should be particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. The present study is particularistic because it focuses on a particular phenomenon occurring in particular internship sites and a particular academic program located in a particular institution, all of which have unique features. The study is also descriptive because my goal was to understand and describe a phenomenon within a bounded case. I did not attempt to explore and explain the internship experiences of the participants, but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences to provide a detailed account of their experiences. Finally, the study is heuristic because it can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, namely, the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program. Given that student populations in institutions of higher learning are increasingly diverse (NCES, 2023) and that universities place more emphasis on equity and career readiness (Greenman et al., 2022), the present case study can help different internship stakeholders, such as internship directors and employers, gain a deeper understanding of the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities so they can design internships that meet the unique needs and goals of world language students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

Qualitative case studies investigating world language internships are particularly important at a time when most world language programs in the United States face decreased enrollments (MLA, 2022) and students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities remain underrepresented in world language courses (Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Zárate-Sández, 2021). The methodology used in this study facilitated the inclusion of detailed descriptions of the participants' internships, which can help internship stakeholders and

world language programs gain a deep understanding of these students' experiences so they can design more accessible and equitable internship opportunities for all students.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the present case study are:

1) How do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?
    a) How do reported outcomes relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*?
    b) How do reported outcomes relate to the NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies*?
2) What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?
    a) How do reported challenges relate to race, language, and identity?
    b) Which factors contribute to the reported internship challenges?
3) What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate their internships?

Research Setting

Delimiting the case and describing the research setting are some of the most important preliminary steps of a case study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, this section provides detailed information about the research setting in which this study took place.

Research Context

Describing and understanding the context in which the present case study took place is essential for interpreting the findings. The state of Georgia has an increasingly diverse population, with 50% of people identifying as White, 30% as Black or African American (non-

Hispanic), and 10% as Hispanic or Latinx (United States Census Bureau, 2021). The Atlanta metropolitan area is the sixth-largest metropolitan area in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024) and has a very diverse population. Specifically, it has the second-largest Black or African American population in the United States after the New York City metropolitan area (Martinez & Passel, 2025). The city of Atlanta itself has a predominantly Black population, with 47% of its population identifying as Black or African American (non-Hispanic), 40% as White, and 5% as Hispanic or Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Therefore, the study was conducted in a racially and ethnically diverse macro-level context.

University

The present study was conducted at a large public university located in Atlanta. The university has a predominantly Black institution (PBI) designation, which is defined as a U.S. institution of higher learning that has: (a) at least 1,000 undergraduate students, (b) at least 50% of low-income or first-generation students, (c) at least 50% of degree-seeking students, (d) a low spending per full-time undergraduate student compared to other institutions, and (e) at least 40% of Black students (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2024).

The university is one of the largest public institutions of higher learning in Georgia, serving 54,000 students. The student body is diverse, with 43% identifying as Black or African American (non-Hispanic), 18% as White (non-Hispanic), 18% as Asian, 15% as Hispanic or Latinx, and 5% as multiracial. Students come from all 50 U.S. states and approximately 150 countries. The university offers over 250 degrees in 100 fields of study across six campuses located in the Atlanta metro area, with the main campus located in Downtown Atlanta.

Department and Academic Program

The study was conducted in a world languages department, which offers courses in seven languages—Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish—and grants both undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees in French, German, Spanish, and World Languages and Cultures. Specifically, the study was conducted within the French program, which offers undergraduate courses at the Beginning level (FREN 10001 and FREN 1002), Intermediate level (FREN 2001 and FREN 2002), and Advanced level (three courses at the 3000 level and various courses at the 4000 level). The program also offers courses at the graduate level for students in the M.A. program (FREN 8000 courses). The French program has two permanent faculty members (one tenure track and one non-tenure track) and approximately 15 graduate teaching assistants. It also has limited-term faculty and part-time instructors, depending on the needs of the program. Due to decreasing enrollments, there is a limited number of advanced-level French courses available each semester, usually two 3000-level courses and two 4000/8000 courses, which are cross-listed. The internship course is offered every semester and can be repeated for course credit that counts toward program completion.

Internship Program and Internship Sites

Since the fall of 2022, undergraduate and graduate students in the French program (i.e., students majoring or minoring in French) can participate in internships. These internships involve the use of the French language and interactions with native French speakers. At the time of the study, internships were available at four different sites, which included an international chamber of commerce, a consulate, an international organization promoting and teaching the French language, and an international organization helping refugees, all of which are located in Atlanta. Several roles were available at each internship site, which included marketing and

communication, membership services, event coordination, business development, casework, cultural services, and educational services. These organizations make significant contributions to the local Francophone community and have ties with the broader French-speaking communities around the world. All the internship sites are non-profit organizations that rely solely on donations and membership dues.

The internships are developed and promoted by the French Internship Director. Promotion tools include classroom visits, emails, and events sponsored by student clubs. On average, six students complete an internship each semester, and students can be placed at the same internship site but in different roles. No more than three students have been placed at the same internship site within a semester. Between the fall of 2022 and the summer of 2024, when the present study started, 19 students participated in the internship program. Among these students, four identified as Black, four as Latinx, one as Afro-Latinx, and ten as White.

Students interested in completing an internship apply through the French Internship Director, who forwards their résumés to the internship site where students want to complete an internship. Application processes vary greatly depending on the internship sites, but most students go through at least one interview. If students receive an offer from an internship site, they register for an internship course to receive three course credits that count toward their French degree. The internship course can be repeated with the consent of the French Program Coordinator and the Internship Director. Due to limited course offerings and course cancelations because of low enrollment, many students complete two internships to count for six credits toward their degree. The course has several requirements, such as the submission of an internship weekly journal in French, a five-page reflection in French, a 10-minute presentation in English at the end of the semester, and two drafts of a résumé, one to be submitted at the beginning of the

internship and one to be submitted upon completion of the internship, which students can either write in French or English. The internship course is taught asynchronously, but the internship director meets with interns individually regularly.

Internship modalities vary, and internships can be virtual, in-person, or hybrid. The internships that the participants completed were unpaid and lasted for 14 weeks on average, either during fall or spring semesters, and required approximately 100 hours of work per semester (i.e., seven hours per week on average).

Sampling and Participants

I used purposeful sampling, defined as "the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses" (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2), to select the participants based on four sampling criteria. The sampling criteria were as follows: (a) participants had to be former undergraduate or graduate French majors, (b) participants had to have an internship experience completed as part of their French major between the inception of the internship program in the fall of 2022 and the summer of 2024, (c) participants had to self-identify as Black, Latinx, Hispanic, or Afro-Latinx, and (d) students had to be native speakers of a language other than French.

Eight individuals met these four criteria and were invited to participate in the study, with all eight agreeing to take part in the study. The rationale for inviting all individuals meeting the sampling criteria was not to reach data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006) but to include *all* voices. Indeed, I intended to center the counternarratives, which is one of the tenets of LangCrit (2014), of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities and collect their testimonies on their internship experiences. Therefore, offering participation to some individuals who were eligible and not others would have excluded voices that deserve more

space in the literature on internships. Additionally, inviting all eligible individuals accounted for potential attrition. To recruit participants, I sent them messages via LinkedIn, as they no longer had access to their student email addresses. The message outlined the study's purpose, significance, data collection methods, approximate time required for each stage of data collection, and information about participant rights and protection.

The following section includes descriptions of the participants who chose their pseudonyms. These descriptions, which are summarized in Table 4, were written in collaboration with each participant.

Table 4

Participant Profiles

Name (pseudonyms)	**Race/Ethnicity** (self-reported)	**Major** (program)	**Internship Period**	**Internship field & modality** F = face to face H = hybrid V = virtual
Antonio	Black/Latino or Hispanic	French (B.A.)	Fall 2022	Business development (H)
Claudia	Latina	French (M.A.)	Fall 2022 Spring 2023	Education (F) Humanitarian aid (F)
David	Hispanic	French (B.A.)	Fall 2022	Communication and marketing (H)
Javier	Black	French (B.A)	Spring 2023 Fall 2023	Marketing (H) Business development (H)
Katherine	Latina	French (B.A)	Spring 2024 Summer 2024	Teaching (F) Humanitarian aid (F)
Nicole	Black	French (B.A.)	Fall 2022 Spring 2023	Teaching (F) Humanitarian aid (V)
Ruth	Black	French (M.A.)	Spring and Fall 2023	Humanitarian aid (F)
Vanessa	Latina	French (B.A.)	Fall 2023 Spring 2024 Summer 2024	Marketing (H) Teaching (F) Humanitarian aid (F)

Antonio

Antonio was born and raised in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He identifies primarily as Dominican but also as Black racially and Latino/Hispanic ethnically. Antonio expressed pride in his heritage and mentioned that although he identifies with the term Afro-Latino, this term was not popular when he was growing up. He moved to the United States when he was 14 or 15 years old. Upon moving to the United States, Antonio did not speak English and took ESOL classes while speaking Spanish at home. Antonio is also the only person in his family who speaks French. The schools he attended were very diverse, which differed significantly from his schooling experience in the Dominican Republic. He developed a passion for the French language and began learning it in the 8th grade, also studying Latin in high school and taking some Spanish classes as well. In college, he initially started a major in accounting but switched to a major in French because he was passionate about the language and was considering becoming an interpreter. As an undergraduate student in the French B.A. program, Antonio completed an internship in the fall of 2022 at a chamber of commerce as a business development intern. This hybrid internship involved weekly virtual meetings and in-person events. Antonio sought professional experience and preferred hybrid or virtual internships due to his full-time job as a flight attendant, a position he still holds today. Antonio graduated in 2022 and is currently applying for new positions within his company.

Claudia

Claudia was born and raised in a small city in Colombia. She identifies as a Latina, although she never really thought of herself as such before moving to the United States. Indeed, she explained that she identified mostly as White and Colombian until she moved to the United States. Then, after enrolling in college, she explained that her identity shifted, and she now identifies as Latina and feels a sense of belonging to Latin American cultures. Claudia grew up

speaking Spanish and started learning English in high school and French in college. Claudia also took Portuguese as an elective in college. She wanted to learn languages to increase her employability. She is the only person in her family who speaks French and English, and the first person to get a college degree. She received an undergraduate degree in modern languages from a university in Colombia and did two exchange programs in the United States before settling in Atlanta for graduate school. She decided to major in French in college because she loves languages and literature. During her French M.A., she completed two internships, one in a consular office in the fall of 2022, where she helped with educational initiatives, and one in a large nonprofit organization helping refugees in the spring of 2023. Both internships were fully in-person, which was Claudia's preference. She wanted to complete these internships to improve her language skills, gain work experience in the United States, grow as a professional, and network. Claudia also wanted to give back and help people who do not speak English, which is why she chose her second internship site. At the time of the internships, Claudia was working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and was teaching one or two French courses per semester. After her graduation in 2023, she worked at the organization where she completed her second internship for a few months. Then, she started a Ph.D. program in education in the United States. She wants to become a consultant in education as well as a researcher to conduct research on multilingualism.

David

David was born and raised in a diverse suburb of Atlanta. His parents were born in Mexico and moved to the United States when they were adults. He sometimes identifies with the term Latino but prefers the term Hispanic. However, during his first interview, he underscored that he identifies as Mexican above all. He attended diverse schools and grew up speaking both

English and Spanish, although Spanish was the main language spoken at home. After his parents took English classes, the family started speaking "Spangligh." David began learning French during his freshman year in high school. He chose French over Spanish because he already knew the latter and wanted to learn a new language to increase his employability. David is the only person in his family who speaks French. In college, after considering a major in chemistry, he decided to major in French and enroll in the French B.A. program because he grew passionate about the language and French culture. He also wanted to learn more about people's lives and diversity so he could become a "catalyst for change." During his undergraduate studies, he completed an internship at an international chamber of commerce in the fall of 2022. During this internship, he was in charge of communication and marketing for the organization. David wanted to complete this internship because he thought working at this specific organization would increase his employability and expand the range of future career opportunities available to him. David also wanted to complete this internship to gain professional experience, especially experience that differed from his job at the time when he worked as a receptionist at a hotel. David graduated in 2023 and now works for an insurance company.

Javier

Javier was born in Wisconsin and moved to Georgia when he was a child. Although he has some Puerto Rican heritage, he identifies solely as Black. Javier spoke English only at home and attended several schools, most of which were diverse. He started learning French in the 8th grade because the language fascinated him. He decided to major in French in college because French was his favorite subject in high school. During his time in the French B.A. program, he completed two internships at the same internship site, an international chamber of commerce, where he focused on marketing and communication during his first semester in the spring of

2023 and business development during his second semester in the fall of 2023. Javier completed these internships because he wanted to gain professional experience while having a flexible option to earn course credits. Indeed, he wanted to complete virtual or hybrid internships because he was working at the time. Javier graduated in 2024 and is currently working as a sales representative, which is the job he had while he completed his internships. He wants to use his French in his future career, which might be in the fields of business, client advisement, business development, marketing, or project management.

Katherine

Katherine was born in the United States, in Georgia, and her family is originally from Peru. She identifies as Latina. Her parents migrated to the United States before Katherine was born and did not speak English when Katherine was a child. She moved to Peru with her family when she was seven years old for two years before moving back to the United States. She attended diverse schools in a suburb of Atlanta. She decided to learn French in middle school because she already knew Spanish. Katherine is the first person in her family to learn French and get a college degree. While in college, she also took Korean courses. After considering a major in music, she decided to major in French to increase her employability. During her French B.A., she completed two internships, one in the spring of 2024 at an international organization that aims to promote and teach the French language and one in the summer of 2024 at a large international nonprofit organization helping refugees. Both internships were in person. Katherine wanted to participate in these internships because she was hoping to improve her language skills, learn how a business operates, and work in an office space, which she had never done before. She also wanted to be exposed to different cultures and gain experience with interpretations to help people who are not fluent in English, which was the case for her parents when she was

growing up. Katherine also needed course credits to graduate because one of her courses had been canceled due to low enrollment. Therefore, she consulted with the Director of the French program, and she completed a second internship so she could graduate on time, which she did in 2024. During the internship, Katherine had a part-time job, and she is currently looking for a full-time job.

Nicole

Nicole is originally from New York but moved to Atlanta when she was nine years old. She identifies as Black. Nicole attended very diverse schools in New York and Atlanta. She spoke English only at home. She started learning French during her freshman year of high school because she did not want to take Spanish. She wanted to be "different" and be able to speak to her three older sisters, who also took French, in a language that nobody else around them could understand. In college, she decided to major in French because she wanted to become a translator-interpreter, travel, and communicate with people. As part of her French B.A., she completed two internships, one in the fall of 2022 at an international organization that promotes and teaches the French language and one in the spring of 2023 at a large international nonprofit organization helping refugees. Her first internship was in-person, and her second internship was fully virtual. Through these internships, Nicole wanted to gain professional experience and improve her language skills. During her internships, Nicole worked full-time as a hostess in the food and beverage department of an amusement arcade. Nicole graduated in 2023 and is currently working for an insurance company in Atlanta as an operations clerk. She would like to stay with this company and intends to move to one of their locations in Canada and use her French professionally.

Ruth

Ruth was born and raised in Nigeria and identifies as a Black woman. She explained that the ways in which she identifies racially and ethnically have changed over time. In Nigeria, where she grew up, her identity was always shaped by her ethnic group, which is Igbo. When she moved to the United States, her identity shifted, and she started identifying as African, Black, or Nigerian. She began learning French in secondary school and used her French when she worked as an immigration officer in Nigeria. She received a B.A. in French from a university located in Nigeria and moved to the United States by herself to attend graduate school. Although she was trying to explore new pathways, she ultimately chose to enroll in the French M.A. program because it offered scholarship opportunities. During her graduate studies, she completed one in-person internship in 2023 that lasted for a full year rather than a semester at a large international non-profit organization helping refugees. Ruth completed this internship because she wanted to gain work experience in the United States. At the time of her internship, Ruth was working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, teaching one or two French courses per semester. Ruth graduated in 2023 and still lives in the United States. She is currently working as a language specialist at a tech company. Her job entails prompt engineering and summarizing sources in French. She is considering transitioning into IT.

Vanessa

Vanessa was born in Chicago but moved to Mexico with her parents, who were born in Mexico, when she was a child. Although Vanessa struggled with her ethnicity growing up, she now feels very proud of her Latina identity. She grew up speaking only Spanish. When she and her parents returned to the United States when she was a child, she took ESOL classes to learn English. She started learning French during her freshman year of high school because she loved the language and French culture, which she discovered while watching movies as a child. She

decided to major in French in college because she loved learning French and wanted to use the language professionally. During her time in the French B.A. program, she completed three internships, one at a chamber of commerce as an event coordinator in the fall of 2023, a second internship in the spring of 2024 at an international organization that aims to promote and teach the French language, and a third internship in the summer of 2024 at an organization helping refugees. Her first internship was hybrid, with weekly virtual meetings and in-person events, and both her second and third internships were fully in-person. Vanessa wanted to complete these internships because she was hoping to improve her language skills and gain professional experience, specifically in the fields of business, marketing, and humanitarian aid. Vanessa chose her third internship site, the organization assisting refugees, specifically because she wanted to help refugees settle in the United States in order to give back to her community. Vanessa also needed course credits to graduate, and one of her courses had been canceled because of low enrollment. After consulting with the Director of the French program, she completed a third internship so she could graduate on time. Vanessa graduated in 2024 and is currently working as a waitress, which is the job she had during her internships. She is also applying for positions in the fields of marketing and humanitarian aid.

Data Collection

As mentioned in Chapter 2, most studies conducted on internships have used survey methods (e.g., Adamczyk et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2022; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018; O'Connor et al., 2021; Sauder et al., 2019). Therefore, qualitative data collection methods such as document analyses, individual interviews, and focus groups are needed to add substance to the existing literature on internships and develop a deeper understanding of students' experiences with internships, specifically in terms of internship outcomes, internship challenges, and students'

strategies to navigate their internships. Data collection in case study methodology is usually extensive and draws on multiple data sources (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Accordingly, I used five data collection methods: (a) recorded internship presentations, (b) internship written reflections, (c) two individual interviews, (d) two focus groups, and (e) a questionnaire.

Internship Presentations

The recorded video presentations that participants gave upon completion of their internships served as the first data collection method. The instructions that participants received before submitting this course assignment were as follows:

> As a final assignment for our internship course, you will prepare a presentation during which you will present your internship experience. You are encouraged to include information about your internship site, your role, the tasks you completed, the outcomes of your internship, and any potential challenges you may have faced and overcome. … You will start by presenting the internship site, then each intern will present their internship experience … Presentations will be in English.

The instructions are presented in more detail in Appendix A. Each semester, interns in the French program are asked to prepare a presentation in English as part of an online French internship event, which is open to all students taking French classes. Students interning during a given semester present at the same event. These events are meant to serve as information sessions for students interested in internships and allow interns to reflect on their internship experience and share their takeaways with an audience. These events last for approximately 75 minutes and are hosted on Webex. Each intern is given five minutes to present their internship site and five minutes to present their internship experience. If several interns participate in an

internship at the same site, they collaborate to present the internship site together during the first five minutes of the presentation. After all presentations are completed, the audience has the opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A in English. The presentations that the participants gave upon completion of their internships were recorded through Webex and were transcribed using the Webex transcription feature.

Presentations given as part of a course requirement may be overly positive, but they can provide insights into the participants' internship experiences soon after they end. To ensure that students feel safe discussing their internship experiences, they are reminded by the internship director that sharing negative feedback does not affect their grades, which is also mentioned in the instructions. I sent both the transcripts and the recorded video presentations to each participant in August 2024, allowing them to verify the accuracy of the transcripts. They were instructed to review the transcripts and watch their presentations to stimulate recall during the first individual interview, which occurred approximately two weeks later. The presentation transcripts were analyzed with attention to internship outcomes, internship challenges, and strategies to navigate internships before conducting the individual interviews.

Written Reflections

The use of documentation as a data collection method can be relevant to any case study because it can not only help researchers make inferences from documents but also help them corroborate or contradict data collected from other sources (Yin, 2018). Accordingly, the written reflections that participants wrote upon completion of their internships were analyzed and served as the second data collection instrument. These reflections were five pages in length and double-spaced, which represented approximately 2,500 words per reflection. The instructions for the reflection included specific guidelines, which are presented in Appendix B. In these reflections,

students taking the internship course are asked to reflect on the tasks they completed as part of their internships, the skills and competencies they developed, the potential challenges they faced, and their takeaways. Before submitting their written reflections, students are reminded by the internship director that sharing negative feelings about their internship experience does not negatively affect their grades.

The reflections were written in French upon completion of the participants' internships. Given that excerpts from the reflections were going to be used to stimulate recall during the individual interviews and be included in the final report of this study, I translated these reflections and provided the translations as well as the original reflections to participants so they could review them approximately two weeks before the first round of individual interviews, which was also intended to stimulate recall. The reflections were analyzed with attention to internship outcomes, internship challenges, and strategies to navigate internship experiences before conducting individual interviews.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews served as the third data collection instrument. I used in-depth interviews, which are "designed to ask participants to reconstruct their experience and explore their meaning" (Seidman, 2019, p. 98), to gain a deeper understanding of participants' internship experiences as well as their unique perceptions of their internships. Seidman (2019) argued that "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). In other words, the goal of in-depth interviews is to have participants reconstruct their lived experiences (Seidman, 2019) and inquire about participants' *subjective understanding*, which can be defined as participants' points of view on their own experiences (Schütz, 1967). Vygotsky (1978) posited that the telling of an

experience is a meaning-making process in itself. Indeed, when participants reconstruct their experience, they make a selection of past events to tell their story, which requires them to assign meaning to past events (Seidman, 2019).

In September 2024, I conducted two semi-structured individual interviews with each participant, the first interview focusing on the participants' backgrounds and some of the practical aspects of their internships (e.g., modality, schedule) and the second interview focusing on their internship experiences. I conducted two interviews because interviewing participants on several occasions can help researchers develop a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences (Seidman, 2019). The interview protocol I followed is included in Appendix C. The first interview (participants' backgrounds) lasted for 90 minutes on average and put the participants' experiences in context. I asked participants to tell me as much as possible about their backgrounds and education so I could develop a better understanding of the ways in which their backgrounds may have informed their internship experiences. Specifically, during this first interview, I asked participants to tell me more about how they identify racially and ethnically, their professional aspirations, and school experiences growing up, how they came to major in French, whether their schooling was a positive or negative experience, and why they decided to complete an internship. I also asked questions about their internship modalities and schedules. I sent the transcripts of the first interviews to the participants approximately one week before the second round of interviews started.

The second interview (participants' internship experiences) lasted approximately 90 minutes and asked participants to reconstruct their lived internship experience. I asked participants to reflect on the meaning they attributed to their internship experience by asking what was positive about the internships and what they enjoyed the most. I encouraged

participants to reflect on what the internship experience meant to them, their perceived outcomes of the internship, how they grew from the experience, the challenges they faced, and how they navigated these challenges. I also asked about the people they worked with, specifically if they worked with people with whom they could identify in terms of race and/or ethnicity, if they experienced any discrimination, and if they felt like they belonged in the organization. To keep a connection between the internship and the first interview, as well as a connection between the first and second interviews, I used stimulated recall by making references to the reflections that participants wrote as well as the presentations they gave upon completion of their internships. Also, during the second round of interviews, I made references to statements participants had made during the first round of interviews.

Participants were given the option to be interviewed either in person or online, and all participants chose the latter option. Several participants no longer lived in the Atlanta metropolitan area, and most of them worked full-time jobs, so the online option was more convenient for them. Interviews were conducted on Webex on the days of the week and at the times chosen by the participants.

Spacing the interviews is an important aspect of in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 2019). Approximately two weeks separated the first round and the second round, which gave the participants enough time to reflect on the previous interview without losing the connection between each interview. According to Seidman (2019), a two- to three-week interviewing process reduces the risk of an *idiosyncratic interview*, that is, an interview in which participants' individual factors may affect the quality of an interview. This spacing also allowed me to generate the transcripts, edit them if needed, send them to the participants for review, and start analyzing them in preparation for the second interview.

All participants had completed the first round of interviews when the second round of interviews started. Although scheduling interviews with eight participants was challenging, finishing the first round of interviews before starting the second one was helpful from a researcher's standpoint so I could focus and reflect on the participants' first interviews before moving on to the next stage of the interview process. Starting the second round of interviews without having completed the first interview with all participants might have been confusing and may not have been as effective from a researcher's standpoint. Overall, the interview process spanned four weeks in September 2024: one week for Interview 1, one week for Interview 2, and one week after each round dedicated to reviewing the transcripts with the participants.

Seidman (2019) argued that interviewing should be viewed as a relationship between the researcher and participants. However, he cautioned that interviewing can be a friendly relationship but not a friendship. Therefore, I ensured to stay connected with participants throughout the study without becoming too informal. I remained available to answer their questions and shared some personal stories during the interviews to help them feel comfortable. My insider positionality, which will be described later in this chapter, and respectful interactions with participants contributed to the establishment of a friendly relationship with the study participants (Seidman, 2019).

Addressing Potential Interviewing Issues

Dilution Effect. The dilution effect occurs when irrelevant information affects the researcher's ability to focus on relevant information (Dana et al., 2013). By conducting two interviews with eight participants, I was exposed to a large amount of data, which made it difficult to focus on the most relevant information at times. I printed a copy of my research questions and placed it on my desk while interviewing the participants and while transcribing,

coding, and analyzing the interview transcripts to ensure that I remained focused on the purpose of the study when collecting and analyzing the data from the interviews.

Sensemaking. Sensemaking can be described as the "ability for interviewers to make sense of virtually anything the interview says" (Dana et al., 2013, p. 512). Although researchers' sensemaking can be positive (Merriam, 1998), some interpretations and conclusions may be imposed by researchers. To minimize the influence of my own assumptions and erroneous interpretations, I deliberately avoided leading questions, asked the participants to clarify their responses whenever they were unclear to me, and encouraged them to elaborate whenever I sensed that more could be said and whenever there was a risk that my perspective might shape their narratives. As previously mentioned, I also employed member checking to ensure that the participants' voices were accurately represented. Each participant received the interview, along with my interpretations, allowing them to request changes. Finally, I used prolonged engagement with interview data by analyzing it on multiple occasions over several months to reduce sensemaking.

Affinity bias. The similar-to-me effect is an affinity bias in which researchers' interpretations may be influenced by the participants to whom they can relate the most, usually in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and origin. Given that I chose to conduct research with participants who belong to racial and ethnic groups that differ from mine, the similar-to-me effect is less likely to have altered my interpretations. However, since I recruited participants who identified as men and women, I ensured that the participants' gender identity did not influence my interpretations. In a similar fashion to sensemaking, clarifications during the interview process, as well as member checking, were important steps to ensure that I did not favor participants to whom I was likely to relate the most.

Focus Groups

Focus groups served as the fourth data collection method. The focus group interview protocol (Appendix D) started with an introduction in which I explained the guidelines for keeping an open and respectful conversation. Next came a warm-up discussion in which participants briefly introduced themselves and their internship experiences. After the warm-up, I asked a total of six questions to the participants, and each of them was given a chance to respond. These questions focused on the most positive aspects of their internships, the most important challenges they faced, and the strategies they used to navigate these challenges, which served as an opportunity to introduce the concept of community cultural wealth by Yosso (2005). Furthermore, focus group questions also asked participants to reflect on the suggestions they had for future interns, their internship sites, and the internship director. All participants took part in the focus groups. To increase flexibility for participants and ensure that the groups were not too large, two focus groups were scheduled in October 2024 based on participants' availability. Focus groups occurred approximately two weeks after the second interview. Each focus group lasted for 90 minutes and had four participants. Given that most participants had full-time jobs and that several of them no longer lived in the area, focus groups were conducted virtually on Webex and video recorded.

My rationale for using focus groups in the study is twofold. First, as a social constructionist, I believe that meaning is socially constructed and negotiated. For this reason, focus groups can help participants recall aspects of their internship experience and co-construct and co-negotiate the meaning that they give to their internship experience. According to Hennink (2007), focus groups "encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues" (p. 6).

Moreover, Liamputtong (2011) argued that "focus group methodology has great potential for discovering the complex layers which shape the individual and collective lived experiences of the research participants" (p. 129).

Second, I chose to use focus groups as a way to reduce my power as the researcher, allowing participants to interact with one another more freely and minimizing my dominance in the conversation (Liamputtong, 2011). Focus groups can help participants feel safe, as they provide research participants opportunities to share information with people from the same socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and gender backgrounds (Madriz, 2003). In other words, focus groups can encourage participants to share information that they may not feel comfortable discussing during individual interviews with the researcher. The purpose of the focus groups in this study was not only to generate additional qualitative data, but also to allow participants to discuss their internship experiences with other former interns and individuals belonging to the same racial and ethnic groups, individuals with whom they could relate. As previously stated, even though I shared similar experiences with some of the participants, such as being an immigrant, having immigrant parents, and having to learn English, I do not belong to the same racial and ethnic groups. Therefore, creating a space in which they could interact with people to whom they could relate not only racially and ethnically but also in terms of their internship experiences was an important step to ensure that they felt safe and comfortable sharing information about their internships.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire, which is presented in Appendix E, served as the final data collection instrument. It was designed on Qualtrics and was sent to the participants right after each focus group ended. Qualitative research sometimes uses numbers to identify patterns in the data

(Marshall et al., 2021). Although most existing studies on internships primarily used survey methods (Hurst et al., 2023; Lambert Snodgrass et al., 2021; McHugh, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2021), administering a questionnaire brought additional insights into the participants' internship outcomes, especially as they explicitly relate to the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and its five goal areas (i.e., *Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities*) as well as the NACE's (2021) eight *Career Readiness Competencies* (*Communication*, *Career and Self-Development*, *Equity and Inclusion*, *Critical Thinking*, *Professionalism*, *Teamwork*, *Technology*, and *Leadership*). Moreover, administering the questionnaire provided additional insights into the participants' use of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and its six forms of capital (*aspirational*, *familial*, *linguistic*, *navigational*, *resistant*, and *social*).

The questionnaire had a total of 29 questions and used a combination of five-point Likert-scaled questions, ranking questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. In the 24 Likert-scale questions (i.e., five for the goal areas of the *World-Readiness Standards*, 11 for the *World-Readiness Standards*, and eight for the *Career-Readiness Competencies*), I asked participants to indicate the extent to which their internships helped them improve in each standard and competency by choosing one of five options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. In the two ranking questions, I asked participants to rank the *World-Readiness Standards* and *Career Readiness Competencies* from the one in which they improved the most to the one in which they improved the least. In the multiple-choice question, I asked participants to choose all the forms of capital from Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth that they had used to navigate their internships. Finally, in the two open-ended questions, I asked if there were additional outcomes or challenges that participants wanted to

report and may have forgotten to mention during the previous stages of the study. The questionnaire was administered to eight participants and generated 14 responses because six participants completed more than one internship, so they were instructed to take the questionnaire for each internship they completed. One participant, Ruth, completed two semesters at the same site and in the same capacity, so she chose to take the questionnaire once.

A second questionnaire was also designed and administered on Qualtrics, which was anonymous and only had one question:

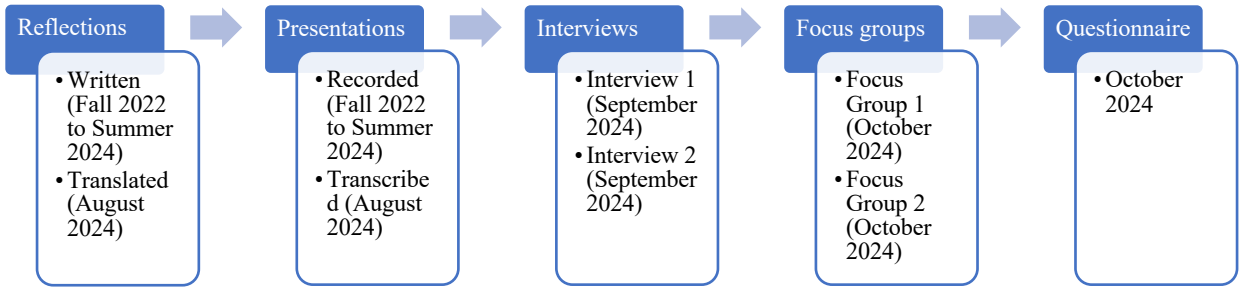
> Is there anything you would like to report anonymously about your internship experience? For instance, issues, challenges, conflicts, discrimination, things that made you feel uncomfortable, things you did not like, etc. Please note that your answers are anonymous. If you want to remain anonymous, make sure you do not include any identifying information in your response (e.g., your name, the name of your supervisor).

The link to this second questionnaire was sent right after all participants had completed the first questionnaire. Administering this second questionnaire was needed to give participants an additional opportunity to share honest feedback about their internship experiences. In fact, given that I am the participants' former internship director, participants may have felt hesitant to share negative feedback about their internship experiences during the interviews and focus groups. Administering an anonymous questionnaire was the most effective strategy to counter this limitation. However, none of the participants took the second questionnaire despite several reminders.

The data collection sequence used in this study is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Data Collection



Alignment between Data Collection and Research Questions

All data collection methods helped answer the three research questions, as they were designed to allow participants to reflect on their internship experiences, specifically in terms of internship outcomes (Research Question 1), internship challenges (Research Question 2), and strategies to navigate internship experiences (Research Question 3). Table 5 shows the alignment between the data collection methods and the research questions.

Table 5

Alignment between Research Questions and Data Collection

Research Questions		Data Collection Methods
1) How do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?	a) How do reported outcomes relate to the ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages? b) How do reported outcomes relate to the NACE's Career Readiness Competencies?	Written reflections, presentations, individual interviews, focus groups, and questionnaire.

Research Questions		Data Collection Methods
2) What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?	a) How do reported challenges relate to race, language, and identity? b) Which factors contribute to the reported internship challenges?	Written reflections, presentations, individual interviews, and focus groups, and questionnaire.
3) What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate their internships?		Written reflections, presentations, individual interviews, focus groups, and questionnaire.

More specifically, the participants submitted written reflections and presentations upon completion of their internships in which they were instructed to reflect on their internship outcomes (Research Question 1), internship challenges (Research Question 2), and how they navigated their internships (Research Question 3). In these written reflections and presentations, I looked for outcomes as they relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards* (Research Question 1a) and NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies* (Research Question 1b). I also used these reflections and presentations to investigate internship challenges (Research Question 2) and the forms of community cultural wealth that the participants used to navigate their internship experiences (Research Question 3).

During the individual interviews and the focus groups, various questions asked participants to reflect on their internship outcomes (Research Question 1), challenges (Research Question 2), and community cultural wealth (Research Question 3). Finally, the questionnaire not only asked participants to report any additional internship outcomes they may have omitted during the individual interviews and the focus group (Research Question 1) but also to report the extent to which their internship outcomes explicitly relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness*

Standards (Research Question 1a) and NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies* (Research Question 1b). The questionnaire also asked participants to report any additional challenges they experienced during their internships (Research Question 2) and the forms of capital they used to navigate their internship experiences (Research Question 3).

Recording, Managing, and Transcribing Data

Individual interviews and focus groups were video recorded using the recording feature on Webex. The presentations that participants gave upon completion of their internships were video recorded using the Webex recording feature upon completion of the participants' internships. This means that the videos were recorded between December 2022 and July 2024. Individual interviews, focus groups, and presentations were transcribed using a broad transcription style, which included all speech utterances and filler words (Henderson, 2018). All words that individuals utter can reflect their consciousness (Vygotsky, 1978), so keeping all utterances in a transcript may reveal instances when participants become hesitant, confused, or do not fully understand a question, which could indicate the need for a follow-up question or a follow-up interview. Moreover, transcribing and translating involve judgment and interpretation (Marshall et al., 2021). Indeed, Wengraf (2001) argued that transcribed and/or translated data is no longer raw data, but rather processed data. For this reason, I used member checking by providing copies of transcripts to the participants so they could verify that the transcripts accurately reflected their voices. I translated the reflections that participants wrote upon completion of their internships from French to English. Because translating data is interpretive and subjective (Marshall et al., 2021; Wengraf, 2001), I provided the translations of the reflections to participants, along with a copy of their original reflections written in French, to ensure that the translations accurately reflected their voices.

I used Webex to transcribe the individual interviews, focus groups, and presentations. To ensure that I remained immersed in the data, I transcribed each interview and focus group within the next few days and read each transcript right after it was generated. I also took notes on my thoughts and impressions right after collecting data. I read the data on multiple occasions and at different times of the day. During each stage of the data collection sequence, I kept detailed field notes that were stored in a password-protected computer. My notes included descriptions, interpretations, and reflections (Schwandt, 2015). In the descriptions, I took detailed notes on factual information about the setting, participants, behaviors, and conversations. In the interpretations, I wrote about the meaning I attributed to what I observed and the reasons why it was significant or relevant to the study. Finally, in the reflections, I documented my thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns.

Given that I used five data collection methods and conducted the study with eight participants, organizing the data was an important step. All data was stored in a password-protected computer. To organize the data, I used the nodes feature on NVivo. I created case nodes for each participant so I could easily store and retrieve data associated with each participant and data collection instrument. I also sorted the data based on the research questions, with three overarching categories, which were internship outcomes, internship challenges, and strategies to navigate internships.

Data Analysis

Case studies require specific data analysis processes (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Yet, methodologists rarely agree on the most effective approaches to analyze case study data (Yazan, 2015). In the present study, data analysis was guided by the purpose of the study, which was to understand and describe the internship experiences of students from

historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program, with special attention to internship outcomes, internship challenges, and students' strategies to navigate their internships. For this reason, I used a *thematic analysis*, which is the process of identifying themes within qualitative data (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022), to analyze the data and identify themes as they relate to each research question. I also used an interactional analysis for focus group data. Finally, I used descriptive statistics for Likert-scale items and ranking items in the questionnaire.

Data analysis processes were also guided by my social constructivist epistemological perspective. Indeed, as a social constructivist, I believe that an emerging design that adapts to the data collected is the most effective to address the purpose of the study while remaining open to constructing the research *with* the participants. Merriam (1998) argued that data analysis is "the process of making sense out of the data... [which] involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning" (p. 178). Accordingly, data analysis was recursive and dynamic, meaning that data was collected and analyzed simultaneously (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006; Merriam, 1998). I started analyzing data within each stage of the data collection sequence and adapted the design of the study if needed. For instance, I prepared some follow-up questions to ask during the second interview based on the discussion that occurred during the first interview.

Coding

Saldaña (2016) defined a *code* as "a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (p. 4). To identify

themes as part of the thematic analysis, I analyzed written reflections, answers to open-ended questions in the questionnaire, and transcripts (presentations, individual interviews, and focus groups) using two cycles of coding (Saldaña, 2016), which are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Coding Phases

Phase	Procedure
First cycle of coding	I used open descriptive coding during a first cycle of coding to analyze the data inductively, without using preestablished codes, and let codes emerge directly from the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967/2006; Saldaña, 2016).
Code mapping and diagraming	I used code maps as well as diagrams to help me sort and visualize codes. I refined codes by creating categories (Saldaña, 2016).
Second cycle of coding	I used axial coding during a second cycle of coding to identify the connections between codes and develop a better sense of the categorical, thematic, conceptual, and theoretical organization of the data (Bingham, 2023; Charmaz, 2006; Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

Note. Adapted from Saldaña (2016).

An initial cycle of inductive coding is widely accepted as an effective approach to qualitative data analysis, and scholars have argued that inductive analysis is a defining feature and strength of qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Saldaña, 2016; Yin, 2018). Accordingly, during Cycle 1, I used descriptive open coding to assign codes inductively. Saldaña (2016) explained that descriptive coding "summarizes in a word or short phrase—most often a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 102) and argued that it is appropriate for all qualitative studies.

Between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, I organized the codes by using multiple iterations of code mapping. I created lists of codes from Cycle 1, categorized them, and condensed them based on

the study's central themes: internship outcomes, internship challenges, and strategies to navigate internships. I also used diagrams to help me visualize and refine the different categories that emerged from code mapping. During Cycle 2, I used axial coding not only to create connections between the initial codes but also to "develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 234). Saldaña (2016) argued that the research questions influence the coding choices that qualitative researchers make, and Bingham (2023) posited that conceptualization and theorization are important aspects of coding. Therefore, I used axial coding to turn codes and categories into themes and relate them to the research questions and the four theories guiding the study.

I used NVivo to help me code the data. Specifically, I utilized word frequency queries to identify the words that are most often used in the data and word clouds to visualize the various contexts in which given words appear. I also used highlight and annotation tools to select excerpts and assign codes, as well as thematic nodes and case nodes to help me build and review the assigned codes while keeping track of what each participant had said regarding each code. Finally, I used coding queries to ensure that codes did not overlap, as well as graphs to help me visualize the excerpts associated with each code.

Saldaña (2016) argued that researchers rarely get coding right the first time around. Therefore, I left several days between cycles of coding in order to avoid idiosyncratic analyses (Seidman, 2019). I remained flexible in the labeling of codes, categories, and themes as finalizing them prematurely can limit findings and reduce the trustworthiness of the study (Seidman, 2019). I used prolonged engagement with the data (Marshall et al., 2021) by going over the data over a long period of time and on multiple occasions, which allowed me to revisit the codes, categories, and themes while ensuring that I did not impose my codes and themes on

the data (Saldaña, 2016). Finally, I wrote analytical memos to reflect on my thoughts, ideas, questions, coding choices, and data analysis decisions throughout the data analysis process.

Interactional Analysis

Concerning the analysis of focus group data, I combined a thematic analysis, which focused on what each participant said, and an interactional analysis, which focused on the interactions and dynamics within the group (Morgan, 2012). As a social constructionist, I believe that meaning is socially constructed and negotiated, therefore, the interactional nature of focus groups, which is often ignored by researchers (Morgan, 2012), is an important step to gain a deeper understanding of the group interactions and dynamics as they relate to participants' internship experiences. During the interactional analysis, I reviewed the focus group transcripts and took notes using Stevens' (1996) group interaction analysis guiding questions (see Appendix F). For instance, to ensure that I accounted for group interactions in addition to individual perspectives, I identified and analyzed the specific issues that resulted in agreement and disagreement.

Descriptive Statistics

I used Qualtrics to calculate the mean scores and standard deviations for Likert-scale and ranking items on the questionnaire. The Likert-scale items were rated with a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The ranking items for the first ranking question (i.e., ranking the five goal areas of the *World-Readiness Standards*) were also rated with a 5-point scale: 1 = 5th rank, 2 = 4th rank, 3 = 3rd rank, 4 = 2nd rank, and 5 = 1st rank. The ranking items for the second ranking question (i.e. ranking the eight *Career Readiness Competencies*) were rated with an 8-point scale: 1 = 8th rank, 2 = 7th rank, 3 = 6th rank, 4 = 5th rank, 5 = 4th rank, 6 = 3rd rank, 7 = 2nd rank, and 8 = 1st rank. The mean

scores and standard deviations gave me a better understanding of the extent to which participants' internship outcomes related to the *Word-Readiness Standards* (Research Question 1a) and the *Career Readiness Competencies* (Research Question 1b). It is important to note that my rationale for including and analyzing descriptive statistics in the study was not to collect quantitative data but rather to gain a deeper understanding of participants' self-reported internship outcomes as they relate to the aforementioned standards and competencies.

Positionality

A positionality statement is an important aspect of ethical and trustworthy qualitative research (Marshall et al., 2021). As previously discussed, my positionality does not fit into the insider/outsider binary. Like many qualitative researchers, I situate myself within a complex and fluid continuum of positionalities (Yip, 2023). From an insider standpoint, I interacted with the participants before the study started in my capacity as Lecturer of French, which is a permanent appointment at the institution in which the study took place. The French program at the institution offers approximately 20 courses per semester with a maximum capacity of 30 students per course, but the program only has two permanent faculty members. Therefore, all participants took at least three courses with me, most of which were advanced-level courses. I was also the faculty member who directed their internships. Additionally, most participants attended between one and three networking events outside of class time with me, during which we interacted. Since the participants' graduation, I have had limited contact with them. When the study started, all participants had graduated, so none were taking courses with me.

From an outsider's standpoint, I believe it is important to note that I do not belong to the same racial, ethnic, nationalistic, linguistic, and generational groups as the participants in the study. Indeed, I identify as a White man from France, and my native language is French.

Although I have lived in a large and diverse metropolitan area for the past 10 years and taught at a PBI for nine years, I grew up in a small city in the south of France and went to schools where most students were White or North African, so I did not interact with many individuals identifying as Black, Latinx, or Afro-Latinx until I became an adult and moved to the United States.

I believe that combining emic and etic perspectives was ideal in this study. On the one hand, an insider's position helped me gain access to the research site and increase the quality of the data I collected. Indeed, the participants already knew me, and we had already established rapport, which meant they may have been more inclined to share information about their backgrounds, internship experiences, and their lives in general. An insider positionality also creates a more equal relationship between the researcher and participants (Chavez, 2008) and presents benefits when collecting and analyzing the data. Because I already knew the participants, it was easier for me to detect participants' hidden behaviors, perceptions, and nonverbal communication cues (Chavez, 2008). On the other hand, an outsider positionality helped me remain focused on the goal of the study and its research questions without becoming too familiar or informal with the participants. Given that my life experiences differ from those of the participants, I practiced reflexivity throughout the study using field notes in which I reflected on my positionality and my identity, and the ways in which they informed the study. I also collaborated with two peer researchers who belong to the same racial and ethnic groups as the participants to ensure that I do not misrepresent them.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important aspect of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that trustworthiness can be achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility can be understood as the extent to which findings accurately reflect participants' experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, a credible study provides data that is both accurate and representative of participants' voices. To increase the credibility of the findings, I used crystallization (Richardson, 1994) across theoretical lenses, methods, data sources, and analysts. Crystallization across theoretical lenses was achieved through the intersection of four theoretical perspectives, namely the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (NSCB, 2015), the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021), LangCrit (Crump, 2014), and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Crystallization across methods was achieved through the use of multiple data collection methods, including internship presentations, written reflections, individual interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire. I drew from these five methods to provide rich, detailed, and rigorous descriptions of the participants' experiences. I used crystallization across data sources by creating connections between the narratives of the eight participants. Regarding crystallization across data analysts, I sought assistance from two peer researchers, one identifying as Black and one identifying as Latina, who helped me review the data and ensure that I did not misrepresent the participants.

I also used extended involvement with the research by interacting with participants regularly and over an extended period of time to get comprehensive insights into their internship experiences. I made sure that I did not ask leading questions during the interviews and focus,

which can influence participants and encourage them to provide the responses that researchers seek (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). Instead, I asked open-ended questions and avoided interrupting the participants or reinforcing their responses. More importantly, I asked the participants to reconstruct their experiences and tell their stories rather than relying solely on the questions I asked.

Transferability

Transferability, which has also been referred to as usefulness (Marshall et al., 2021), can be defined as the extent to which findings can be applied to contexts other than the one under investigation. Although generalizability is not the goal of the present study and the research setting in which the study was conducted is strongly influenced by unique contextual factors such as the university setting, the program under study, and the unique characteristics of the participants, providing detailed information about the study, including its setting and sampling, is an important step to ensure that readers can assess the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the present chapter, I provided detailed information about the study, including its design, setting, and participants. I also used thick descriptions when presenting and discussing the findings to ensure that readers can assess the transferability of the findings.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research over time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To increase the dependability, transparency, and traceability of the study, I provided an explicit and detailed account of the research procedures to create an audit trail. I used field notes and memos in which I documented and reflected on the methodological decisions and changes I made throughout the study. I also looked at the data on multiple

occasions to increase the consistency and stability of the data analysis processes. I kept a printed copy of the research questions, which are the foundation of any case study design (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018), when collecting and analyzing the data to ensure that I remained consistent and focused on the purpose of the study.

Confirmability

The final criterion of trustworthiness, *confirmability*, measures the extent to which the findings and analyses are unbiased and could be confirmed by another study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although I neither believe that research studies can ever be objective or neutral nor that qualitative studies are meant to be replicable (Marshall et al., 2021), attempting to reduce the researcher's biases, preconceptions, and assumptions can increase the confirmability of the study. To do so, I practiced *reflexivity*, which can be defined as a "set of continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through which researchers self-consciously critique, appraise, and evaluate how their subjectivity and context influence the research processes" (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023, p. 242). Throughout the study, I used journaling to reflect on my positionality, subjectivity, biases, and assumptions, and the ways in which they may shape my interpretations. I also used peer debriefing by asking a more experienced researcher to review my interpretations and ensure that they were based on the data rather than my biases. Confirmability was also achieved through member checking. Each participant was given the transcripts of the interviews, focus groups, and presentations, as well as the draft of the present dissertation, before it was finalized. Each participant had the opportunity to request that information be removed, added, clarified, or modified.

Equity and Ethical Considerations

Equity is a foundational aspect of the present research study. In this context, equity refers to ensuring fairness and justice in the treatment, representation, and inclusion of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Conducting more qualitative research that amplifies the perspectives of these students is critical, particularly at a time when student populations are becoming increasingly diverse (NCES, 2023) and inequities continue to affect the U.S. education system (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Seidman (2019) argued that equity should drive every aspect of a study, stating that "striving for equity is not only an ethical imperative; it is also a methodological one" (p. 117).

To design research ethically, protecting participants' identities was paramount. Participants chose their pseudonyms to protect their privacy, and all information collected during the study was stored in password-protected folders on a password-protected computer. Explicitly outlining the purposes and processes of the inquiry is another critical aspect of ethical research. Seidman (2019) emphasized that participation in a study "must be based on being informed, not persuaded" (p. 148). I provided detailed consent forms to the participants so they understood the purpose of the research as well as its processes before agreeing to participate. I was also available to address any questions or concerns they had before agreeing to participate. Finally, I reminded the participants that they could decide to leave the study at any point.

Scheduling interviews and focus groups based on participants' availability and preferences is another critical aspect of ethical research. I offered participants a wide range of days and times to ensure that interviews and focus groups did not conflict with their work and personal schedules. To provide more flexibility, I also gave participants the option to participate

in the interviews and focus groups remotely. Virtual interviews were conducted via Webex, and I used headphones in a private room to ensure confidentiality.

Maintaining equity and ethical standards in research involves navigating various challenges, such as managing power dynamics between the researcher and participants. I addressed this challenge by engaging in ongoing reflection and empowering the participants. For instance, I ensured that participants felt comfortable sharing their life stories by emphasizing that I wanted to learn more about their internships, including the potential negative aspects of their experiences. I developed a friendly relationship with the participants and shared some of my personal stories to help them feel comfortable.

Reciprocity is also a key aspect of ethical research, especially when involving participants from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. To give back, I shared the findings with participants at the end of the study to demonstrate that our work had real-world implications. Specifically, I explained to the participants that their stories had the potential to inspire future generations of students to participate in internships and help internship stakeholders design internships that are more accessible and equitable. Ethical research also entails sharing accurate accounts of participants' experiences. I used thick descriptions, direct quotes, member checking, and peer debriefing to ensure that I honored participants' words and did not misrepresent them. Finally, I used crystallization across data sources and participants (Denzin, 1970/2017) and included a detailed description of my reflexivity and positionality to ensure that readers understand how my perspectives, worldviews, and values informed the study and the ways in which data were collected and analyzed. This approach ensured methodological rigor and transparency in the research process.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Internship Outcomes

In this chapter, findings are presented in alignment with the three research questions, each reported in turn. The first research question guiding the study was: *How do students from historically marginalized communities in a world language program describe their internship outcomes?* I first report participants' internship outcomes as they relate to the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards*, then the NACE's *Career Readiness Competencies*. After reporting the ways in which participants explicitly expressed the extent to which their internship outcomes related to each standard and competency in the questionnaire, I provide additional insights from the analysis of the other four data sources.

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

In the questionnaire, which was administered to eight participants for each internship they completed, thus generating 14 responses, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their internship outcomes related to each of the five goal areas (*Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities*) and 11 standards of the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) by selecting one of five options for each goal area and standard: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, or Strongly Agree. A summary of their responses is presented in Table 7, including both the number of participant responses ($N = 14$) and the corresponding percentages.

Table 7

Summary of the Questionnaire's Likert-Scale Items (World-Readiness Standards)

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Communication	6	42	1	7	3	21	3	21	1	7
Interpersonal Communication	5	35	4	28	2	14	1	7	2	14
Interpretive Communication	2	14	8	57	1	7	2	14	1	7
Presentational Communication	2	14	6	42	0	0	4	28	2	14
Cultures	5	35	7	50	2	14	0	0	0	0
Relating Cultural Practices	4	28	6	42	2	14	1	7	1	7
Relating Cultural Products	1	7	7	50	2	14	3	21	1	7
Connections	4	28	4	28	3	21	1	7	2	14
Making Connections	2	14	7	50	0	0	3	21	2	14
Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives	2	14	6	42	2	14	3	21	1	7
Comparisons	2	14	9	64	2	14	1	7	0	0
Language Comparisons	0	0	12	85	0	0	1	7	1	7
Cultural Comparisons	0	0	8	57	1	7	2	14	2	14
Communities	4	28	7	50	0	0	2	14	1	7
School and Global Communities	2	14	6	42	3	21	2	14	1	7
Lifelong Learning	3	21	4	28	6	42	0	0	1	7

Note. N = 14 responses corresponding to the 14 internships completed by the eight participants.

The Likert-scale items for each goal area were rated on a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 8. The mean scores suggest that *Cultures* was the goal area in which respondents improved the most (M = 4.21). *Comparisons* was second (M = 3.86), *Communities* third (M = 3.79), and *Communication* fourth (M = 3.57). The mean scores on the Likert-scale items also suggest that *Connections* was the goal area in which respondents improved the least (M = 3.50).

Table 8

Questionnaire Results on the Goal Areas of the World-Readiness Standards

	M	*SD*
Cultures	4.21	.67
Comparisons	3.86	.74
Communities	3.79	1.21
Communication	3.57	1.40
Connections	3.50	1.35

Note. Listed from the highest to the lowest mean score.

The questionnaire also asked participants to report the extent to which they improved in each of the 11 standards of the *World-Readiness Standards* using a 5-point Likert scale. The means scores and standard deviation, which are described in the subsequent sections of the chapter, are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Questionnaire Results on the World-Readiness Standards

Rank	Standard	Goal Area	*M*	*SD*
1	Relating Cultural Practices	Cultures	3.79	1.15
2	Interpersonal Communication	Communication	3.64	1.39
2	Language Comparisons	Comparisons	3.64	.89
4	Interpretive Communication	Communication	3.57	1.12
4	Lifelong Learning	Communities	3.57	1.05
6	School and Global Communities	Communities	3.43	1.12
7	Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives	Connections	3.36	1.17
8	Relating Cultural Products	Cultures	3.29	1.10
8	Making Connections	Connections	3.29	1.33
10	Presentational Communication	Communication	3.14	1.36
11	Cultural Comparisons	Comparisons	3.00	1.25

Note. Listed from the highest to the lowest mean score.

In the questionnaire, respondents were also asked to rank the five goal areas of the *World-Readiness Standards* from the one in which they improved the most to the one in which they improved the least. The ranking items were rated using a 5-point scale: 1 = 5th rank, 2 = 4th rank, 3 = 3rd rank, 4 = 2nd rank, and 5 = 1st rank. Mean scores, which are presented in Table 10, suggest that the goal area in which respondents improved the most was *Cultures* (*M* = 3.29). The second area in which they improved the most was *Communication* (*M* = 3.21), then *Communities* (*M* = 2.93), and *Comparisons* (*M* = 2.71). *Connections* received the lowest mean score (*M* = 2.71), suggesting that it was the goal area in which participants improved the least.

Table 10

Questionnaire Results on the Rankings of the World-Readiness Standards

Goal Areas	*M*	*SD*
Cultures	3.29	1.58
Communication	3.21	1.32
Communities	2.93	1.10
Comparisons	2.86	1.30
Connections	2.71	1.62

Note. Listed from the highest to the lowest mean score.

Three goal areas were consistent across the analyses of the Likert-scale responses and ranking responses. *Cultures* had the highest mean score in both analyses, *Communities* had the third highest mean scores, and *Connections* had the lowest mean scores. Conversely, the mean scores for *Comparisons* and *Communication* were not consistent. As shown in Table 8 and Table 10, *Comparisons* had the second-highest mean score on the Likert scale (*M* = 3.86) but the fourth highest (or second lowest) on the ranking scale (*M* = 2.86). *Communication* had the fourth-highest mean score on the Likert scale (*M* = 3.57) but the second-highest mean score on the

ranking scale (M = 3.21). Findings from the questionnaire and the other four data collection methods provide clarification and additional insights for each goal area and standard.

Goal Area 1: Communication

Most respondents to the questionnaire reported having improved their communication skills in the target language. The questionnaire asked participants the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to communicate effectively in French in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes." Six respondents strongly agreed, one agreed, three were undecided, three disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, seven respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and four either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As previously stated, *Communication* had the fourth-highest mean score (M = 3.57) on the Likert scale and the second-highest mean score on the ranking scale (M = 3.21), which indicates that *Communication* was somewhat emphasized during these internships but that it was not the goal area in which respondents improved the most.

The discrepancy found in the mean scores between the Likert scale and the ranking scale may indicate that respondents did not fully agree with the fact that their internships improved their communication skills in the target language. As indicated in the participant descriptions included in Chapter 3, all participants in the study expressed a strong desire to complete the internships to improve their communication skills in the target language. Therefore, we can assume that they were hoping to be exposed to the target language and have opportunities to use it to communicate. The higher mean score on the ranking scale may indicate that *Communication* was among the goal areas in which participants improved the most, but the lower mean score on the Likert scale suggests that respondents may not have improved their communication skills as much as they were hoping for.

Claudia (both internships), **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (both internships), **Nicole** (first internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (all three internships) made explicit references to the improvement of their communication skills in the target language in their presentations and reflections as well as during the individual interviews and focus groups. Only **Antonio**, **David**, and **Nicole** (second internship) did not emphasize the improvement of their language skills. Specifically, **Claudia** (second internship), **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (both internships), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second and third internships) reported that their internships helped them build their vocabulary and learn new expressions. In her reflection, **Nicole** explained that her first internship enabled her to use words she had learned in class while learning new words, expressions, and proverbs, "I learned how to use French expressions and speak with [my internship supervisor] in a more natural setting. Since I studied international business, I used vocabulary that I had learned in my courses." **Claudia** also referred to the enrichment of her vocabulary and said that the interpretations she did for French-speaking clients during her second internship helped her expand her vocabulary because she would look for the words she did not know on her phone and use them in context with native speakers. Interestingly, the lack of new vocabulary is one of the aspects that **Claudia** found most disappointing about her first internship, which did not involve interpretations or many tasks overall. **Javier** also referred to the improvement of his vocabulary, "And we were learning so many different words!" **Ruth** reported that she did not learn a lot of new words or structures in French, but she said that her speech became more fluent. She compared her work as a Graduate Teaching Assistant teaching French courses with her work as an intern and said:

> [For the classes I taught], I had to prepare my slides, so I already had notes on what to teach … But the internship was more like everyday life, spontaneous. You don't have to think, you just say it. It's just like you're having everyday conversations.

Interestingly, very few participants made explicit references to grammar. **Nicole** was one of the few participants who did so, "Because this is a nonprofit organization that has French speakers and teachers who can help you with pronunciation, communication, and grammar, that really helped me with my French classes at the time." The lack of explicit references to grammar might indicate that the participants in the study were hoping to improve their communication skills rather than their grammatical knowledge, and/or that their internships did not place a strong emphasis on explicit grammar instruction.

A central theme related to the *Communication* goal area was the increased confidence in using the target language to communicate. **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) reported that they felt more confident speaking French after the completion of their internships, mostly because they were immersed in a French-speaking environment. **Katherine** stated during her second interview, "We had to speak French all the time, so it definitely helped me practice the language." **Vanessa** wrote in her reflection about her second internship, "My French language skills improved significantly thanks to immersion in a French-speaking environment and regular interaction with students and colleagues." For **Nicole**, immersion in the target came as a pleasant surprise, "I wasn't expecting it. I thought it [would be] a brief exposure to the French culture, but not really the language. It surprised me. It was great!" She then explained that exposure to the language led to increased confidence, "I was speaking a lot of French. That correlates with

confidence also with speaking in French. Well, I keep repeating confidence. It's the main thing that I noticed that made a major improvement at the time."

In certain cases, participants were able to monitor their progress, which also bolstered their confidence. **Katherine** explained:

> I think I gained a bit more confidence in speaking French … Over time, [my internship supervisors] would help me fix my mistakes. I think it helped me in that sense. And they mentioned that my French was better at the end of my internship.

Nicole reported similar outcomes during her second interview, "I did see improvements in my French skills. So, that's when I realized, oh my God, this has actually helped me a lot more than I expected." She then explained that she saw her improvement reflected in the feedback from her professors, "I felt more confident speaking in French. [My professor] would give us feedback, and I did feel like I saw improvements with my skills in [his] feedback." **Javier** discussed the networking events he attended as well, and the fact that meeting native French speakers through these events boosted his confidence:

> I had the opportunity to speak without feeling like I'm going to mess up, which we're going to mess up no matter what. Nobody speaks perfect French in the first place … So, it gave me the confidence to say what I needed to say. I know how to say a lot of things anyway, but it felt reassuring. It was a comfortable and safe space to speak French.

During the job fair organized by her first internship site, **Katherine** met with French business leaders and made a point of speaking French with them. She was pleased to see that she was able to understand most of what was said to her that day, which made her feel proud of herself:

> I feel like it helped me improve my spoken French, and just being able to speak with people in French. When I studied in France, I was very nervous to speak to people in

French, and sometimes I would just speak English. But now I'm more confident in that way. So, I think that helped me in my goals.

Moreover, certain tasks, such as interpretations for French-speaking clients, were particularly beneficial in boosting participants' confidence in their communication skills. Although the participants who had to interpret reported that interpretations were among the most challenging tasks they had to perform, **Vanessa**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Claudia** all said that the opportunity to interpret in the target language boosted their confidence and fluency.

In addition to increased vocabulary and confidence, which do not fit within specific *Communication* standards, the study provides findings on the extent to which internship outcomes relate to the three standards within the *Communication* goal area, which are *Interpersonal Communication*, *Interpretive Communication*, and *Presentational Communication.*

Standard 1.1: Interpersonal Communication. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to interact and negotiate meaning in spoken or written conversations in French to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions." Five respondents strongly agreed, four agreed, two were undecided, one disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Overall, nine respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *Interpersonal Communication* had the highest mean score across the three modes of communication ($M = 3.64$), indicating that respondents felt slightly more confident about the improvement of their interpersonal communication skills than their interpretive communication skills ($M = 3.57$) and more confident about their progress in presentational communication ($M = 3.14$). Moreover, when comparing the mean scores of the 11 *World-Readiness Standards*, *Interpersonal Communication* had the second-highest mean across all

standards, which indicates that *Interpersonal Communication* was among the most emphasized standards during these internships.

Qualitative data also indicate that *Interpersonal Communication* was the *Communication* standard in which the participants improved the most during their internships. However, spoken interpersonal communication was emphasized far more than written interpersonal communication, with no participant reporting having to write spontaneously in French. Whether they spoke with their internship supervisors, colleagues, or clients, most participants used French regularly in spontaneous interactions. **Claudia** said during her presentation about her first internship, "I have to say that my language improved. I was talking French the whole time." She even referred to interpersonal communication explicitly during her presentation, "This internship helps you improve your French language, but also improve your interpersonal communication skills. And that's something that I want to highlight." **Ruth** stated that she spoke French most of the time as well, which made her spoken French more spontaneous, "Some days, from morning until I leave, I was speaking French on the phone, face to face, and it became spontaneous." She even reported thinking in French, "Even [when] talking to myself, I [saw] myself saying it in French, you know, even talking to my colleagues, I [would] be saying it in French."

As previously discussed, **Claudia, Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** engaged in interpretations for French-speaking clients, which was beneficial for their interpersonal communication skills. **Claudia** mentioned in her presentation about her second internship, "I helped a lot with translation and interpretation in the French language. So, I can say that my French language level improved 100%." **Vanessa** used French every day of her internships and said during her presentation about her third internship, "Every day that I was in the office, I would always interpret for my supervisor's clients, whether that be French or Spanish. So,

whenever my supervisor needed me to interpret, I would always be there to interpret for the families." In her reflection, **Ruth** reported similar outcomes and highlighted the positive effect that interpretations had on the fluidity of her spoken French:

> The opportunity to interpret provided a rare platform to enhance my French skills. I believe there is a difference between speaking French casually with friends or in the office and being suddenly called upon to interpret. The latter doesn't give you much time to think or formulate sentences and requires knowledge of interpretation techniques that cannot be ignored … Through continuous practice, I managed to adapt linguistically. After two semesters of interpretation, I speak more fluently and am more comfortable with French.

In summary, findings across all data sources highlight that *Interpersonal Communication* was one of the 11 standards of the *World-Readiness Standards* in which participants improved the most. Participants appreciated the opportunity to communicate with colleagues, clients, and community members, which made their spoken French more fluent. However, interpersonal communication was only practiced through speaking and not writing.

Standard 1.2: Interpretive Communication. Concerning *Interpretive Communication*, respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed in French on a variety of topics." Two respondents strongly agreed, eight agreed, one was undecided, two disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, 10 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *Interpretive Communication* had the second highest mean score within the *Communication* goal area ($M = 3.57$), indicating that respondents felt more confident in

comparison to their presentational communication ($M = 3.00$), but slightly less confident in comparison to their interpersonal communication ($M = 3.64$).

Based on the qualitative data, fewer participants made explicit references to their interpretive communication skills when compared to their interpersonal communication. As far as the *Interpretive Communication* standard is concerned, listening seems to have been emphasized far more than reading. Indeed, all participants except **Nicole** (second internship) were exposed to significant amounts of oral input in the target language, but few were exposed to written texts. **Nicole** (first internship) explained in her written reflection that she noticed that each week, her listening comprehension improved. She attended the movie events that were organized by her internship site, which fostered her listening skills. **Claudia** stated that the networking events she attended as part of her first internship and the interpretation sessions during her second internship helped her with her listening skills because she heard a lot of people speaking French around her. **Javier**, who had weekly meetings in French with his supervisor and who attended various networking events during which he interacted with native speakers, discussed the fact that his internships helped him realize that his listening interpretive communication skills were better than he thought, "I would be surprised sometimes with the level that I could understand, you know? Like, wow, I understand that." **Vanessa** wrote about her second internship, "My time at [the organization] allowed me to enhance my French language skills significantly. Through immersion in a French-speaking environment and engaging with students and colleagues, I became more confident and proficient in both speaking and understanding the language."

As for *Interpersonal Communication*, the outcomes related to *Interpretive Communication* were greatly influenced by the type of tasks that participants performed. The

participants who engaged in interpretations, such as **Claudia**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa**, had to learn to listen very carefully to oral input so they could interpret for their French-speaking clients and provide accurate information to them. Moreover, participants who received instructions and feedback in French also reported significant progress in their listening skills.

However, reading was not emphasized in any of the internships that participants completed. **Javier** and **Ruth** explicitly stated that they never had to read anything French, so they did not feel as though their interpretive written communication improved. **Nicole** (both internships) is the only participant who explicitly reported being exposed to written French and got to practice her reading skills:

> I was with the membership services, and their database and their website were in French, so I had to navigate through a lot and figure out terms … The work and tasks were a lot more engaging because their database is partially in French. So, I would just read over everything.

She stated that she had to read documents in French during her second internship as well, "All the documents provided by [my internship site] were in all the languages the organization offers. I can say that my reading comprehension in French has improved."

To conclude, *Interpretive Communication* was strongly emphasized, but its outcomes depended greatly on the extent to which participants were exposed to oral input in the target language and the type of tasks they performed. Moreover, listening comprehension was emphasized far more than reading comprehension, with only one participant explicitly reporting improvement in her reading skills.

Standard 1.3: Presentational Communication. In the questionnaire, participants were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to present

information, concepts, and ideas in French to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers." Two respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, none were undecided, four disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and six either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *Interpersonal Communication* had the lowest mean score within the *Communication* goal area ($M = 3.14$), indicating that respondents felt less confident about the improvement of their presentational communication skills when compared to their interpersonal communication ($M = 3.64$) and interpretive communication ($M = 3.57$). These findings suggest that these internships did not foster presentational communication as much as interpretive and interpersonal communication. Moreover, it is noteworthy that *Presentational Communication* had the second lowest mean score across the 11 *World-Readiness Standards*, which indicates that, although the other two modes of communication were strongly emphasized, *Presentational Communication* was among the least emphasized standards during these internships.

The lack of emphasis on the *Presentational Communication* standard that was highlighted in the questionnaire is corroborated by qualitative data in which participants made few references to their presentational communication. Specifically, written presentational communication was not emphasized in any of these internships. Indeed, only three participants, **Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Vanessa**, had to write and edit texts in the target language. Additionally, **Javier** and **Ruth** explicitly stated that they never had to write anything in French, whether it was spontaneous or edited writing. **Vanessa** explained that she gained confidence in her ability to communicate effectively in writing, mostly through the tasks that were assigned to her during her first internship, during which she had to create posts in French for social media platforms.

Katherine also referred to some writing tasks in which she had to create flyers about movies in French, which involved some writing and editing in the target language, although she did not report that her written French improved significantly. Finally, **Nicole** wrote in her reflection that her first internship taught her how to send emails in French using proper formalities.

If participants engaged in presentational communication, it was mostly through writing, with social media posts, flyers, and emails. None of the participants had to use the presentational mode of communication through speaking. Indeed, none of them reported having to give presentations in French or communicate orally using rehearsed and edited language. Most of the spoken language the participants produced was spontaneous, thus contributing to the *Interpersonal Communication* standard, which confirms that interpersonal communication was emphasized far more than presentational communication.

Goal Area 2: Cultures

The study also provides data on the extent to which internship outcomes relate to the *Cultures* goal area. In the questionnaire, when asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to interact with cultural competence and understanding," five respondents strongly agreed, seven agreed, two were undecided, none disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 12 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and none disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is noteworthy that *Cultures* was the only goal area with which none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. As previously stated, the *Cultures* goal area had the highest mean scores on the Likert scale ($M = 4.21$) and the ranking scale ($M = 3.29$), which suggests that the *Cultures* goal area was the most emphasized during these internships. More specifically, the study provides data on the extent to which internship

outcomes relate to the two standards within the *Cultures* goal area, which are *Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives* and *Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives.*

Standard 2.1: Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives. In the questionnaire, when asked whether respondents agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between cultural practices (i.e., patterns and norms of social interactions such as etiquette, body language, gender roles, space, and time) and cultural perspectives (e.g., meanings, attitudes, values, ideas) of French and/or Francophone cultures," four respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, two were undecided, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, 10 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, and two either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, the *Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives* standard not only had a higher mean score than the other standard within the *Cultures* goal area (i.e., *Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives*) but also the highest mean score across all 11 *World-Readiness Standards* ($M = 3.79$). This finding suggests that these internships strongly prepared participants to relate cultural practices to cultural perspectives and that this was the most significant outcome of their internships.

Qualitative data corroborates the emphasis on the *Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives* standard, with most participants in the study making references to cultural practices and demonstrating an ability to connect them with cultural perspectives. Specifically, participants who had supervisors and colleagues from France or other French-speaking countries reported having enhanced their understanding of cultural practices, specifically practices that relate to the workplace. Participants like **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) interned in internship sites they

deemed “very French” and interacted mostly with French people. Therefore, their internship taught them a great deal about French work etiquette and work culture.

During her second interview, **Claudia** referred explicitly to the difference between cultural products and cultural practices and said that her internships were particularly helpful for understanding cultural practices, “You have a different culture, and I'm not talking about culture as music or the culture of this country, no, more the culture of how people do things, about their routine, about things that they have already established, so this is the culture of the company.”

Participants who did not work with colleagues and supervisors from France but whose internship site was very diverse also referred to their increased intercultural competence. In her written reflection, **Katherine** explained loving her second internship because it allowed her to “talk to people from diverse backgrounds, learn about their cultures, try to be respectful, and be understanding that they are from different backgrounds and might not think in a certain way and might communicate differently.” **Vanessa** shared similar outcomes and highlighted the fact that her three internships prepared her to work with people from different backgrounds, “I feel like in each internship, I dealt with different people, different backgrounds. I can deal with different types of people. I can deal with relationship building and maintaining different relationships.” **Ruth** even compared her internship to a travel experience in her written reflection:

> It goes without saying that cultural diversity fosters emotional and social intelligence. Both are based on mutual respect, [which] cannot be achieved without understanding that cultural diversity is a beautiful thing and, for those lucky enough to be part of a diverse community, a way of traveling without actually traveling.

Claudia also discussed the cultural outcomes of her second internship in her written reflection, “The simultaneous growth of my language skills and cultural sensitivity was one of the most

rewarding aspects of this internship." She added more insights into the specific tasks that contributed to her intercultural competence, "Interpretation sessions on sensitive topics required more than just language skills; they demanded cultural finesse and deep empathy."

It is noteworthy that the participants who completed hybrid internships, such as **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** (both internships) or virtual internships, such as **Nicole** (second internship), did not emphasize cultural practices when discussing the outcomes of their internships, which suggests that internship modalities affected the participants' ability to learn about cultural practices and relate them to cultural perspectives. Although their internships enabled them to learn more about work practices within specific U.S. organizations, they did not seem to have fostered their understanding of the cultural practices of the target cultures. In the case of **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier**, their hybrid internships involved attending in-person networking events during which they met professionals who were originally from France, but these encounters might have been too brief to develop a deep understanding of Francophone cultural practices.

In sum, the ability to relate cultural practices to perspectives was strongly emphasized during these internships. However, the diversity of the internship environments and the internship modalities greatly informed the extent to which internship outcomes connected to the *Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives* standard.

Standard 2.2: Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between cultural products (i.e., tangible and intangible cultural creations such as visual and performing arts, laws, media, music, holidays and celebrations, books, journals and newspapers, cinema) and cultural

perspectives (e.g., meanings, attitudes, values, ideas) of French and/or Francophone cultures." One respondent strongly agreed, seven agreed, two were undecided, three disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and four respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, the *Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives* standard had the eighth highest mean score across all 11 standards ($M = 3.29$), indicating that respondents did not feel as confident about their ability to relate cultural products to cultural perspectives as their ability to relate cultural practices to cultural perspectives, which was the standard with the highest mean score across all standards ($M = 3.79$).

Qualitative data corroborates this finding, with fewer participants making explicit references to cultural products. **Katherine** is one of the only participants who discussed her ability to connect cultural products to cultural perspectives, which was achieved through watching French films. During her first internship, she attended the movie screenings hosted by her internship site and indicated that these films helped her learn more about social issues in French-speaking countries. **Ruth** also mentioned in her reflection that she interned in a very diverse environment, which enabled her to learn more about cultural products from various cultural groups:

> The cultural diversity within the organization was remarkable. Each person brought their unique cultural aspects, such as food, dress style, language, religion, and even social norms, without disrupting office rules and ethics.

Several participants indicated that their internships enabled them to learn more about cultural products, but their ability to relate these products to cultural perspectives was less evident. For instance, **Antonio**, **Claudia, David**, and **Javier** had the opportunity to attend events

during which they tasted French food and learned more about "French life," but it is not clear whether these experiences prepared them to relate cultural products to perspectives.

Several participants made references to cultural products, including food, clothing, and films, but few emphasized their ability to connect these products to cultural perspectives, with French films being one of the rare examples of cultural products being connected to cultural perspectives. Therefore, the findings suggest that these internships fostered the ability to relate cultural practices to cultural perspectives more than the ability to relate cultural products to cultural perspectives.

Goal Area 3: Connections

Regarding the *Connections* goal area, respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to connect the French language with other disciplines or fields and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations." Four respondents strongly agreed with the statement, four agreed, three were undecided, one disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 8, the *Connections* goal area had the lowest mean score on the Likert scale (M = 3.50), and as shown in Table 10, it had the lowest mean score on the ranking scale (M = 2.71). These findings suggest that *Connections* was the least emphasized goal area during these internships. The study provides more specific data on the two standards within the *Connections* goal area, which are *Making Connections* and *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives.*

Standard 3.1: Making Connections. When asked whether respondents agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to build, reinforce, and expand my knowledge

of other disciplines while using the French language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively," two respondents strongly agreed, seven agreed, none were undecided, three disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Overall, nine respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and five either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *Making Connections* had the eighth highest (or third lowest) mean score across the 11 *World-Readiness Standards* ($M = 3.29$), indicating that this standard was not strongly emphasized during the internships. However, qualitative data suggests otherwise.

All participants in the study mentioned that one of the most significant outcomes of their internships was the opportunity to gain professional experience. All participants reported having gained experience in specific fields, such as business, marketing, education, international relations, and humanitarian aid. For instance, **Claudia** explained that her two internships helped her create connections between the language and her two passions, specifically education and community work. Moreover, most participants reported having the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Francophone companies, meet French-speaking professionals, and realize the wide range of sectors in which these companies operate, which was highlighted by many participants in the study, including **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), and **Vanessa** (first internship). Javier even emphasized on several occasions that his internships helped him realize that the local French-speaking community was far larger and more diverse than he had thought. Therefore, most participants, even if they did not use the target language extensively, like **Antonio** and **David**, had the opportunity to connect the French language to various fields of work.

Even though all internships facilitated the ability to make connections between the French language and other disciplines, mostly various fields of work, participants did not feel

confident that their internships helped with the *Making Connections* standard. It is noteworthy that this standard involves critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the target language. Therefore, participants may not have agreed with this specific dimension of the standard and considered that their internships did not help with these skills. Critical thinking and problem-solving are investigated further in the section of the chapter that discusses career readiness.

Standard 3.2: Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives. When asked whether respondents agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the French language and its associated cultures," two respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, two were undecided, three disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and four either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives* had the seventh highest mean score across the 11 standards ($M = 3.36$), suggesting that this standard was not strongly emphasized during these internships.

Based on qualitative data, working in a diverse environment and interacting with individuals from various backgrounds fostered the participants' ability to access and evaluate information from various perspectives. **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) interned in a very diverse environment in which they interacted with people from a wide range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. For instance, **Katherine** explained that her second internship gave her the opportunity to learn more about French-speaking countries in Africa, where some of the refugees with whom she worked came from.

Additionally, **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), and **Vanessa** (first internship) got to attend large networking events in which people from France and other French-speaking countries were invited, which enabled them to not only realize that French people are far more diverse than they thought but also that the local French-speaking community is also more diverse than they thought and that Francophone countries other than France are well represented locally. **Javier** emphasized this aspect during his presentation:

> You talk to a lot of people from different cultures and ethnicities. This is a French-oriented job, but at the same time, you've got people from North Africa, the Caribbean, and East Asia that you can talk to. That's actually a really crazy thing.

He even admitted that the diversity found during these events prompted him to go back to the same internship site the following semester:

> I think the reason I liked the events is because they were very diverse. It really sold me to do the next semester [at the same internship site] because each event that we did was very diverse. There were tons of White people, obviously, but there were people from other parts of the world, from Haiti, from Africa, from [French overseas territories]. That was so interesting … There were so many people who came out and supported [the events] from all different types of backgrounds, ethnicities, and different languages.

Certain participants, such as **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole**, and **Vanessa** (second internship), reported their internship site being "very French," which may not have given them many opportunities to acquire information from diverse perspectives. Although their internships were in-person and involved regular interactions with native speakers, mostly from France, the internships do not seem to have given them many opportunities to learn more about the diversity in the French-speaking world. Interestingly, hybrid internships that involved

attending several in-person events that were very diverse seem to have fostered this ability. These findings suggest that exposure to a target culture during an internship does not necessarily lead to significant progress with the *Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives* standard.

Goal Area 4: Comparisons

Regarding the *Comparisons* goal area, the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence." Two respondents strongly agreed with the statement, nine agreed, two were undecided, one disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 11 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only one either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 8, the *Comparisons* goal area had the second-highest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 3.50$). Moreover, as shown in Table 10, it had the fourth-highest mean score (or second lowest) on the ranking scale ($M = 2.86$). These findings indicate that the *Comparisons* goal area was somewhat emphasized during these internships. The discrepancy between the Likert scale and the ranking scale indicates that there was no clear consensus on the *Comparisons* goal area, which could mean that certain internships emphasized the *Comparisons* goal area more than others. The study provides more specific insights into the alignment of internship outcomes with the two standards within the *Comparisons* goal area, which are *Language Comparisons* and *Cultural Comparisons*.

Standard 4.1: Language Comparisons. When asked whether participants agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the French language and my native language," none strongly agreed, 12 agreed, none were undecided, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

Overall, 12 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and two either disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is important to note that *Language Comparisons* is one of two standards of the *World-Readiness Standards* that did not receive any strongly agree responses. However, as shown in Table 9, *Language Comparisons* had the second-highest mean score across the 11 standards ($M = 3.64$), which suggests that the internships strongly emphasized comparisons between the target language and participants' native language, even though none of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

The emphasis on the *Language Comparisons* goal area was less evident in qualitative data, with only **Claudia** (both internships), **Katherine** (second internship), and **Vanessa** (second and third internships) alluding to language comparisons. Several participants mentioned having learned new words, language structures, and expressions, which they connected to their native language to identify the meaning of these words and memorize them. Moreover, two participants, **Katherine** (first internship) and **Nicole** (first internship), reported receiving feedback on explicit grammar rules, which may have facilitated language comparisons between French and English grammar rules.

Three participants, **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (second internship), and **Vanessa** (third internship), who are the only Latina participants in the study, made explicit references to multilingualism. Having the opportunity to create language connections between French, Spanish, and English appears to have been beneficial for them. **Antonio** and **David**, the other participants who are fluent in Spanish, did not have to use languages other than French and English during their internships, which may explain why they did not refer to multilingualism. During her second internship, **Katherine** provided interpretation services for French-speaking and Spanish-speaking refugees and appreciated the opportunity to use three languages and

practice her Spanish. **Claudia** shared similar feelings about her second internship, which was conducted at the same internship site as **Katherine**'s, where she also engaged in interpretations in French and Spanish. **Claudia** mentioned multilingualism explicitly and said, "Multilingualism became an essential skill, enabling rich and meaningful conversations with clients in their native languages."

Finally, **Vanessa** explained that her third internship was conducted in a linguistically diverse environment, which allowed her to create connections between French and French-based creoles, "Many different languages were spoken in the office, which exposed me to all those different languages and cultures. I worked with one supervisor who spoke Creole. And I just saw how different that was from French, but also very similar."

To summarize, as indicated by the questionnaire, the *Language Comparisons* goal area was emphasized during these internships. However, this emphasis was less noticeable during the rest of the study. Exposure to the target language, explicit feedback received from colleagues and supervisors on participants' language skills, and opportunities to use languages other than French and English influenced the extent to which internship outcomes related to the *Language Comparisons* standard, with Latina participants reporting significant positive outcomes relating to multilingualism.

Standard 4.2: Cultural Comparisons. When asked whether respondents agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to use the French language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of French/Francophone cultures and my own culture," no respondent strongly agreed, eight agreed, one was undecided, two disagreed, and three strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and five either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As for the previous

standard, *Cultural Comparisons* did not receive any strongly agree responses, which means that the two standards within the *Comparisons* goal area are the only two standards that did not receive any strongly agree responses.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 9, *Cultural Comparisons* had the lowest mean score across all 11 standards ($M = 3.00$), which not only suggests that the respondents did not feel confident that their internships prepared them for cultural comparisons but also that they felt more confident that their internships prepared them for language comparisons. It is also surprising that *Cultural Comparisons* had the lowest mean score across all 11 standards, given that *Cultures* was the goal area with the highest mean score on both the Likert scale and ranking scale. These findings suggest that the internships helped the participants learn about cultural practices, products, and perspectives of a given culture, but that the internships did not provide many opportunities for participants to compare the target cultures with their own.

As previously discussed, **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) made several references to their internship sites being "very French," which allowed them to draw comparisons between French culture and their own cultures. Specifically, they mentioned that French people tended to be more formal and less warm than Hispanic/Latinx people. During her presentation about her third internship site, **Vanessa** alluded to cultural comparisons between her own culture and those of her colleagues:

> The environment in the office was very diverse … and because of this, there were many positive outcomes. A diverse team brings together different perspectives, experiences, and cultural insights … [One of my colleagues] was Muslim. So, when we would work together, she would take her own breaks to go pray. It was very beautiful to see because I just saw the way that she worked and how differently she works compared to her

> coworkers. So, if you intern at [this organization], you will definitely be exposed to different cultures, languages, and foods, because in the break room, everyone brings a little part of their culture. And it's very beautiful.

For the two participants who moved to the United States as adults, **Claudia** and **Ruth**, the fact that the internships helped with cultural comparisons was clear. In her reflection, **Ruth** explained that her internship provided her with opportunities to compare her own country, Nigeria, with the United States:

> The office was always vibrant with colorful clothing and varying accents. This made me realize the diversity present in the U.S. and made me feel very comfortable from the first day of work, seeing that I came from a country as diverse as the U.S.

Claudia had a similar experience during her second internship, which she discussed as part of her second interview:

> We have a lot of clients and coworkers who are from Asia and Africa. And, in Latin America, we share a lot of cultural aspects with people from Africa and people from Asia. We like to talk, to bring food, to have small talks about things that are not about work. We are more extroverted. So, that multicultural aspect, I enjoyed a lot in the second internship. I loved that … It made me feel like I was kind of working in my home country. I mean, it felt like home.

Ruth explained that interning in a diverse environment helped her draw comparisons between cultures to successfully interact with people from various backgrounds:

> I've come to understand that culture affects communication and how you communicate with people. So, we have some cultures that are very reserved. They will not approach

you until you approach them or until they feel comfortable. Then there are some that are just free. Everyone is a friend.

During her second interview, **Ruth** also referred to specific cultural differences between her culture and U.S. culture, particularly in the workplace, "Something I found out about American office culture is that people ask a lot of questions about your personal life." She also noted, "In Nigeria, professionalism often depends on respect based on culture and age, whereas in the U.S., it is based on respect in general, regardless of age or culture."

In summary, cultural comparisons were not discussed extensively during the study, which corroborates results from the questionnaire that indicated that *Cultural Comparisons* was the least emphasized standard during these internships. Although the internship strongly emphasized the *Cultures* goal area, only a few participants highlighted their ability to draw comparisons between the target culture(s) and their own. This was particularly true for the participants who interned in environments they described as very French or very diverse. Also, participants who moved to the United States as adults reported more outcomes related to the *Cultural Comparisons* standard.

Goal Area 5: Communities

In the questionnaire, when asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world," four respondents strongly agreed, seven agreed, none were undecided, two disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, 11 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 8 and Table 10, the emphasis on the *Communities* goal area was consistent, as it had the third-highest mean score on the Likert scale

(M = 3.79) and the third-highest mean score on the ranking scale (M = 2.93). These findings suggest that these internships emphasized this goal area, but that it was not the one in which respondents improved the most. The internship outcomes that relate to the *Communities* goal area are now presented in the context of the two *Communities* standards, which are *School and Global Communities* and *Lifelong Learning*.

Standard 5.1: School and Global Communities. When asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to use the French language within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in multilingual communities and the globalized world," two respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, three were undecided, two disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, eight respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 9, *School and Global Communities* had the sixth-highest mean score across the 11 standards (M = 3.43), which suggests that these internships somewhat emphasized participants' ability to use the target language within and beyond the classroom to interact with French-speaking communities.

Because the study focuses on internships, which are an extension of classroom learning, most participants got to use the French language beyond the classroom. **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) reported being immersed in the language and interacting with colleagues and supervisors who were from France. Therefore, they had many opportunities to use the target language in a professional context with Francophone community members.

Moreover, **Antonio**, **Claudia** (first internship), **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (first and second internships) got to attend events organized by their internship sites and meet many Francophone community

members, such as executives and diplomats. For example, **Katherine** attended a Francophone job fair organized by her internship site, which enabled her to learn more about French companies and consular offices based in the region. **Antonio**, **David,** and **Javier** worked during large networking events attended by hundreds of professionals, most of whom were from various French-speaking countries, which gave them many opportunities to interact in the target language with Francophone community members. Becoming familiar with the Francophone community in Atlanta and Georgia was the most engaging aspect of **Javier**'s internship, which he underscored during his second interview:

> I had no idea that there were so many businesses in Atlanta and Georgia that were French-related. I thought that was cool … And that was interesting because I was learning about what these places sold, what they did … And they're here in Atlanta … Tons of people are moving to Atlanta. I think of how [my professor] would always say in class, how Atlanta has a very big French-speaking presence, and I've got to actually see that. I got to do research on that. That's so interesting because it's huge … I learned about so many businesses … That was probably the most engaging for me.

Furthermore, **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) got to interact with French-speaking community members by helping them settle in the United States and providing them with interpretation services. Only **Nicole**'s second internship, which was fully online, did not involve such community interactions.

In sum, most internships facilitated community interactions and the use of the language beyond the classroom. The only internship that did not foster the *School and Global Communities* standard was the one that was fully online, which underscores the influence that

internship modality has on internship outcomes, especially when they relate to the *Communities* goal area.

Standard 5.2: Lifelong Learning. When asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to set goals and reflect on my progress in using the French language for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement," three respondents strongly agreed, four agreed, six were undecided, none disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, seven respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only one either disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is noteworthy that six respondents (42%) were undecided, which means that *Lifelong Learning* was the standard with the largest number of undecided responses. These results suggest that nearly half of the respondents were not fully confident about the extent to which their internships fostered lifelong learning. Despite the large number of undecided responses, *Lifelong Learning* had the fourth-highest mean score across the 11 standards ($M = 3.57$), which suggests that these internships somewhat fostered participants' motivation to become lifelong learners of the French language, but it is important to note that a large number of participants did not feel confident about this standard.

During the second individual interview, participants were asked whether they still used their French today, were hoping to use it in the future, and whether their internships had influenced their current or future use of the language. All participants reported maintaining a connection with the language for enjoyment during their free time, mostly when listening to music and watching videos, movies, and series in French. However, **Claudia**, **David**, **Javier**, **Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Vanessa** currently do not use the language professionally. As previously discussed, all participants reported that the internships boosted their confidence to use the language in professional contexts and when interacting with native speakers. Although only two

participants, **Antonio** and **Ruth**, currently use the French language professionally, **Claudia**, **David**, **Javier**, **Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Vanessa** reported wanting to use the language in their future careers.

As discussed previously, the internships helped all participants realize that the local Francophone community is far larger than what they had expected and that being proficient in French opens many career opportunities. Therefore, most internships helped participants understand that the French language can be used for career advancement. Although **Antonio** did not use a lot of French during his internship, he reported that his knowledge of Francophone communities and appreciation for the language increased:

> I would say that [my French] might have improved somewhat in the sense that you can kind of [better] understand the extent of the different communities and businesses. But, again, since we did not speak the language, I would not say that my spoken abilities improved, but I think that my knowledge and my appreciation did.

Nicole mentioned in the written reflection about her first internship that she enjoyed learning expressions that she could use with native speakers of the language, revealing her motivation to improve her French to engage in communication with Francophone communities. Indeed, **Nicole** mentioned during her second interview that she wants to move to Canada and use her French professionally. Overall, these internships seem to have contributed to participants' increased awareness that proficiency in French opens various career opportunities. However, the extent to which these internships encouraged participants to use the target language for enjoyment is not clear.

In conclusion, the internships completed by participants had a wide range of outcomes that related to the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015). Data indicate that the *Cultures*

goal area was emphasized the most and that the *Connections* goal area was emphasized the least. However, findings suggest that not all standards within each goal area were emphasized equally. Regarding *Communication*, *Interpersonal Communication* and *Interpretive Communication* were emphasized far more than *Presentational Communication*. Concerning *Cultures*, participants felt more confident about their ability to relate cultural practices to perspectives than relating cultural products to perspectives. As far as *Connections* is concerned, the participants did not feel very confident in their abilities to make connections and acquire diverse perspectives, although qualitative data suggests that the internships enabled them to connect the target language with various professional fields. Finally, regarding *Comparisons*, language comparisons were emphasized more than cultural comparisons. That said, the extent to which internship outcomes related to each goal area and standard was greatly influenced by the internship contexts, which included the use of the target language, the diversity at the internship site, the tasks that participants were expected to complete, and the modality of the internships.

Career Readiness Competencies

I will now relate participants' internship outcomes to the NACE's (2021) eight *Career Readiness Competencies* (*Career and Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Equity and Inclusion, Leadership, Professionalism, Teamwork,* and *Technology*). The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the extent to which their internship outcomes related to each competency by selecting one of five options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, or Strongly Agree. A summary of their responses is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Summary of the Likert-Scale Items (Career Readiness Competencies)

Career-Readiness Competencies	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Career and Self-development	2	14	11	78	0	0	1	7	0	0
Communication	4	28	8	57	0	0	1	7	1	7
Critical Thinking	4	28	9	64	0	0	1	7	0	0
Equity and Inclusion	5	35	6	42	2	14	0	0	1	7
Leadership	5	35	4	28	2	14	3	21	0	0
Professionalism	8	57	5	35	1	7	0	0	0	0
Teamwork	4	28	6	42	2	14	2	14	0	0
Technology	7	50	5	35	1	7	1	7	0	0

Note. $N = 14$.

The Likert-scale items were then rated with a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. As shown in Table 12, questionnaire data suggests that *Professionalism* was the competency in which respondents improved the most ($M = 4.50$), *Technology* was second ($M = 4.29$), *Critical Thinking* was third ($M = 4.14$), and *Career and Self-Development* and *Equity and Inclusion* were fourth ($M = 4.00$). Moreover, questionnaire data suggest that *Communication* was the third competency in which participants improved the least ($M = 3.93$), *Teamwork* was second ($M = 3.86$), and *Leadership* was the one in which they improved the least ($M = 3.79$).

Table 12

Likert-Scale Results on Career Readiness Competencies

Rank	Career Readiness Competency	*M*	*SD*
1	Professionalism	4.50	.63
2	Technology	4.29	.88

Rank	Career Readiness Competency	*M*	*SD*
3	Critical Thinking	4.14	.74
4	Career and Self-development	4.00	.65
4	Equity and Inclusion	4.00	1.07
6	Communication	3.93	1.10
7	Teamwork	3.86	.99
8	Leadership	3.79	1.15

Note. Listed from the highest to the lowest mean score.

The second ranking question in the questionnaire asked respondents to rank the *Career Readiness Competencies* from the one in which they improved the most to the one in which they improved the least. The results, which are represented in Table 13, indicate that *Professionalism* was the competency in which they improved the most (*M* = 6.07), *Career and Self-Development* was second (*M* = 5.64), *Communication* third (*M* = 4.93), *Teamwork* fourth (*M* = 4.57), and *Critical Thinking* fifth (*M* = 4.21). Ranking items also indicate that *Technology* was the third competency in which respondents improved the least (*M* = 4.14), *Equity and Inclusion* the second least (*M* = 3.86), and *Leadership* the least (*M* = 2.57).

Table 13

Ranking Results on Career Readiness Competencies

Career Readiness Competencies	*M*	*SD*
Professionalism	6.07	1.44
Career and Self-Development	5.64	.91
Communication	4.93	2.55
Teamwork	4.57	1.50
Critical Thinking	4.21	2.18
Technology	4.14	2.26
Equity and Inclusion	3.86	2.56
Leadership	2.57	1.68

Note. Listed from the highest to the lowest mean score.

When comparing the Likert scale and ranking scale, *Professionalism* has the highest mean scores in both scales, which suggests a strong emphasis on *Professionalism* during these internships. Comparison between the two scales also indicates that the least emphasized competency, *Leadership*, was consistent. Regarding the other six competencies, the Likert scale and the ranking scale show some discrepancies. The highest discrepancy concerned the *Technology* competency, which was the competency with the second-highest mean score on the Likert scale and the sixth-highest (or third-lowest) on the ranking scale. Other instances of discrepancies included *Communication*—which had the sixth-highest mean score on the Likert scale items and the third-highest mean score on the ranking scale—and *Teamwork*— which had the seventh-highest mean score on the Likert scale and the fourth-highest on the scale.

Career and Self-Development

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to proactively develop myself and my career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of my strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and beyond the organization." As shown in Table 11, two respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 11 agreed, none were undecided, one disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 13 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only one disagreed or strongly disagreed. As previously noted, *Career and Self-Development* had the fourth-highest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 4.00$) and the second-highest mean score on the ranking scale ($M = 5.64$). These findings suggest that the respondents felt confident that their internships helped with the *Career and Self-Development* competency, especially when ranking the competencies.

Participants made many references to their careers and self-development during the study. Indeed, *Career and Self-Development* was among the *Career Readiness Competencies* to which participants referred the most. All participants explained that the internships helped them clarify their career goals and discover new fields of interest. **Vanessa** explained during her second interview, "All three [internships] gave me more of an idea of what I want to do and the field I want to go into. I'm still kind of job hunting, but the internships definitely made an impact on me and my career goals." She wrote in her reflection that her third internship was particularly influential:

> My career goals have also been influenced by this internship, which has reinforced my interest in roles involving direct client interaction while having a positive impact on society. My motivation to continue working in areas that support community development and address socio-economic disparities is fueled by the inspiration I have received.

Katherine mentioned in the reflection about her second internship that she was not familiar with the field of humanitarian work before participating in her internship and that she is now considering it as a career option. She said during her second interview, "I wouldn't say [my internships] changed my career goals, but I think I'm more open to different types of paths. I never thought to work in a French-speaking organization or a humanitarian organization." **Javier** explained that his internships helped him clarify what he wanted to do in the future. He appreciated the opportunity to add new experiences to his resume and become familiar with fields such as marketing and business development, and he is now considering working in these fields. During her second interview, **Claudia** also mentioned that her internships helped clarify her career goals:

> [My internships] helped me have a lot of clarity about what I want to do. Also, they just brought me the opportunity to see the reality of education and the immigration waves we're having right now in the world … So, that's why I'm doing my Ph.D. in education, and that's why the main topic [of my research] is going to be migrant population.

Like **Vanessa**, the internship **Claudia** completed at the organization helping refugees was particularly influential:

> Thanks to [my second] internship, I got more interested [in the field of migration]. I remember that after I [graduated], I applied to one of the positions that [my internship site] has. And it was because I felt like I had the connection of helping people, and I have a lot of skills, a lot of knowledge, I could speak a lot of languages, then my profile was very helpful, not for the organization but for the clients.

Nicole also made references to her internships being helpful to clarify her career goals:

> I think [the internships] made [my career goals] clearer. Because of [my first internship], I have partial knowledge of how administrative services and membership services work. So, the fact that I had experience in it made me realize that it's something that I had an interest in, but I want to try out other things as well.

All participants discussed their increased employability and the fact that their internships made them more competitive in the job market. **Antonio** explained that his internship helped him set himself apart from other candidates:

> I am now more proficient in the business world than I have ever been. My weekly tasks and involvement in events have been crucial for my learning and professional growth. In a market saturated with qualified professionals, this experience has been essential for staying competitive.

He added, “It looks amazing on a resume. So, the jobs that I've been looking for now are not because of the internship, but the internship is something that is helping me in my journey to get where I need to be.”

Javier, who has interviewed for several jobs after his internships, said that his internship experience was received positively by recruiters and served as a talking point during his job interviews. Specifically, he explained that several recruiters appreciated the fact that he had internship experience, especially two internships within the same organization. During her second interview, **Ruth** explained that her internship experience helps her show recruiters that she has professional experience in the U.S., especially when recruiters seem concerned that she is neither from France nor from the United States, “The [recruiter said], ‘You are not American. You are not from France or any French-speaking country. So, how do you fit in?’ He was concerned … I had to use my internship and said that I interned in an American office and that I understood American work culture.” **Nicole** explained that her second internship helped her get the job she has today:

> I was doing computer work, and my job now is computer work also, so both experiences are kind of similar. I was working online and had to create memberships [during my first internship]. For the [second internship], I had to create organizational documents ... So, it all led to what I do now, which I'm really happy about because I love the job I currently have. And it's pretty much the same [as my internships].

Antonio, **Javier**, **Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Ruth** mentioned that their internships boosted their confidence when applying for jobs and exploring new career pathways. **Antonio** discussed this important aspect in his written reflection:

> I also realized how adaptable my skills can be ... Moreover, exposure to this world and its diverse people has made me believe that limiting myself and my career opportunities is not in my best interest.

Antonio also explained that he is now applying to different positions within his current company, which he would have felt more hesitant about had he not completed his internship:

> I feel confident in the skills I have developed through these projects and others and know that I am now more qualified than ever to seize new opportunities … To this day, I'm very grateful for that internship because I've used that on my resume to apply to several positions within [my current company] for special assignments. So, what we did in the internship ended up translating into real life. So, that is what I wanted from it, and I got exactly what I needed, which is skills and experience for real life.

Katherine also discussed feeling more confident in navigating her career options:

> One of my career goals was to do interpretation and be able to use my French and Spanish. Having those opportunities to use [my French] helped me become more confident. And I feel like if I didn't have those internships, I would just be kind of going into something with no experience, and I would feel more nervous to do it because it is a job for real … I think it makes me more comfortable going into my career.

All participants mentioned that their internships helped them build a network and create connections that could be valuable to advance their careers. In her written reflections, **Katherine** mentioned that her first internship enabled her to build a network and learn more about French companies when she attended a Francophone job fair organized by her internship site, “I got to know many staff members and made contacts, some of whom could be good contacts for future opportunities.” **Nicole** wrote in her reflection that her first internship, which was conducted at the

same site as **Katherine**'s first internship, helped her create connections and meet someone who works for her dream company, which led her to connect with him on LinkedIn. In the questionnaire, she wrote, "I was able to make one or two connections on LinkedIn because of this internship, so I was able to broaden my LinkedIn profile. Whenever recruiters see my LinkedIn profile, at least they know that I do know some people." During his presentation, **Antonio** also referred to the network he built through his internship:

> The connections that you find in these internships are unparalleled. One day, you might be talking to [someone from a] chamber of commerce, but the next day, you might be talking to another executive. So, being with the [organization] is an opportunity that is without measure… [My supervisor] has introduced me to many contacts that I can potentially use in the future. Now my name is known in [several organizations] because of this internship. So, this is something that is extremely beneficial for me.

David also discussed the importance of networking, especially during the events he attended as part of his internship:

> I worked at the reception at what was probably the biggest event of the year ... I enjoy this type of work because it gives me the opportunity to meet new people from time to time. Of course, high-profile guests like [executives from two large airlines] attended, as well as several directors and presidents of French companies. It was a great opportunity to talk with many entrepreneurs and open doors for my career ... That night was potentially the best I've had in a long time, and I will never forget it.

Claudia highlighted the fact that her first internship taught her the importance of networking and gave her more confidence when approaching people she did not know:

> Another thing that I learned was to do networking, break the ice, and go talk to that person you don't know, and maybe that person can offer you an opportunity. That's something that I was not very familiar [with], going to events and starting to talk with someone you don't know. That was a really meaningful learning experience for me, and it was very interesting because it pushed me out of my comfort zone. The first internship gave me those skills that I didn't know I needed to have for the professional world.

These internships strongly emphasized the *Career and Self-Development* competency, with all participants making many references to their internships being helpful to clarify career goals, explore new career pathways, increase their employability, and build a network.

Communication

In addition to communication in the target language, which, in the present study, is viewed through the lens of the ACTFL's *World Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015), *Communication* as a *Career Readiness Competency*, that is communication in the broader sense and not necessarily in the target language, seems to have been emphasized during the internships under study. When asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with people inside and outside of the organization," four respondents strongly agreed, eight agreed, none were undecided, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, 12 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and two disagreed or strongly disagreed.

As shown in Table 12, *Communication* had the sixth-highest (or third-lowest) mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 3.93$). However, as shown in Table 13, it had the third-highest mean score on the ranking scale ($M = 4.93$). It is also noteworthy that *Communication* had one of the highest standard deviations ($SD = 1.10$) on the Likert scale, indicating that the emphasis on the

Communication competency was not consistent across internships. These findings also suggest that respondents felt more confident about *Communication* in the ranking question than in the Likert-scale question. This discrepancy is similar to the one found in the *Communication* goal area of the *World-Readiness Standards*, which also had a discrepancy between the Likert scale and the ranking scale. These discrepancies could indicate that respondents had higher expectations regarding their communication skills, and although they ranked *Communication* as one of the competencies and goal areas in which they improved the most, their progress may not have been as significant as they were hoping for. It could also mean that they valued *Communication* more than the other *Career Readiness Competencies* and *World-Readiness Standards*.

Participants in the study made references to multiple types of communication skills during the study, confirming that communication was emphasized during these internships. First, all participants mentioned that they became more comfortable communicating in a professional setting. **Katherine** explained that she learned to communicate with colleagues, especially during meetings, potential partners, and sponsors. **Vanessa** wrote in her reflection about her third internship, "I gained a broad range of skills applicable in various professional contexts. Communication and interpersonal skills were particularly important, as they were necessary due to frequent interactions with clients, employers, and colleagues."

David and **Katherine** also indicated that their internships helped them feel more comfortable speaking to people in general, not just when using the target language. **David** wrote in his reflection, "I feel more confident in my ability to speak in front of people. Before [the internship], I was nervous about approaching people, but now I find it less nerve-wracking." **Katherine** reported similar outcomes and mentioned that her spoken communication improved

overall because she defines herself as an introverted person, “I'm more of a shy and introverted person. So, I'm usually nervous to talk to people, but I think these internships helped me to loosen up a little and be able to speak to people without being nervous as much.”

Claudia, **David**, **Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Vanessa** highlighted the fact that they improved their email and social media communication skills, which connects to the *Technology* competency. **David**, **Javier**, and **Vanessa** emphasized the fact that they used social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, while **Claudia**, **Katherine**, and **Nicole** highlighted the improvement of their email communication skills. In her written reflections, **Katherine** mentioned having gained better professional communication skills, especially in her first internship, which taught her how to write emails, organize them, and make them more effective.

Communication was strongly emphasized during these internships, with most participants reporting progress and increased confidence when communicating in professional settings, via emails, and on social media platforms.

Critical Thinking

Regarding the *Critical Thinking* competency, four respondents strongly agreed that their internships prepared them to “identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information,” nine agreed, none were undecided, one disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 13 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only one either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 12, *Critical Thinking* had the third-highest mean score on the Likert scale (M = 4.14). Moreover, as shown in Table 13, it had the fifth-highest mean score on the ranking scale

(M = 4.21). These findings suggest that the respondents felt somewhat confident that their internships helped with the *Critical Thinking* competency.

However, qualitative data indicate that participants made fewer references to critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Several participants, especially those who had well-defined and unique roles within the organization, reported having to think critically to find solutions to problems. Specifically, in her written reflection about her second internship, **Katherine** mentioned having improved in addressing clients' issues, especially when engaging in interpretations. **Antonio** wrote in his reflection that he had to find solutions to issues related to seat assignments and food during events organized by his internship sites. **Claudia** discussed the fact that her second internship gave her the opportunity to find solutions to problems in collaboration with her supervisor, who often asked for her input when challenges emerged. There was even one instance when she was the one who resolved a conflict because her boss could not find the solution:

> The client was not relaxed, and my boss was also getting very exasperated. I remember that I said to the client in French, 'You have to relax because if you don't relax, nobody is going to provide a solution.' And the client looked at me [and said], 'okay'.

In several cases, participants improved their critical thinking and problem-solving skills because their internship site was busy, so they had to learn to be proactive. **Vanessa**, when discussing her difficulties in balancing her first internship, her coursework, and her job, wrote in her reflection:

> Prioritizing tasks and managing my workload effectively was a valuable learning experience that will serve me well in future roles ... The development of a deeper understanding of resilience and adaptability was one of the most significant aspects of

> personal growth ... The time I spent working in a humanitarian organization, where it was often necessary to deal with challenging situations, instilled in me the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and taking initiative.

Ruth highlighted the importance of being proactive in her reflection as well and explained that she learned to manage challenges by "being creative in finding solutions." She said in her presentation, "You have to think on your feet and be very fast. On average, we receive 800 clients in a month. So, sometimes we have a lot of traffic. So, to avoid overcrowding, you need to learn how to be proactive." When discussing the fact that some clients were frustrated with her, **Ruth** wrote in her reflections:

> Curiously, I always found that finding someone who spoke their native language to re-explain information changed their behavior, even if they understood English. Unfortunately, I did not always find such a person. However, I have learned to manage these challenges by working closely with my colleagues, using effective communication tools.

Not all internships seem to have fostered critical thinking skills. Based on qualitative data, the participants who had well-defined roles, and therefore more agency in their work, as well as the participants who were working in busy environments, had more opportunities to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Equity and Inclusion

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked if their internships prepared them to "demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures," five respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, two were undecided, none disagreed, and one strongly disagreed. Overall, 11

respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only one either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 12 and Table 13, *Equity and Inclusion* had the fourth-highest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 4.00$) and the second-lowest mean score in the ranking scale ($M = 3.86$). These findings suggest that the respondents did not feel as confident that their internships helped with the *Equity and Inclusion* competency, especially when ranking the competencies.

The participants who ranked *Equity and Inclusion* higher than the other competencies and agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that their internship outcomes related to the *Equity and Inclusion* competency also made most of the references to equity and inclusion during the rest of the study. These participants, **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship), all interned at the same internship site, which was a large organization helping refugees. They had to provide interpretation services for clients and helped them navigate various processes, such as finding a home and a job.

More specifically, **Katherine** had to do interpretations for refugees who were looking for accommodation, accompanied social workers during airport pickups, and visited refugees' homes to deliver groceries. She said during her second interview that she appreciated the opportunity to help people who have similar life circumstances as her, "It was very meaningful being able to help your own people coming into this country. They don't know anything, and they're just trying to have a clean start here." Indeed, her experience reminded her of her own life experience, which she emphasized during her second interview:

> My dad doesn't speak English very well. So, growing up, I kind of had to translate for him. And, as a kid, you kind of have to step up and be that person for your family. And in the internship, there was this younger girl who came in with her mom and was translating

> for her … And I could kind of see myself in the little girl. And in that moment, I wish I had known that language so I could tell the little girl, 'It's okay, I'll speak with your mom.' Because sometimes it could be stressful, you know, having to step up and be that [person for your family].

Ruth also highlighted the connection between humanitarian aid and her own life experience:

> I interacted with clients who were emotionally downcast, withdrawn, and shy, and I had to patiently coax them out of their shells to discuss the services they needed by asking questions and anticipating their needs. Not being aware of their emotional and social situation could have discouraged them from seeking help or, worse, led to self-harm. I was very happy to learn that mental health services were part of the support offered to these special individuals, as I understand the uncertainty of leaving one's country, sometimes without family, to settle in a completely new place.

Claudia also emphasized equity and inclusion in her reflection and mentioned that working in the field of humanitarian aid was the most rewarding aspect of her second internship:

> The opportunity to build meaningful connections with clients through home visits was the backbone of my experience. By entering their daily lives, I gained a unique insight into their reality–a complex blend of challenges and triumphs in their quest for resettlement … I feel a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the lives of those in need … This internship was much more than a simple opportunity; it was a profound immersion into the complex reality of individuals seeking a new beginning. The home visits, interpretive sessions, navigation of legal forms, and participation in quality control were windows into often invisible realities.

Vanessa explained that her third internship opened her eyes to how grateful she should be because many refugees face hardship and cannot find a job, which confirmed her commitment to social justice:

> This experience also strengthened my commitment to social justice and advocacy and solidified my desire to continue working in areas that promote community empowerment and provide assistance to vulnerable populations. Helping individuals regain control of their lives and achieve economic independence greatly outweighed the challenges I faced in my work.

In sum, the participants in the study who worked directly with underserved and underrepresented communities, such as refugees, reported many outcomes that related to the *Equity and Inclusion* competency. However, the participants who did not have such interactions did not make explicit references to outcomes relating to this competency. These findings highlight that the nature of the internship sites' activities and the interactions that interns have during their internships strongly influence the extent to which internships foster the *Equity and Inclusion* competency.

Leadership

Regarding *Leadership*, as we can see in Table 11, five respondents strongly agreed with the following statement: "My internship helped me recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals," four agreed, two were undecided, three disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, nine respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and three disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is worth noting that *Leadership* is the competency that received the highest number of disagree responses. As shown in Table 12 and Table 13, *Leadership* had the lowest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 3.79$) and the ranking scale ($M = 2.57$). These findings suggest that *Leadership* was the competency in

which respondents improved the least. Data collected through presentations, written reflections, individual interviews, and focus groups confirms that *Leadership* was among the least emphasized competencies.

Only **Antonio**, **Claudia** (second internship), **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (first and third internships) emphasized their leadership skills during the study. The participants who referred to leadership skills were the ones who had well-defined roles and had roles that differed significantly from the roles assigned to their colleagues and fellow interns, which meant they had more control and agency over their work. For instance, during his presentation, **David** referred to himself as "the social media guy of the entire organization," which meant he was in sole charge of communication for his internship site.

The extent to which leadership skills improved also seems to be tied to the nature of the tasks performed by participants. The more meaningful the tasks were, the more participants got to improve their leadership skills. **Vanessa** explained, "[The internships] did meet my goals because I got to use my French and deal with different people of different backgrounds and help out, make an impact in my own way and leave my own mark." **Claudia** shared similar feelings about the relevance and importance of her work:

> The second internship showed me I have a lot of skills, professionally. This is very nice to share what I have with the community, and it's going to be helpful, and I feel proactive. I feel like, because I'm that kind of person, I'm doing something, and what I'm doing is important. It's meaningful.

Interpretation appears to have been particularly beneficial in fostering leadership skills. **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) explained that they were in sole charge of interpreting for their assigned clients and getting their

messages across. In her written reflection, **Vanessa** discussed the fact that she was given several important responsibilities, including interpretations and matching grant paperwork:

> One of my most important tasks was to serve as an interpreter for my supervisor's clients, whose primary languages were Spanish and French. This role was essential in ensuring that the clients' needs and concerns were accurately communicated and addressed, and in facilitating clear and effective communication between the organization and the clients … I was responsible for filling out documents related to the matching grant, which was a crucial element of the organization's efforts to secure funds and resources for our clients.

Other tasks that promoted leadership skills included event coordination and business development. Specifically, **Vanessa** said that her second internship helped with her leadership skills because she had to organize cultural events and activities. **Antonio**, **Javier** (second internship), **Katherine** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) were in charge of conducting research to grow their organization or increase its local presence. **Antonio** and **Javier**, as business development interns, had to conduct research on possible new members in order to grow the membership of their organization. **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) also had to conduct research to find new sponsors to support their organizations.

The type of management also informed the extent to which participants improved their leadership skills. Indeed, the participants whose supervisors trusted them and allowed them to make decisions on their own reported better outcomes than the participants who were not given the same level of agency and autonomy. For example, **Antonio** wrote in his reflection, "From the beginning of my internship, [my supervisor] entrusted me with various projects and tasks of different priorities." **Claudia** explained that she took initiatives during her second internship

because her supervisors trusted her. Although her offers to help were mostly ignored during her first internship, they were embraced by her team during her second internship. She explained that her supervisors allowed her to work autonomously, “It was more, here is the situation, go and find a solution. If you have questions or it's too challenging, we're going to help you … And that pushed me to have more agency in my decisions.”

Leadership was among the least emphasized competencies. However, the extent to which these internships fostered leadership skills was greatly influenced by the uniqueness of the participants’ roles, the tasks assigned to them, and the type of management used in the organization.

Professionalism

When asked the extent to which respondents agreed with the following statement: “My internship helped me realize that work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace,” eight respondents strongly agreed, five agreed, one was undecided, none disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 11, *Professionalism* is the only competency that did not receive any disagree or strongly disagree responses. Moreover, *Professionalism* is the competency that received the most strongly agree responses. As shown in Table 12 and Table 13, *Professionalism* had the highest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 4.50$) and the ranking scale ($M = 6.07$). These findings indicate that the respondents felt very confident that their internships helped with the *Professionalism* competency.

Although all participants had work experience before their internships, some considered the internship as their first “real” or “professional” job. In her written reflections about her two internships, **Katherine** mentioned loving to work in a “real office,” which she never had the

opportunity to do before her internships. Although **David** was working as a full-time employee as a hotel receptionist at the time, he wrote in his reflection, “I would like to thank [my supervisor and my professor] for giving me the opportunity to start my professional career.”

Most of the participants in the study reported that their internship allowed them to be professional, for example, during meetings and when interacting with colleagues. However, as for the *Leadership* and *Critical Thinking* competencies, the nature of the tasks performed by the participants informed the extent to which they improved their professionalism. It appears that the participants who were in charge of their internship site’s communication and had to post information about their organization, whether through websites or social media platforms, reported better outcomes than other participants in the study. These results suggest that performing tasks that involve an audience can improve interns’ professionalism and work ethic. **David** said during his first interview, “I was in charge of making sure that anything I posted on social media or anything I did to communicate with other companies through emails or phone, I made sure that I did it correctly to make sure I maintained professional relationships with all of these contacts.” He also emphasized the importance of maintaining his internship site’s reputation during the Q&A that followed his presentation:

> There are simple things that, if they get overlooked, could put our reputation on the line. But at the same time, that also helps you develop the fact that you need to look at the details of your posts and advertising. If you make some sort of mistake, you can try better and perfect that knowledge over time as you make these posts and promotional events.

The in-person networking events that participants attended as part of their internships also seem to have increased their level of professionalism. **Javier** said that professionalism and “portrayal professionalism” were among the most important skills he gained during his

internship. He spoke about the importance of displaying a level of professionalism during the events he attended, as well as the importance of LinkedIn and networking. The participants who attended in-person networking events, such as **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier**, are the only participants who made references to professional attire, which suggests that attending in-person networking events increased the participants' sense of concern with regard to professional clothing. **Javier** discussed this aspect in detail during his first interview:

> It got me into the mindset to start looking for a business attire because my internship gave me a taste of that … And then I'm thinking later on in the future, like, whatever job I'm going to have, I'm going to need attire that's a little bit more professional ... I'm supposed to be representing [the company]. I need to make sure I can represent. If I get a job, I'm going to have to dress like this.

As indicated in the *Career and Self-Development* section, most participants also reported becoming more comfortable with networking, mostly through these in-person events, which increased their professionalism because they became more comfortable approaching people they did not know while remaining professional.

As mentioned previously in the *Communication* section, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (first and second internships) also learned to send professional emails. **Nicole** said during the presentation of her second internship:

> I was able to learn how to write professional emails and do everything in a professional way. And I was also able to look over mistakes since I was doing data entry. Being able to be very detailed but also maintain efficiency and be fast is something that is necessary.

The use of social media also shifted for some participants. For instance, **Vanessa** (first internship) and **Javier** had used social media to create personal content prior to the internship, but they had never used social media professionally. Some participants, such as **Nicole**, explained that they learned how to remain professional, especially when disagreements emerged, and to accept constructive criticism. **Katherine** (first internship) and **Vanessa** (third internship) also mentioned that their internships helped them remain professional, especially when working with colleagues and clients from diverse backgrounds.

In summary, these findings suggest that the internships under study played a significant role in fostering the participants' professional development. Through a variety of tasks and experiences, they gained valuable skills in representing themselves appropriately in professional settings, communicating effectively with colleagues and clients, and understanding the expectations of the workplace.

Teamwork

When asked in the questionnaire whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities, four respondents strongly agreed, six agreed, two were undecided, two disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 10 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and two either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 12 and Table 13, *Teamwork* had the second-lowest mean score on the Likert scale ($M = 3.86$) and the fourth-highest mean score on the ranking scale ($M = 4.57$). These findings suggest that the respondents did not feel as confident on the Likert scale as on the ranking scale, which suggests that there was no clear consensus regarding the extent to which the internships fostered teamwork.

Qualitative data reveals that participants made many references to teamwork and collaboration, with *Teamwork* being among the competencies discussed the most during the study. Indeed, all participants had to interact with colleagues, supervisors, and clients on a regular basis, with the only exception being **Nicole**, whose second internship was entirely virtual. **Vanessa**, when asked about the skills she improved the most during her second interview, explained:

> Working with the team, hearing each of my team members out, or how we're going to get a task done. Because I wasn't the only one who would work with the match grant paperwork. We kind of had to divide that between my peers and me. So, definitely team building.

Antonio and **David**, who interned at the same organization at the same time, both mentioned that their internships gave them opportunities to collaborate with one another and that there was some overlap between their positions.

Two participants, **Antonio** and **Nicole** (first internship), mentioned that their internships were helpful because they were not used to collaborating and were not confident in their social skills. **Nicole** said in her presentation about her first internship:

> It did take me a minute to get used to the environment because I'm so used to doing things on my own or working by myself, but this internship actually helped me with speaking out more and working alongside other people. So, that was really beneficial for me.

Antonio had a similar experience and mentioned that his internship helped with his social skills:

> I'm not the most social person, so the internship did help me push myself in that sense. I was more social. I was able to get out of my box … I've never been part of an event, so

> helping [my supervisor] put together some of the events and helping set up and all that, those were very important skills that I learned.

In certain cases, the lack of tasks assigned to interns gave them the opportunity to explore other departments or units within the organization and collaborate. In her written reflection about her second internship, **Katherine** explained that there were times when her internship site was very quiet, so she offered to help other departments, which gave her the opportunity to collaborate with new colleagues and increase her teamwork skills. **Katherine** emphasized this aspect during her presentation as well when she said:

> Sometimes, I would be there waiting for a task to do or something I could help with, and that is why sometimes I would go to the front desk to help, or I would help just anyone who needed something. So, it was nice to kind of learn what other departments do.

Although *Teamwork* was not ranked in the questionnaire as one of the most emphasized competencies, it was among the competencies that were discussed the most during the rest of the study. Specifically, all hybrid and in-person internships involved a significant amount of collaboration, which improved participants' teamwork skills, especially for those who were not used to working in teams. Moreover, the only internship that was fully online did not seem to have fostered the *Teamwork* competency, which highlights the important role that internship modalities play in fostering collaboration and teamwork.

Technology

When asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "My internship prepared me to understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals, seven respondents strongly agreed, five agreed, one was undecided, one disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Overall, 12 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed

with the statement, and only one respondent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As shown in Table 12 and Table 13, *Technology* had the second-highest mean score on the Likert scale (M = 4.29) but the third-lowest on the ranking scale (M = 4.14). These findings suggest that the respondents felt very confident that their internships helped with the *Technology* competency, especially on the Likert scale question. However, in the ranking question, respondents did not report that *Technology* was among the competencies in which they improved the most. This discrepancy could mean that although most respondents agreed that their internships contributed to the improvement of their technology skills, they viewed their progress as less significant in comparison to the progress they made in the other competencies. It could also mean that the respondents did not value the *Technology* competency as much as the other competencies.

All participants made explicit references to their technology skills improving during their internships. For instance, improvement in the use of collaboration technological tools was mentioned by most participants. As previously mentioned in the *Communication* and *Professionalism* sections, most participants had to send emails, which improved their email communication skills. Additionally, **Nicole** and **Ruth** mentioned becoming better acquainted with collaborative technology tools such as Microsoft Teams, Box, and Outlook in general, with Box being new to both of them.

Katherine, **Nicole**, **Javier**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** referred to Microsoft Office, specifically Microsoft Excel. **Vanessa** mentioned during her presentation about her first internship, “Some skills that I gained would definitely be Excel. Before, I wasn't really good at Excel. I didn't know much about it until the [internship].” **Nicole** made a connection between her increased technology skills, specifically with Microsoft Word and Excel, and her employability, “In the future, I will already know how to create things in Excel or Word … Now, using Microsoft is not

a problem for me in the future when a company asks me how to use it." **Vanessa** had a similar experience, "I recognized the importance of Excel proficiency in the workplace and was determined to overcome this challenge."

Antonio, **Katherine** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) had to use Canva to design flyers for events organized by their internship sites. **Claudia** (first internship), **Javier** (both internships), and **Vanessa** (first internship) also had to design newsletters, and **Antonio** learned to use online survey tools. **Claudia** said that her internships helped her develop her technology literacy because she had to learn how to use different software and websites so she could then teach her clients how to use them on their own.

David, **Javier** (both internships), and **Vanessa** (first internship) improved their skills on social media. They worked as communication and marketing interns at the same chamber of commerce during different semesters, so they had to promote the organization's events on social media platforms. **Javier**, **David**, and **Vanessa** mentioned having improved their digital marketing and social media skills because they oversaw their internship site's communication tools. **Javier** emphasized the fact that he became more comfortable when using LinkedIn:

> Although I had experience with LinkedIn before my internship, I now have a good understanding of how important this application is. I made many posts on LinkedIn, which was challenging because the [organization's] reputation was at stake. If I made a mistake on a post, it was necessary to correct and review the content multiple times to maintain the reputation of [the organization].

Antonio and **Katherine** (first internship) referred to more traditional technology tools such as printers, scanners, and projectors. **Antonio** wrote about the gala during which he worked, "As the person responsible for the visual aspects of the evening, I had the opportunity to work

with the venue staff to ensure that our images and videos were displayed according to the plan by testing the sound and projectors." In her written reflection about her second internship, **Katherine** explained that she learned to use an office printer and a scanner. She mentioned this again during her presentation:

> I also gained more knowledge in administrative work, such as … scanning documents and navigating important websites and applications that the [organization] would use … And then scanning documents, which I had never done before this internship, so it was a nice experience to learn.

The participants reported progress in various technological skills, which included collaborative technology (e.g., emails and Teams), editing tools (e.g., Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel), social media platforms, and more traditional office technology, such as printers, scanners, and projectors.

In conclusion, the study provides comprehensive insights into the participants' internship outcomes as they relate to the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021). Regarding the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015). Data indicates that the internships fostered all five goal areas, with *Cultures* being the one emphasized the most. However, findings suggest that differences exist between standards within each goal area, with some being emphasized more than others. Overall, the extent to which internship outcomes related to each goal area and standard was greatly influenced by the internship contexts, which included the use of the target language, the diversity at the internship site, the tasks that participants were expected to complete, and the modality of the internships.

As far as career readiness is concerned, all participants reported improvement in multiple *Career Readiness Competencies*, but *Professionalism* was the most emphasized competency,

which was the case across most internships. *Career and Self-Development* was another competency that was consistent and emphasized in most internships. *Leadership* was the least emphasized competency across most internships. Regarding the other five competencies, the extent to which participants improved was informed by the internship contexts, such as the nature of the internship site's operations, the internship modalities, the tasks that were assigned to participants, and the management styles.

Internship Challenges

The second research question guiding the present study was: *What challenges, if any, do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program encounter while participating in an internship?* The following section presents findings as they relate to the second research question and highlights some of the challenges that participants experienced during their internships, which include difficulties adapting to a new environment, using and comprehending the target language, building rapport with supervisors, perceived preferential treatment toward White interns, feeling of isolation, lack of confidence, task-related issues, workload management, and financial difficulties, each discussed in turn below.

Adapting to a New Environment

All participants reported facing difficulties adapting to their internship environment, particularly during the early stages of their first internship. Several factors appeared to have increased adaptability issues. First, the use of the target language played a significant role in hindering adaptability, especially for **Antonio**, **David**, **Katherine** (first internship), and **Nicole** (first internship). During her presentation, **Nicole** said, "Some hardships for me were getting

used to the environment and being able to break away from my shyness at the time because I wasn't really confident with my French abilities."

Cultural differences also affected participants' adaptability. **Claudia** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) described their internship sites and supervisors as "very French," which affected their adaptability, not only at the beginning of the internship but also throughout. During her second interview, **Claudia** explained:

> [During] the first internship, I took a passive role … because I have to admit I don't know the French culture very well … how to navigate in that culture. So, maybe I need to go to France and have some intercultural experience to better understand the culture and to see which way I can connect. So, I have to say that it was me adapting, not assimilating.

Claudia, who moved to the United States as an adult, had difficulties adapting to her first internship site, which was not very diverse, but she did not experience issues adapting to her second internship site, which was a very diverse organization helping refugees. Her experience suggests that she faced fewer adaptability issues when she interned at a culturally diverse internship site than when she interned at an internship site that she described as "very French." Claudia also pointed out that her second internship site felt like home because it was diverse, which reminded her of Colombia. Her experience shows that having a culturally relevant internship environment also increased her adaptability.

Adapting to an internship proved particularly challenging for participants who already had an established career. **Antonio** mentioned during the focus group that the most challenging aspect of his internship was getting used to a new work environment, especially after having had the same job for several years, "At the beginning, [the biggest challenge] was getting used to this

new environment and new tasks. I've been with my current employer for many years, so I was out of my comfort zone." Alternatively, participants who did not have a lot of work experience also struggled to adapt to their internship environments. **Katherine** explained that her first internship was her first office experience, so it was difficult for her to adapt, "It was my first internship, so I was a bit nervous about it, more shy to approach things. So, it probably took me a bit longer to adapt to that one." Moreover, the participants who completed more than one internship reported more adaptability issues at the beginning of their first internship, even when both internships were completed at different sites.

Adaptability also seems to be tied to the extent to which roles are well-defined. Participants who were provided with detailed descriptions of their roles, such as **Antonio**, **David**, **Ruth**, and **Claudia** (second internship), did not struggle to adapt as much as the participants who did not have very specific roles, such as **Claudia** (first internship) and **Katherine** (first internship). Moreover, adaptability seems to be informed by the orientation and training received at the beginning of the internships. One internship site, where **Claudia**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** interned, provided extensive training and orientations, which were very beneficial to them. Alternatively, the participants who interned at internship sites that did not provide the same level of support at the beginning of the internship reported more adaptability-related issues. For instance, **Nicole** explained that she did not receive extensive training at the beginning of her first internship, which created stress and confusion. Moreover, adapting to new internship environments appears to have been challenging for the participants who completed virtual or hybrid internships, such as **Javier** (first internship) and **Nicole** (second internship). **Nicole** reported that it was difficult to get support at times and find a balance between her internship and

her personal life. **Javier** reported that he did not fully understand what was expected of him, especially at the beginning of his first internship.

In summary, participants' adaptability was influenced by their use of the target language, cultural differences, prior work experience, the clarity of their roles and tasks, and the training they received. Notably, participants who completed multiple internships reported greater challenges with adaptability at the outset of their first internship, suggesting that subsequent internships enhance interns' adaptability over time.

Language-Related Challenges

As discussed in the first section of the chapter, questionnaire data reveal that most participants felt confident that their internships helped with communication in the target language. However, qualitative data suggest that several participants faced challenges relating to the use of the target language. Specifically, **Antonio**, **Claudia**, **Katherine**, and **Nicole** did not feel comfortable using the target language, especially when they needed to use it with native speakers of the language. **Antonio** shared his initial hesitation to engage in conversation with native speakers during the events organized by his internship site, "I was a little hesitant to use [my French] because these [were] real French-speaking people. So, am I going to use my broken French and make a fool of myself?" **Katherine** reported similar concerns, "When I first got there, I was just a bit nervous to speak to new French speakers because I was more scared to make mistakes." Their experience suggests that interacting with native speakers of the language during an internship was intimidating for them, especially at the beginning of their internships. During the focus group, **Nicole** even said that interacting in French was the most challenging part of her first internship:

> I did feel like there was a lot of pressure on me because we did speak in complete French. So, I felt like I had to make sure that my French was close to perfect because we did have someone who critiqued us immediately if we made an error.

Claudia agreed with **Nicole** and said that speaking French was the most challenging aspect of her first internship as well:

> In the first internship, [the] challenge [was] communicating [in] French because you don't want to make mistakes. You want to speak perfect French … You don't want to look like you don't know what you're saying … Sometimes, I struggle to communicate. And probably that was the challenge that I saw at the beginning [of the internship], but sadly, that challenged me until the end.

Javier (both internships), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (first and second internships) reported issues with understanding the target language, especially when business terminology was used. **Katherine** explained in the written reflection about her first internship, "When I arrived at [the organization], there were many things I couldn't understand because much of the terminology was business-related." **Javier** and **Vanessa** also reported feeling unsure about the instructions they received when instructions were given in the target language.

Several participants, including **Antonio**, **Claudia** (first internship), **David**, **Katherine** (second internship), and **Nicole** (second internship) reported a lack of exposure to the target language. **Antonio** explained during his second individual interview:

> We never actually used French … The only time I saw French would be during events, and I tried to speak French with some of the attendees and guests. So, at that point, yes, I did use [French], but most of the time, it was only English.

Antonio, who was very satisfied with his internship, also said: “The one thing I would have changed was asking [my internship supervisor] to speak French during the meetings. I think that should have been my number one request.” During his presentation, he explained the reasons behind the lack of emphasis on the French language: “As far as being instructed on the task at hand for the week, everything [was] done in English. I guess it's better so there's no misunderstanding [about what] is required from you.” Although **Katherine** was glad to practice her Spanish during her second internship, she admitted that it reduced her opportunities to practice French, which was one of her primary internship goals:

> I feel like I didn't have many opportunities to use my French because I speak Spanish. They knew that, and I feel like they mostly wanted me to interpret in Spanish. I don't mind because it helps with my Spanish, but the reason I was there was for my French … So, that's why I feel like [the internship] didn't connect to my major courses as much.

She wished she could have used more French, especially during interpretation sessions, to increase her confidence.

Claudia (first internship) and **Nicole** (second internship) reported feeling disappointed that their French did not improve as much as they were hoping for. **Claudia** explained that during her first internship, her French did not improve, “I had the chance to practice my French, but I don't feel like my French improved ... My expectations of improvement in my language were not completely achieved.” When asked why she thought her French did not improve despite having the opportunity to use it, she explained:

> Because I didn't learn a lot of vocabulary … I remember [thinking] this is a full-time French language and environment, so I'm going to be speaking French the whole time. At

> the end of the internship, I said, let me see if I know how to say this word in French, basic vocabulary, and I said no … I didn't feel any improvement in the vocabulary.

In her written reflection, **Nicole** explained that she had difficulties finding people who spoke French at her second internship site because she was working remotely:

> Finding someone who speaks French was another challenge. I know the [organization] is a very diverse organization with different languages, but most people working with the organization are in the office.

Even though she was exposed to some written French, **Nicole** reported feeling disappointed because she was hoping that being exposed to written French would improve her grammar, "I know that with reading comprehension, your grammar understanding should also improve, but unfortunately, this is not the case for me." In **Nicole**'s case, the lack of exposure to the French language during her second internship caused a diminution in her communication skills:

> I feel like [my French] actually diminished, to be honest, because I was so used to using it on a daily basis and speaking it for at least two hours a day. And then after that, I felt like I lost everything in a way.

The findings indicate that the participants who were not exposed to enough French were disappointed, but the participants who were expected to speak French most of the time reported some issues with confidence, mostly with their speaking and listening skills.

Rapport with Internship Supervisors, Clients, and Partners

Although **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Nicole** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) established a strong rapport with their internship supervisors, as we will see in the third section of the chapter, **Nicole** (first internship), **Katherine** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship) reported some communication issues, which

resulted in uncomfortable situations and fear of asking questions. **Katherine** explained during the focus group that the most challenging aspect of her first internship was interacting with her supervisor, which ended up being "awkward" at times. She said that her internship supervisor was somewhat intimidating, which made her nervous to talk to her and ask for help when needed. There were also several instances when her internship supervisor expressed frustration at things she did. **Katherine** explained that she is a shy person, which her internship supervisor may have interpreted as a lack of motivation or interest in the internship.

In **Nicole**'s case, the use of the target language had a negative effect on the rapport she built with her supervisors and colleagues, "So, it was really hard for me to get to know people sometimes, especially since we spoke in French only." The feedback she received from her supervisors further affected the rapport she built with them:

> It was difficult for me to ask questions because I had to speak in French. And I wasn't sure if I was saying the structure correctly because they would instantly say, 'No, you're saying it wrong.' Or, sometimes, I feel like their tone was a little aggressive, although that could just be my personal view. So, that's what the honest [**Nicole**] says.

Nicole went on to say, "Even after the prolonged time I've had with them, I didn't really feel comfortable." However, looking back, she acknowledged that her internship supervisor and colleagues probably wanted her to learn from her mistakes rather than being harsh to her. **Katherine** had a very similar input, "[My supervisor] was just a bit tough on [me]. I know she meant well, but it sometimes felt like, I don't know, a bit awkward. I just felt more nervous talking to her." **Vanessa** faced similar challenges during her second internship; however, she acknowledged that not being close to her supervisors is part of the professional world:

> I did enjoy [the second internship] too. I have nothing bad to say. I would just say it kind of felt like a little more distant. I couldn't connect with my supervisor [on the same level as my supervisors in my first and third internships], which is okay because I'm not always going to be buddy-buddy with all supervisors. That's just the professional world.

As for adaptability, it appears that cultural differences in the workplace may have negatively affected the rapport between interns and internship supervisors. For **Nicole**, the rapport she had with her supervisor seemed to have reinforced some of the existing negative views she held about French people and French culture:

> I'm not trying to put a negative view on French people, but I do believe that when they're explaining things, they can come off a bit aggressive and rude sometimes. So, I feel like when it comes to [my supervisor], who was French, her tone, I would say, made things feel sometimes rude and aggressive. But, because she's French, I know she [didn't] mean to hurt anyone's feelings; it's just her French culture.

Katherine had similar views and highlighted the role that cultural differences, especially with Hispanic cultures, played in her interactions with her supervisor:

> She's very French. That's the best way [to describe her] … She seems more intimidating, or maybe that's just who she is, or maybe that's just how she portrays herself … In Hispanic culture, everyone's very loving and warm, I should say. And I know that depends on the French-speaking country as well, but I know the stereotype is, you know, French people are more reserved and not as warm to new people, especially at work.

In **Nicole**'s case, age also seems to have harmed the rapport she built with her supervisors, "I think I'm taking this on a personal level. I think it's because of the age difference all of us had … I was closer to the interns than the coordinator and the teachers."

Vanessa also reported feeling closer to the supervisor who was closer to her age.

In addition to building rapport with internship supervisors, a few participants reported having conflictual interactions with clients and partners. **Katherine** and **Vanessa** noted that several clients for whom they were interpreting expressed frustration, adding another layer of difficulty to an already challenging task. During the focus group, **Katherine** mentioned that communicating with clients, particularly those from different backgrounds, was the most challenging aspect of her second internship:

> The most challenging was interacting with clients because they come from so many different backgrounds. But sometimes you have to approach them differently. And sometimes, there are issues. One time, that was upsetting, they were taking it out on me, even though I didn't really have anything to do with it. So, interacting with a diverse group of clients was challenging.

Ruth also referred to the frustration that clients expressed, which often resulted in conflictual interactions:

> Sometimes we have difficult clients. They think you are lying … I remember one client who was kind of shouting … I got so angry and frustrated … That was very difficult for me. And after that, I felt like I was too harsh. I don't know what he wanted because he couldn't speak English clearly. It was difficult … He was just a difficult person.

Claudia faced conflictual interactions with a partner organization providing services to her second internship site's clients. When having conversations on the phone with the partner organization's representatives, she felt that the latter were "very rude" to her because she sometimes had to call the partner organization several times on the same day to assist different clients.

In sum, several participants reported issues when building rapport with their supervisors, especially when they were expected to use the target language most of the time with supervisors who were from France. Additionally, several participants faced conflictual interactions with clients and partners.

Preferential Treatment and Discrimination

Two participants reported preferential treatment toward White interns. During the second individual interview, **Nicole**, who was the only Black intern at her first internship site, explained that the other two interns were offered free benefits to thank them for their work, but those benefits were not offered to her, which made her feel bad. Although she is not certain whether these treatments were motivated by race, the interns who benefited from preferential treatment were White. Initially, **Nicole** explained during her second interview that her proficiency in French influenced the differential treatment of interns at her internship site:

> Throughout the entire internship, I felt like my skills weren't as great in comparison to the other interns. So, I did feel like there was a difference in treatment, kind of, because the other interns knew more French … And the instructors and the coordinators at the time kind of noticed that their skills were better than mine.

After reflecting on this issue, she explained that race may have been a factor:

> But thinking back, in the back of my head, I do feel like because I was the only Black person there, with certain things that they would say, I kind of felt, in the back of my head, at least, that there was, I don't, I can't say. I don't know how to explain this correctly … Again, I don't like to see things from a racially motivated point of view, but I will say, at the time, sometimes, I would think that the treatment was partially because I was the only Black person. Only because I think there was this one experience between

> me and the other male intern I was working with. I had asked the coordinator a question, and she mentioned [that] once [I am] done with the internship, maybe [I] can take some of [her] classes [that are] 50% off. But then, when I mentioned it to the other intern, he said, 'Oh, they didn't tell me it was 50% off. They told me that they would just give it to me for free.' And they didn't tell me that. So, I [was] a little confused … And I was like, that's kind of weird.

Claudia, who identifies as Latina, noticed during her first internship that most tasks were assigned to other interns, both of whom were White. Because **Claudia** is neither a native English speaker nor a native French speaker, she felt as though her linguistic skills might have informed task assignments and encouraged her internship supervisors to assign most tasks to the other interns. Indeed, one of her fellow interns was a native English speaker, and the other one was a native French speaker. Although **Claudia** did not interpret these task assignments as a form of discrimination, she reported some frustration and disappointment. She explained that she took a passive role and even became a "shadow" at her internship site.

Moreover, **Katherine** reported that there was one instance when her internship supervisor assumed that she was Mexican just because she spoke Spanish:

> We didn't talk about [our backgrounds] there. And there was only one time, and I know she didn't mean it like that, I guess. It was my supervisor. We had a conversation, and she kind of assumed I was Mexican, but I'm Peruvian. I mean, unfortunately, I've experienced that many times where people just assume I'm Mexican. So, I think I'm used to it now.

While **Katherine** did not describe this experience as a form of discrimination and mentioned that she was accustomed to it, it is important to recognize that other interns may have felt differently about this incident. Additionally, although she was the only participant who reported being

mistakenly associated with a nationality to which she did not belong, her experience deserves to be highlighted here to raise awareness that such issues can arise during internships.

Even though most participants in the study did not report any form of preferential treatment or discrimination, it is important to note that certain behaviors, such as rewarding White interns or assigning more tasks to White interns, can make students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities feel excluded, regardless of whether these behaviors are racially or linguistically motivated.

Feelings of Isolation

Feelings of isolation were common in some of these internships. **Nicole** (second internship) reported feeling isolated and not knowing how to reach out for help because her internship was virtual. She explained during her second interview:

> The only downside was that I didn't really speak to anyone besides my mentor, which isn't too bad, but it would have been nice to also get to know other people and be exposed more to the clients or the refugees that came in [the office].

Although there was a texting feature through which she could have texted her colleagues and developed a rapport with them, **Nicole** explained that she did not use the feature because of the mindset in which she was at the time, which she regretted later:

> I kind of wish I just used it a little bit more to get around and [introduce myself]. So, it's a chat or a texting feature that allows you to send messages … At the time, I had the mentality of doing what I had to do and getting out when the time came. So, I wasn't really there to socialize. It's more so getting my work done.

Feelings of isolation were also present during in-person internships. **Ruth** explained that she was so busy that she did not have time to develop rapport with her colleagues. Alternatively,

Katherine discussed her second internship site as being too quiet at times because many employees worked remotely in the summer. She also explained that her first internship site felt too small, which meant that there was no space where all employees met, which reduced collaboration and rapport building. As previously discussed, **Claudia** explained that the lack of tasks assigned to her made her feel lonely at her first internship site. There were times when people did not even acknowledge her presence, which resulted in her becoming a "shadow" and taking a passive role.

Although **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (all three internships) discussed the important role that other interns played in helping them feel safe and comfortable, as we will see in the third section of the chapter, **Katherine** reported that during her second internship, she did not feel close to the other interns. There was an area at the internship site dedicated to interns, but she felt that it wasn't the right place for her because interns did not interact with one another.

Both **Katherine** (second internship) and **Vanessa** (first internship) felt isolated at times because their internship site was not diverse. **Katherine** explained that she felt isolated because she was the only Latina at her internship site, except when **Vanessa** was there, "Sometimes, I did feel a little bit isolated, I guess because me and [Vanessa] were the only Latino or Hispanic people there." Neither **Katherine** nor **Vanessa** reported feeling isolated during their internship at the organization helping refugees, which was a very diverse environment, which suggests that interning in a non-diverse environment increased their feelings of isolation and that having a fellow intern who identified with the same racial or ethnic group improved their experience.

During their individual interviews, **Antonio** and **David** explained that the events they attended as part of their internships were not very diverse and that they did not see many

Hispanic or Latinx people in attendance. However, they did not report this lack of representation as a challenge per se, and **David** even mentioned a sense of pride in acting as a representative of his community during these events.

Some participants reported feeling isolated during their internships. Several factors contributed to increased feelings of isolation, including the modality of the internships, with virtual internships being more isolating, participants' heavy workload, a lack of task assignments, and a non-diverse environment.

Lack of Confidence, Imposter Syndrome, and Deficit Views

As for feelings of isolation, working in internship environments that were not diverse affected confidence, which was the case for **Katherine** (first internship) and **Vanessa** (second internship). **Vanessa** explicitly stated that she struggled with imposter syndrome because she was the only Latina:

> And another challenge, I guess, would be just, you know, at the beginning when you adapt and you are kind of nervous and you think you're just going to fail everything, so it's just kind of putting away my pessimistic thoughts and just trusting myself, you know, I can, I'm here for a reason. It's called imposter syndrome, I think. It's like, I don't belong here. Why do I have this opportunity? And it's just because many people of color don't have these types of opportunities. And when you do have this opportunity, it's like, I don't belong here. Like, why am I the only Latina here?

Antonio, **Claudia** (first internship), and **David** reported struggling with their lack of confidence and deficit views, especially at the beginning of their internships. **Claudia** did not understand why her first internship application was successful and, to this day, still does not understand what the recruiters saw in her, which suggests a lack of confidence, "I don't know

what they saw in my resume, then they said, 'Yes, **Claudia**, we're happy if we have you on the team' … And I don't know if my resume helped me, or I don't know." **David** had similar views and discussed his surprise when he was accepted into his internship, "When I received the email informing me that I was accepted for an internship, I was very surprised. I knew the competition among other students was fierce, but I was still amazed to see my name in the final selection." **Antonio**, whose family is originally from the Dominican Republic, also reported his internship as being somewhat unexpected, "As an immigrant to the United States whose family left everything in search of a better life, I never imagined having the opportunity to intern with an organization like [my internship site]."

Some participants reported struggling with perfectionism and fear of failure, especially when they were in sole charge of completing high-stakes tasks. **David**, who was in charge of communication and marketing at his internship site, emphasized during the focus group that the most challenging aspect of his internship was the mental toll and the responsibilities he had to maintain his internship site's reputation:

> Having to take care of the entire social media … and knowing that [the organization] has connections with massive companies like [examples of large U.S. American corporations], all sorts of other big French companies. You're going to have to make sure that everything is pretty much near perfect. Otherwise, you're going to have that feeling like, oh, no. I must have said something wrong. We're going to look wrong to these very big companies, and then, you know, things are going to probably start snowballing from there.

Javier, who had the same role as **David** but in a different semester, said, "At first, I was kind of nervous because I didn't want to make grammatical errors, making sure everything looked good,

sounded correct, sounded professional, and adding it to [social media]." **Vanessa** said during the focus group that she struggled with perfectionism as well, "Going into an internship, you have no experience, and you're kind of learning that experience as you go. And it can be challenging wanting to be perfect."

As previously discussed, most participants who reported a lack of confidence seemed to have been self-conscious about their skills in the target language. **Claudia** said, "At the start [of the internship], I was a timid person because I lacked confidence in my level of French." **Nicole** explained, "I faced many difficulties with my tasks and the environment. At first, it was difficult because I was alone and lacked confidence in my French." She went on to say, "Occasionally, I struggled with communication due to my fear of making mistakes and bothering someone." She explained in her written reflection that being surrounded by native French speakers had a negative effect on her confidence, especially regarding her linguistic skills:

> I often had difficulties understanding [my colleague] … Her speaking flow made it challenging to understand. Sometimes, I lost confidence in my French. I know I can speak it, but I occasionally become nervous or shy.

Claudia also discussed being self-conscious about her proficiency in the target language:

> I didn't feel comfortable speaking French in the first [internship]. And I think it's because I knew about my issues with the language … and I remember at the beginning [of the internship] I didn't care, but when I started speaking French and [my colleagues] were having difficulties to understand me, I [thought] my French [was] not good enough.

Interestingly, **Claudia** pointed out that during her second internship, which she completed right after her first internship, her colleagues did not seem to have issues understanding her, which suggests that her colleagues at her second internship site may have been used to hearing different

accents because it was a very diverse organization. She also reported not feeling self-conscious about using her French during her second internship, which suggests that the extent to which an audience understood her affected her confidence when communicating in the target language.

The lack of clarity on their roles also influenced participants' confidence, which was mostly caused by a lack of training, orientations, or detailed internship descriptions. **Javier** wrote in his reflection, "I came into this role with a little bit of uncertainty, only because I was unsure of what my responsibilities would be. I had an idea that I could help out with the marketing and events, but I was genuinely unsure." During the focus group, **Vanessa** said that the most challenging aspect of her second internship was not having an orientation, "I would say, lack of an official training with that internship. But compared to the [my third internship site], they did have [an orientation], and I feel like that made just a significant difference because you kind of had an idea of what your role was." **Nicole** explained that she lacked confidence, not only at the beginning of her internship but also whenever she would receive new task assignments.

Overall, the lack of confidence, imposter syndrome, and deficit views with which some participants struggled were more prominent at the beginning of their internships. These feelings were also more important when participants interned in non-diverse environments, used the target language extensively, and completed high-stakes tasks.

Task-Related Challenges

Several participants reported issues relating to the tasks assigned to them, some of which were not engaging, redundant, challenging, or nonexistent.

Irrelevant Tasks

Katherine (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (second internship), who all interned at the same internship site, explained that their internship included several tasks

that were not relevant. Such tasks included organizing or cleaning the office space and watering plants. Although they acknowledged that any internship might include such tasks, these work assignments reduced their motivation and level of engagement. Specifically, **Nicole** explained during her first interview that the work she did at the beginning of her internship was not engaging, "Most of our work required us to reorganize the bookshelves and clean, which I did not find interesting at all." **Katherine** shared similar feelings during her first interview, "I didn't really like doing the organizing paperwork. I know it's usually part of the job, but it's not my favorite thing." **Vanessa** also discussed this aspect, "[My internship supervisor] would want us to clean the kitchen area or water plants, which didn't really help in what I was there for, but I would do it." She explained that this internship was not as well-defined as her first and third internships, and she realized, after the internship started, that it involved more administrative work than she had expected. In **Katherine** and **Vanessa**'s case, performing these tasks affected the rapport with their supervisors because the latter noticed that they did not seem engaged while performing these tasks, which caused frustration.

Several participants reported having to perform tasks that were not engaging or relevant to their degrees, but, despite these challenges, they appreciated having an internship experience and growing as professionals while getting exposure to the target language in a real-world setting.

Lack of Tasks

Claudia (first internship), **Katherine** (second internship), and **Nicole** (first internship) reported that there were times when they did not have any work to do, mostly because the internship site already had a team in place to oversee most tasks, which did not provide enough

room for interns to grow and learn. **Claudia** is the participant who seemed the most disappointed by the lack of tasks assigned to her during her first internship:

> Sometimes, I just go to lunch, come back, and then wait. Maybe I have to send an email, maybe something is going to happen, and they're going to ask me to do it. Even organizing papers, but nothing.

Claudia tried to be proactive and offered her help multiple times but ended up taking a "passive role." She said during her second interview, "When I proposed things, they said, 'No, someone is already taking care of it. We don't need the help. Maybe we'll let you know.' So, every time I propose[d] something or ask[ed], 'Do you want me to…', it was like, 'No, no, no.'" She went on to say, "I think that I felt restricted to that position."

In some cases, the lack of tasks assigned to interns was caused by the seasonality of the internship sites' operations. For example, **Katherine** explained during her presentation about her second internship that the summer season was slow at her internship site, which created a slow and "weird" environment at times. In other cases, the occasional absence of the internship supervisors resulted in a lack of tasks assigned to the participants. **Nicole** explained during her second interview, "The organization was somewhat disorganized. When I arrived at the organization and didn't see [my internship supervisors], I had nothing to do." She emphasized this challenge in her written reflection as well and explained that there were days when she did not have any tasks to perform, so she worked on her course assignments.

Claudia (first internship) and **Nicole** (first internship) also explained that their lack of knowledge and experience in certain areas reduced their task assignments. For example, **Nicole** explained that her lack of familiarity with software such as Microsoft Word and Excel had a negative effect on the number of tasks assigned to her:

> If someone at the organization needs something done on the computer with Word or Excel, they need someone who already knows how to do it. Sometimes, I was the only person in the organization without a task, so I wanted to do it, but because I didn't know how they would wait for another person or another day to complete it. I think that I missed opportunities to learn simple tasks.

As mentioned in the previous section, in **Claudia**'s case, language proficiency and cultural competence seem to have caused a reduction in her task assignments. She explained that her proficiency in English and lack of knowledge of the U.S. American culture may have shaped the ways in which tasks were assigned during her first internship:

> The environment is very formal and because they have a French culture and they like to keep it, but they also want to follow the American standards, the American culture. And sometimes, when they have to send an email or when they want to make a phone call with someone that speaks English, they prefer to ask [the other intern], because she's from the USA, she speaks English better than everybody in the [office], so she knows more about the dynamic, talking with American people.

To summarize, several participants reported not having many tasks to perform, which was caused by the seasonality of the internship sites' operations, participants' lack of training in certain areas, participants' perceived lack of linguistic or cultural knowledge, the existing structure of the internship site—which already had employees in charge of completing most tasks—and the occasional absence of internship supervisors.

Redundant Tasks

Some participants reported a lack of variety in the tasks they performed. **Claudia** faced this problem during her first internship, "All the time, I was doing the same [thing]. I was doing

an email. I was doing the newsletter." **Vanessa** said about her third internship, "And there were some little things that I didn't enjoy, like the match grant paperwork that can be a little repetitive." She also said that completing repetitive tasks during her second internship reduced her motivation:

> I definitely could have gone in there, in the beginning, with more energy, more pumped up to search for sponsors. And it was just kind of very repetitive, I would say, which is why I kind of got less pumped up to do it every day. But that was not something I looked forward to, but I tried my best. Any sponsor we would find, we would have to put [the information] into an Excel sheet, and it was not my favorite.

Nicole discussed the limited scope of her task assignments as well, which, she thought, could potentially reduce her employability:

> I feel like having more tasks to do as an intern is better because I'm more exposed to experience, and they'll help me in the future. So, just having membership services skills was convenient, but once I left the internship, I didn't really see myself doing anything else besides membership services … It's convenient to have the same role, but you're also thinking about your career and wanting to have more things to put on your resume.

When asked whether they felt comfortable asking to explore other areas and perform new tasks, **Claudia, Katherine**, **Nicole**, and **Vanessa** said that they did not feel comfortable doing so. **Vanessa** explained, "I'm very grateful for that opportunity. I learned so much, but I just didn't feel comfortable enough to ask to explore other areas. I felt very constricted to what I had to do." **Nicole** was also hesitant to discuss her goals, "I was not very comfortable with speaking in terms of what I wanted to do." **Katherine** explained that she was asked about what she wanted to focus on only once, at the beginning of the internship. However, she was not familiar with the

organization at the time and did not know what her options were, so this interaction did not result in any changes regarding her task assignments.

The only two participants who returned to the same internship site, **Javier** and **Ruth**, reported that their second semester felt somewhat redundant. Although **Ruth** wanted to return to her internship site because it felt like the place where she belonged and because she wanted to learn more about the position and the organization, it turned out that her second semester lacked new learning opportunities:

> [My goal was] to learn more and improve on what I already knew. New skills, new things. In that regard, I don't think [my second internship] really met my expectations. It did meet my expectations the first time, but the second time, it was more like a routine for me. There was nothing new. Everything was the same. I wanted something deeper than that, something more complex.

Javier, who also chose to return to his first internship site but in a different role, said during his second interview, "The least engaging [aspect of my internship], honestly, was the social media aspect because I had already done that and not even in a bad way, but I was kind of like, I've been there, done that. I get bored."

Overall, the participants who completed a wide range of tasks appreciated the flexibility in their work assignments, but the interns who were restricted to a specific role or set of tasks reported feeling bored at times. Therefore, a balance between flexibility and consistency in task assignments seems to have been the preferred option for the participants.

Challenging Tasks

Some participants also reported that their internships included tasks that were challenging, especially tasks that involved an audience. As previously stated, **David**, who

oversaw communication and marketing at a chamber of commerce, started feeling some pressure when he realized that he had to maintain his organization's reputation on social media:

> If I had to find some challenges in my internship, it would be the importance of ensuring that every post and task is absolutely perfect grammatically and factually. It may not seem important, but every detail matters for the integrity of our reputation. Even a small typo can undermine the professionalism of the intern and the director.

Javier expressed similar feelings during his second interview, "Their newsletter was probably the most difficult but also interesting thing …. There's lots of last-minute changes … and lots of people depend on [these newsletters]." **Nicole** felt uncomfortable when she was asked to read exam instructions in French to a group of students taking a test:

> Towards the end [of the internship], they wanted me to help out with the exams, to read through the [instructions] to the students who were taking [the exams]. I wasn't really comfortable doing that. That was the only time I ever declined them in a way … The instructions were in French, and I wasn't comfortable speaking or reading them out to people I didn't know at the time. So, it was scaring me.

Nicole also reported in her written reflection that the tasks assigned to her during her second internship were lengthy, which proved to be challenging at times. **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** (both internships) had to attend the networking events organized by their internship sites, which was challenging at first, especially for **Antonio**, "Participating in events was exciting and nerve-wracking, but above all, it was rewarding."

Tasks that involved technology were also arduous for some participants. **Nicole** (first internship), **Vanessa** (second internship), and **Katherine** (first internship) reported having issues when using Excel because they had limited knowledge of the software, while **Javier** explained

having spent a long time trying to understand Mailchimp. Moreover, tasks that involved research skills also proved to be challenging. **Katherine** (first internship) had to conduct research on movies that the organization was screening, which she found challenging. **Vanessa** (second internship) had to look for sponsors, which was both challenging and repetitive. **Antonio** was asked to conduct research on the Francophone community in the Atlanta metro area and the Southeast region, and he explained that it was difficult for him to complete this task and find the information that the internship supervisor had asked him to collect. He said:

> The only [task] that I had a problem with was when I was looking for athletes of French descent in Atlanta teams … It was just complicated dealing with celebrities, something that I had never had to deal with. And that information is not easy to find. I don't think I was able to find it. But that was the only one that proved to be particularly difficult, so I did not enjoy it as much.

Tasks that could have consequences on people's lives, especially people from underserved and underrepresented communities, were difficult for some participants. **Vanessa**, who helped refugees during her third internship, said during her first interview:

> The match grant paperwork can be a little repetitive, but it was different because it was for a family. You know? It was for a real person; someone I could help. So, it was a little repetitive, tedious, and complex. You had to be careful where to sign, making sure the packets were ordered correctly.

Interpretations were among the most challenging tasks that participants completed, mostly because they required advanced communication skills in the target language and because they could have consequences on people's lives. **Katherine** said that interpreting in French and Spanish was very difficult. At times, she did not know how to say something, which was

frustrating because she knew the importance of accuracy in interpretation, especially when interpreting for refugees who need interpreters to meet their basic needs. **Katherine** wrote in her written reflection about her second internship that she was very nervous about doing interpretations because of a lack of confidence in her French and Spanish. She expressed frustration over her inability to recall certain words, which she found discouraging, "Often, I remembered the word after the interpretation and became annoyed that I had forgotten it … I want my interpretations to be as accurate as possible so that no party is left confused."

She mentioned this challenge during her presentation as well:

> Some difficulties I faced were definitely interpreting. Even though it was a great experience, it was definitely difficult. I was very nervous every time I did it because I sometimes forget certain words and phrases … So, it was a bit nerve-wracking … But even now, if I were to be told that I needed to interpret, I would still get nervous. And I don't know if that will ever go away, really.

Claudia, who is a native Spanish speaker, also experienced challenges when she had to make phone calls in English:

> One difficult thing was when they asked me to make phone calls to schedule appointments. Sometimes it was difficult to do that, and sometimes I didn't enjoy it … Because it's not easy. I could understand people when I'm talking on the phone for an appointment, I understand everything, but when I ask what I want, they don't get it. And I know maybe it's because of my accent, or maybe I'm not using the correct vocabulary word for the conversation.

Nicole pointed out during her second interview that her task assignments started changing toward the end of her first internship because of the nature and seasonality of the activities of the

organization, which was challenging and confusing for her. She said, “Towards the end [of the internship], they would have me do a bunch of random things, but I wasn't really doing the membership services at the time. Maybe a little, but it wasn't as much as it was towards the beginning.”

Although all participants appreciated the opportunity to learn and grow, they reported having to perform challenging tasks. The tasks that were most challenging included the ones that involved the use of the target language (e.g., interpretations) and, to a certain extent, the English language (e.g., making phone calls in English), tasks that involved an audience (e.g., reading exam prompts to students, posting content on social media), attending networking events, and tasks that could negatively affect people’s lives, especially people from underserved and underrepresented communities.

Workload Management

All participants had jobs at the time they completed their internships. Three participants worked full-time: **Antonio** worked as a flight attendant, **David** worked as a hotel receptionist, and **Nicole** worked as a hostess in the food and beverage department of an amusement arcade. **David** gave more information about his job, “It was a full-time job, and it was one of those full-time jobs where you could definitely see yourself working over 40 hours depending on how the day goes, because it was a hotel.” **Javier** worked part-time at a store, **Vanessa** and **Katherine** worked as waitresses, and **Claudia** and **Ruth** worked as Graduate Teaching Assistants, teaching one or two courses per semester. **Katherine** explained that working part-time made it easier to accommodate the internship:

> I feel like it didn't affect [my job] because I was part-time. I feel like if it were full-time, I would feel more inclined to maybe change the hours or something. But at my job, my

> schedule is not a set schedule, so it kind of changes all the time. So, I would just have to call out some days that I wanted to go to my internship so I wouldn't be scheduled that day.

Antonio, **Katherine**, **Javier**, and **Vanessa** had to adapt their work schedule to accommodate their internships. **Javier** had to work longer shifts to free up days for his internships, and **Antonio** had to rearrange his schedule on a couple of occasions so he could attend the networking events organized by his internship site. In addition to modifying his schedule at times, **Antonio** had to reduce his work hours to accommodate his internship:

> I had to reduce the number of hours I worked because I would be away, and I had classes Tuesdays and Thursdays, so I could only fly Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays … So, it was maybe a 40% to 30% reduction in my work schedule as far as hours go.

Claudia, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** also discussed long commutes, which increased the time they had to dedicate to their internships. **Vanessa** had to drive about 60 minutes to get to her third internship site, **Claudia** between 60 and 90 minutes each way depending on traffic to get to her first internship site, and **Ruth** had 90 minutes of commute each way, resulting in more than three hours of commute each time she had to go to the office. During the focus group, **Ruth** explained that this was the most challenging aspect of her internships:

> The most challenging thing for me was the transit. Getting to the office took me one hour and 30 minutes. And sometimes it could take me two hours or more if the bus did not come. So, going and coming back took me three hours to sometimes five hours.

Interestingly, even though commuting was challenging for **Ruth**, she explained during her first interview that she would not have wanted to do her internship virtually:

> I loved being in person. I wouldn't have taken [a] virtual internship … Sometimes, I wished it had been virtual, especially when I was rushing to get to class from my internship or when the bus was taking so long or did not come, so it took me three hours trying to get home, which happened a lot.

Ruth's explanation during the focus group prompted a response from **Claudia**. Although she did not have issues commuting to her second internship site, which happened to be the same as **Ruth**'s, she explained that she did not have a car at the time and that a friend loaned her a car. **Ruth**'s experience of having to take public transportation and multiple buses to get to her internship site helped **Claudia** realize that she would have had the same difficulties had her friend not loaned her a car.

Even virtual or hybrid internships that did not involve commuting proved challenging for some participants. **Vanessa** wrote about her first internship, which was fully online and mostly asynchronous, "It was challenging to balance my internship, my coursework, and my job at the same time." **Javier**, who completed two virtual internships, is the participant who emphasized time management issues the most:

> The most difficult challenge for me was managing my time. At the beginning of the semester, it was daunting because I already had a chaotic schedule before starting the internship, so adding another task was overwhelming. Additionally, I have anxiety, so I never seem to have enough time in the day. Despite this, my schedule required me to try to finish everything because I understood how hard my professor worked to secure internship opportunities with various organizations.

During his second interview, **Javier** said, "[My fellow intern] and I, sometimes, we couldn't do any of [our tasks] because we were just being pulled from so many different directions." He

reported that the end of the semester was particularly difficult to manage because his internship site was busy, and he had to submit his final exams:

> The only time it was tough to find time for all my tasks and assignments was at the end of the semester when there were many projects and essays to complete. Also, incidentally, the final week of the semester was when we had a lot of work at school and for the [internship], so unfortunately, all the tasks had to be completed at the same time as university assignments.

He went on to say:

> It was kind of hard because some teachers were not as understanding that we had our internships on these days … Schoolwork was another level of school [because] it was 4,000-level classes. So, the work that we were doing wasn't hard, but it was extensive. So, you had to focus a little bit more on it.

Javier's experience indicates that the timing of course assignments had a negative effect on his ability to complete his internship work. **Antonio**, who participated in the same focus group and interned at the same internship site as **Javier** but during a different semester, noticed that **Javier**'s workload was similar to his, although **Antonio** had two fellow interns and **Javier** only had one. This finding suggests that their internship site assigned the same amount of work to interns regardless of the number of interns they had, which seems to have made Javier's workload less manageable.

Workload management was particularly challenging for the participants in the study because all of them had to work in addition to taking courses. Several in-person internships involved long commute times, but the participants who completed virtual internships also reported issues with workload management. Finally, the courses that participants took also

affected their ability to manage their schedules, as some courses, especially advanced-level language courses, required more time investment than others.

Internship Modality

Antonio, **Javier**, and **Nicole** (second internship) pointed out the limitations of their internship modality, especially virtual and hybrid internships, which appear to have been more limiting than in-person internships. For **Nicole**, working remotely was challenging in the sense that she could not find a balance between her personal life and her internship, "All my work was on a computer at home, so I had trouble stopping my work and relaxing." For **Nicole**, working remotely also meant that she had limited support and did not receive significant exposure to the target language, "Although it was convenient to work from home, I didn't get as much exposure to the French language and culture as if I were in person." She also explained that meeting in person during her first internship was more effective than online meetings during her second internship and that meeting in person also enabled her to build rapport with her fellow interns, which she could not do during her second internship.

Although **Antonio** appreciated the hybrid format of his internship, which allowed him to dedicate more time to his personal life and his job, he discussed the limitations of a virtual internship during his presentation:

> We were given the option to work at the office. Looking back, I would have just gone to the office to see how the business actually runs. As a business development intern, I think that would have been more beneficial for me … The only thing that I missed from my internship is actually getting my hands dirty in a way with the business aspect and doing some office work … Looking back, I did miss out on something by not going into the office.

Claudia, who completed two in-person internships, also pointed out the limitations of online internships, which is why she specifically chose in-person internships. She explained that she prefers to work more hours and be in person to get more exposure to the target language and "build a community." She then explained that the COVID-19 pandemic affected her internship modality preferences:

> There were a couple of internships that were hybrid and online. And I said it's not going to be the same because I had this with online education, and we came from the COVID situation, and personally, I didn't like being in front of the camera. I prefer to be face-to-face.

Alternatively, **David** discussed the benefits of a virtual internship and the limitations of an in-person internship. He discussed the fact that the modality of his internship, which was mostly hybrid, was preferable because most of his work did not require in-person interactions:

> I think if the structure was going to be the same in person, then I'd rather it had been virtual. There was not much of a need to have to travel to an office that's probably half an hour away, which was the case for me. And if we were going to be talking about the same things that we would have probably had the opportunity to talk about virtually, then I feel that there wouldn't really be a need to be there in person.

He then discussed the fact that his internship would have been far more difficult had it been in person:

> It would have definitely been a lot more difficult had it been in person. So, for me, having a full-time job and then classes that I was taking, plus an internship, too. It would have been too much to handle. But, especially driving in the city, with traffic.

There was no clear consensus between in-person, virtual, and hybrid internships, as each modality had unique opportunities and limitations. Virtual and hybrid internships were more convenient, especially for participants who worked full-time jobs, but provided less exposure to the target language and fewer opportunities to build rapport with supervisors and colleagues. In contrast, in-person internships provided more exposure to the language and involved more interactions with supervisors, colleagues, and fellow interns, but these internships often involved long commute times.

Financial Difficulties

The internships completed by the participants were unpaid, as all the internship sites were non-profit organizations relying solely on donations and membership dues. Surprisingly, few participants reported financial difficulties associated with their internships, despite being specifically asked about potential financial difficulties during individual interviews. However, the experiences of the participants who did face financial challenges warrant attention. **Claudia**, an international student from Colombia, is the only participant who explicitly mentioned facing financial hardship during her internships:

> There [were] a lot of limitations with the money. I don't have a lot of money. I only had enough money to pay my rent, and I remember that at that time, my budget was only $50 per week. I couldn't spend more than $50.

Claudia discussed her financial struggles at the time of the internships in more detail during her second interview:

> I'm going to say [something] that's not going to sound good, but I did whatever I was able to do. For example, grocery shopping. Someone said, '**Claudia**, I have this list. I don't have time to go. Do you have a couple of hours to go, and I'll give you a tip? And I

> needed that money because the money that I was receiving for teaching was helping me to pay part of my rent, and I had to eat … And as I mentioned before, I have emotional support from my family, but I don't have any economic support from my family.

Additionally, **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** reported having to incur expenses during their internships, even though they did not explicitly refer to these expenses as challenges but rather as investments for their future careers. **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** had to purchase clothes, such as ties and suits, which they did not own before their internships. Specifically, **David** had to purchase professional clothes for a black-tie event organized by his internship site, "I had to buy clothes for the [event], but if anything, I consider that an investment for any other uses for other events." **Javier** had similar views on the purchases he had to incur:

> The events that we [attended], we had to be dressed for the part and be professional. And, of course, I have clothing, but it kind of forced me to look the part, and it fed me to go out and grab something new, and it's like, I can use this professionally; I can invest in something towards work and business, towards my career.

Although **David** and **Javier** did not consider that these purchases were a challenge per se, it is worth noting that not all participants already possessed the professional clothes needed for their internships.

Claudia (both internships), **Katherine** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) had to work full days from the office, so they had to spend money on lunches. The participants who received complimentary food expressed gratitude. **Ruth** said, "Sometimes there were free lunches for us. Not really lunches, but some stores donate food to [clients], and the staff are allowed to get some. So sometimes I get [food] from there." **Katherine** also mentioned that her supervisor would sometimes pay for her lunch, which she appreciated. Also, all

participants who had in-person internships had to either drive or take public transportation, so they had to purchase bus tickets or pay for gas. All participants who had to park at their internship site could park for free or were reimbursed for parking. However, **Nicole** had to pay for parking at her internship site once but was not reimbursed. Also, **Katherine** (second internship), **Nicole** (second internship), and **Vanessa** (third internship) had to pay $50 for a background check, which was required by the organization.

Antonio, **Claudia**, and **Ruth** did not live with their families during their internships, so they had all the expenses associated with living in their own homes, such as rent and utilities, while being in school. It is also important to note that **Claudia** and **Ruth**, as international students, could not have a paid job in addition to their graduate teaching assistantships, which limited their income.

None of the participants were primary caregivers for family members, and none had children. The only participant who reported having expenses associated with supporting family members was **David**, who discussed the financial support he gave to his family in Mexico:

> My family is all the way back in Mexico … There are moments when if I had to send some money over there, I went ahead and did it … And we want to make sure that we give them enough support to see about finding a way to take care of them while we're still over here. And there really is not much of a way for us to really do that except for helping fund any medical expenses or medication.

Only one participant, **Claudia**, highlighted the financial hardship she faced during her internships, which could be attributed to the fact that other participants still lived at home or had full-time jobs that generated sufficient income. Finally, **David** and **Javier**, who had to incur

expenses to purchase clothing, considered those as investments for future careers rather than challenges.

In conclusion, the participants identified a wide range of internship challenges, several of which related to race, language, and identity. Specifically, the participants reported challenges with adaptability, the use of the target language, rapport with supervisors, preferential treatment toward White interns, feelings of isolation, lack of confidence, task-based issues, limitations associated with internship modality, and financial hardship.

Community Cultural Wealth

The third research question guiding the study was: *What forms of community cultural wealth do students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities in a world language program employ to navigate their internships?* The following section provides an overview of research findings that pertain to this third research question, which are presented within the frame of Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth and its six forms of capital: (a) *aspirational*, (b) *linguistic*, (c) *familial*, (d) *social*, (e) *navigational*, and (f) *resistan*t. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Yosso defined *aspirational capital* as students' ability to maintain hopes and dreams, especially under difficult circumstances, *social capital* as their ability to use their social network, *linguistic capital* as their capacity to develop communication skills, *familial capital* as their ability to draw from one's familial and community networks, *navigational capital* as their capacity to navigate social institutions, including predominantly White spaces, and *resistant capital* as their ability to advocate for their equal rights and collective freedom.

Before reviewing findings that relate to each form of capital, I will provide an overview of the participants' general views on these forms of capital. In the questionnaire's multiple-choice question, the respondents were asked to select the forms of capital they used to navigate

their internships. As shown in Table 14, 11 respondents reported using their *social capital*, 10 reported using their *linguistic capital* and *familial capital*, nine reported using their *aspirational capital* and *navigational capital*, and seven reported using their *resistant capital*.

Table 14

Capitals on which Participants Reported Relying

Capital	*n*	%
Social	11	78
Linguistic	10	71
Familial	10	71
Aspirational	9	64
Navigational	9	64
Resistant	7	50

Note. $N = 14$. Adapted from Yosso (2005).

During the focus groups, participants were asked to report the form of capital they used the most to navigate each internship. As shown in Table 15, *social capital* was chosen as the form of capital on which participants relied the most by seven of the respondents. *Aspirational capital* was chosen by four respondents, *linguistic capital* was chosen by two respondents, and *resistant capital* was chosen by one respondent. Although ten respondents reported using their *familial capital* and nine reported using their *aspirational capital*, none of them ranked familial capital and aspirational capital as the forms of capital on which they relied the most. The results indicate that participants utilized various forms of capital to navigate their internships. Specifically, four respondents reported employing all six forms of capital, one utilized five, two respondents utilized four, five respondents utilized three, and one utilized two forms of capital. Furthermore, the findings suggest that social capital was particularly important for the participants in this study.

Table 15

Capitals on which Participants Reported Relying the Most

Capital	*n*	%
Social	7	50
Aspirational	4	28
Linguistic	2	14
Resistant	1	7
Familial	0	0
Navigational	0	0

Note. N = 14. Adapted from Yosso (2005).

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital is defined as students' ability to rely on their aspirations as well as their ability to maintain hopes and dreams in the face of adversity (Yosso, 2005). As previously mentioned, nine respondents to the questionnaire reported using their *aspirational capital* during their internships. Moreover, during the focus group, four respondents ranked aspirational capital as the form of capital they used the most.

All participants made references to their aspirational capital during individual interviews, written reflections, presentations, and focus groups, not only in their initial decision to apply to their internships but also to carry through the internships, especially when they faced challenging situations. Indeed, all participants reported feeling highly motivated to complete their internships and provided various reasons for wanting to complete their internships, which included improving their communication skills in the target language, interacting with native speakers of the language and building a network, gaining professional experience and advancing their careers, and serving their communities. The four participants who reported relying the most on their aspirational capital were **Javier** (second internship), **Nicole** (second internship), **Ruth**, and

Vanessa (second internship). **Javier** explained that maintaining hope in the face of adversity and remaining focused on his aspirations enabled him to complete both of his internships. However, aspirational capital proved particularly helpful during his second internship because that semester was far busier than the first one, even though he interned at the same site.

Ruth reported that she primarily used her aspirational capital to navigate her internship because her aspirations brought her to this internship site in the first place and carried her through the internship, which she had mentioned during her second interview as well:

> When I look back now, I don't know how I did it … I mean, that's what I came to do. I came to school. I came to study. That's my mindset. So, it's not that bad … I told myself that I had three days free, so it was okay.

Vanessa mentioned during the focus group that whenever she had a difficult day at her internship site, she engaged in self-reflection and tried to remain focused on her career goals. She explained that focusing on the benefits of her internships, especially for her future career, was an important driving force. "For the second internship, which was probably the most challenging because it was just a different environment, and I just relied on my resilience and just pushed through." During this internship, **Vanessa** reported not being able to build rapport with her internship supervisors and having some negative interactions with them. It was also the internship where she felt the most isolated because the environment was not diverse. However, she persevered by remaining focused on her aspirations and goals:

> I wouldn't change a thing [about my internships], even if I did struggle in one of them, because I just feel like everything happened for a reason, and the way that it went taught me something, taught me new skills, new perspective. I just feel like I wouldn't change anything and would just keep it the way that it is because it was meant to happen that way

> in order for me to grow. Even bad experiences make you grow and have different perspectives.

Nicole explained that she mostly relied on her aspirational capital during her second internship because she was working remotely, which required additional internal motivation, "I was working from home, on a computer all the time, so I really had to depend on myself a lot in terms of being able to motivate myself." She also made references to her aspirations during her individual interviews, "I developed self-dedication. Well, I think I always had that," and went on to say, "I'm kind of an optimistic person, or at least that's how I like to view myself. I try to think of the positive more than the negative." When asked about the kind of support she had to help her complete her internships, **Nicole** said that she mostly relied on international motivation and resilience, "It was all kind of self-motivation and looking forward to breaks, like the winter breaks or Thanksgiving breaks, and any days off I had requested off from work. And looking forward to the degree I was waiting for."

Claudia referred to her ability to maintain hope and her resilience on several occasions, without ranking aspirational capital as the capital on which she relied the most. During her second interview, she explained that the financial challenges she experienced during her internships did not matter to her because she knew these internships were unique opportunities to advance her career and increase her employability:

> I had limitations with the money, but I didn't care about it. I said I'm going to apply to that [internship] because it's going to benefit me in the future and the present. I'm going to network, practice my French, and be in a space that I have never been before. So, that is wonderful.

Claudia further explained, “In this country, there is the mindset that time is money, but when you invest your time in meaningful things, that is going to give you another kind of reward. Not all the time is money. That's my mindset.”

Overall, many participants in the study reported using their aspirational capital, which proved particularly important for some of the participants who completed virtual internships, had workload management issues, felt isolated, or struggled with financial hardship.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital is defined as the “intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). In the questionnaire, 10 respondents reported using their linguistic capital. It is important to note that none of the participants in the study is monolingual. Indeed, all participants were French majors, so they all speak French in addition to English. All participants also speak additional languages. Specifically, **Antonio**, **Claudia**, **David**, **Katherine**, and **Vanessa**, who represent 62% of the participants in the study, are fluent in Spanish because their families are originally from Hispanophone countries such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Peru. Additionally, **Ruth** grew up speaking her native language, Igbo, and English. In other words, 75% of the participants in the study grew up in multilingual households. **Nicole** and **Javier** are the only participants who were raised in a primarily monolingual household. However, **Nicole** learned Korean, and **Javier** took Spanish and Japanese courses. Therefore, all participants in the study had solid linguistic capital. However, not all of them used it to the same extent.

Due to the nature of world language internships, most participants had to interact in the target language and use their linguistic capital to perform the tasks assigned to them. That said, **Antonio**, **David**, and **Nicole** (second internship) reported a limited use of the target language

during their internships. **Claudia** (second internship), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (second internship) reported using the target language extensively. Therefore, the participants' use of their linguistic capital depended on the extent to which they were expected to use the target language to communicate during their internships.

During the focus groups, **Claudia** (second internship) and **Vanessa** (third internship) identified linguistic capital as the form of capital they utilized the most. Interestingly, both internships were completed at the same internship site—a highly diverse organization where they were expected to interpret for refugees and immigrants. Their experiences indicate that the type of organization and the nature of its activities significantly influenced the forms of capital on which the participants relied the most. **Claudia** noted during her second interview that her proficiency in three languages was a valuable asset, and the company frequently relied on her linguistic skills, which motivated her to apply for a job at the company after graduation. During the focus group, she stated:

> I was using French, Spanish, and English, and thanks to that, I was able to communicate with a lot of clients and coworkers … I can say that my linguistic capital, when intertwined with cultural awareness, [helps me] know more about the community that I'm speaking to. And that just gave me enough resources to handle situations during my internship.

Claudia made various references to her linguistic capital during her individual interviews and even explained that her cultural background and ability to speak multiple languages helped her secure her second internship:

> [The interview] was my first time selling myself to the American [job] market. They were asking questions about my experience with migrants. I think that it is well known

> about the Venezuelan immigration wave, and if Venezuelan people want to go to the USA, the first country that they need to cross is Colombia, and Colombia has been very affected in that way. I remember that I talked about helping Venezuelans, and [the recruiters] were very interested in the background that I have, and also the way that I speak more than one language. So, I remember that I passed my first interview, and then they sent me to the second interview, and then they made it official.

Vanessa said during the focus group that her linguistic capital was particularly helpful when she had to provide interpretation services to refugees:

> I relied on my background and, you know, I used a lot of Spanish, and I translated a lot of Spanish and French. And it was definitely a very diverse environment, and I felt very comfortable speaking to people who are from where I'm from.

Her experience suggests that she felt more prone to using their linguistic capital when she interacted with people to whom they could relate racially and/or ethnically. During the Q&A session that followed the presentation of her second internship, **Vanessa** was asked by an audience member whether it was challenging to complete an internship in a French-speaking environment. She made a reference to her ability to navigate multilingual spaces:

> I would say it's pretty intimidating at first, but you kind of have to immerse yourself and push yourself to do it. And also, if you have any questions on a certain word, just feel free to ask, or you can just describe something, like, around it. But I would just say, just throw yourself into it, and don’t be afraid to make mistakes.

Katherine also reported that being a Spanish speaker was an asset during her second internship because she had interpretation experience on a personal level:

> I enjoyed doing the interpretations because before the [internship], I didn't really have a chance to do that. I mean, I would maybe do it at home or at work sometimes, when mostly Spanish speakers come in. So, it was nice to have that professional experience for interpretations.

Although most participants had to use the target language during their internships, the nature of the tasks performed informed the extent to which participants used their linguistic capital. Indeed, the participants who had to do interpretations, such as **Claudia**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa**, made many references to their linguistic abilities during the study and reported being able to successfully perform these interpretations because of their capacity to navigate between languages. **Claudia** said that she was able to explain concepts to French-speaking clients, even when she did not know certain words, "Sometimes I didn't know how to use the correct expressions, but I explained what I wanted to say, and they understood it." **Katherine** had a similar experience, "I tried to rephrase it differently … I would try my best, and if I couldn't really figure it out, say it in English, even though you probably don't understand it." **Ruth** said during the presentation of her first internship, "I communicate with clients as they come in … When you find people who don't speak English, who don't speak the language that you speak, you don't turn them away. You have to find a way of communicating with them."

Linguistic capital was an important asset that the participants in the study brought to their internship sites. Because of the nature of the internships under study, which were all conducted by French majors, this finding was to be expected. However, not all participants got to use their linguistic capital to the same extent, and linguistic capital was particularly helpful for participants who were expected to use the target language on a regular basis and had to provide interpretation services.

Familial Capital

Familial capital is viewed as students' ability to draw from their family and community for support (Yosso, 2005). According to questionnaire data, 10 respondents used their familial capital, which was the second form of capital that was chosen the most after social capital. However, none of the respondents ranked it as the form of capital they used the most. During the presentations, written reflections, and interviews, fewer participants mentioned their families or friends, which could be attributed to the fact that family is a personal matter and that participants may not have felt comfortable discussing it as part of the focus groups, written reflections, and presentations.

David, **Javier**, **Nicole**, **Vanessa**, and **Katherine**, who represent 62% of the participants in the study, still lived with their parents when they completed their internships, which significantly reduced their living expenses, such as rent and utility bills, and enabled them to dedicate time to their internships. **Nicole** explicitly referred to the financial support she received from her family, "It was definitely beneficial for me to stay at home with my family, in terms of expenses." **Vanessa** said, "If I had no money, [my family] would be there for me." **Katherine** also referred to the financial support she received from her family:

> I lived at home while I was in university, so that definitely helped with the financial aspects because I didn't have to worry about having to pay rent compared to a lot of other students … I'm glad I didn't have to worry so much about getting those hours at work. I'm very grateful for that.

David also referred to the financial support he received from his family:

> [My family] did everything they could do on their end [to help me]. I told them not to worry about any financial expenses, but they were not budging. They just wanted to help

> me out with whatever financial expenses needed to be made, especially with any clothing that I had to purchase.

Antonio, who no longer lived with his parents, is the only participant who referred to the support received from a partner, "I continued to work full-time, so my wages never wavered. But I had my partner also who, if I needed something, would do it for me, but I still maintain my full-time job."

Claudia, **David**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** discussed the emotional support they received from their families, which was particularly important for **Claudia** and **Ruth**, the only two participants whose immediate families lived in another country, respectively Colombia and Nigeria. **Ruth** discussed the important role that her family played during her internship, especially when her mom and sister checked on her and encouraged her:

> My family, my mom, my sister, sometimes they'll say, 'How are you doing? How is your work? I hope you are fine.' Those little things helped because I wasn't receiving any financial support from anyone, from anywhere. So, it really, really helped.

Claudia, who is the first person in her family to move to the United States and go to graduate school, also discussed the emotional support she received from her family, which proved important to her, especially at the beginning of her first internship, because she was accomplishing things that nobody had ever done in her family:

> Oh my God … You share your goals and what you are achieving with your mom and dad, and they will make sure that the entire family knows about it. For example, I told my mom, 'I'm going to do an internship at [this internship site].' My mom was like, 'Wow. For real? But you need to dress very well. Pay attention to that. You need to be very professional,' and my grandma sent me an audio, and she was like, 'Congratulations!

> God bless you! Everything is going to be good. Just enjoy. Represent very well. You're so smart.' And I remember a lot of people from my family said, 'You are getting outside of your comfort zone in a way that is very impressive'. I'm the first person in my family who has been living in the USA, who is now doing a Ph.D., and who knows a lot of languages.

Claudia went on to say:

> The whole time [my dad was] telling me, 'If you need anything, just let me know. If you're short of money, just let me know.' And I know that's very nice of him, but I never asked for money. [My family] already did a lot for me in high school and college at the undergraduate level, but now it's on me. So, I don't ask them for money because I know I can be proactive.

David also discussed the emotional support he received from his family:

> My family is always going to support me through everything. So, of course, when they heard of this [internship] opportunity, they were very excited for me because this is definitely a great step in the right direction to put myself out there and see what the future lies ahead for me … It's not just financial support; they gave me the emotional support to stay there, keep going. It wasn't a hard internship … but, of course, they just wanted to make sure that I did my job right, that I did my job exactly how it should be.

Katherine, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** referred to the emotional support provided by specific family members. **Katherine**'s mom reassured her when she doubted herself and her potential:

> When I first started [the internship], I was a bit nervous to go in. With every new experience, it's like that. My mom, especially, was there to make sure I was okay and supported me … Before every internship, I mentioned it to her because I tell her

> everything … and she [said], 'This is a good opportunity for you to learn and gain more experience.' I'm a very shy person, nervous about starting new things … But she always talked me through it and said, 'You know, it's going to be scary at first, but you can do it.' And she just pushed me to do these new things, especially the internships.

During her second interview, **Vanessa** discussed the fact that her mom helped her when she struggled with imposter syndrome:

> My mom is my biggest supporter. And if ever I need to vent, I just go to her, and she would just be like, '[**Vanessa**], you're there for a reason. They gave you this opportunity. They chose you for a reason.' And I would just kind of keep thinking that; I am here for a reason, and I have something to bring to the table.

In **Ruth**'s case, her sister played an important role during her internships:

> I kind of trained my younger sister in school. So, I was kind of taking care of her financially while here. And emotionally too, because sometimes she would call me and tell me things, and I'd be like, 'Oh, don't worry about it. It will be fine.' Then, I'll advise her. And she does that for me too, praises me, tells me that everything is going to be fine.

During her first interview, **Vanessa** also talked about the support she received, not only from her family but also from her friends. She was one of the few participants who mentioned the important role that her friends played during her internship:

> I have my family. They've always supported me in what I do. And then, my friends supported me, not financially, but mentally. Also, I love my coworkers. They're always there. You know, if you need to vent. You can always vent to my coworkers …

Family played a significant role for the participants in the study, particularly in providing emotional support and, to some extent, financial support. Nevertheless, none of the participants

identified familial capital as the primary form of capital on which they relied to navigate their internships.

Social Capital

Social capital is defined as students' ability to rely on their social network (Yosso, 2005). In the context of this study, social capital is viewed as participants' ability to rely on their peers, fellow interns, colleagues, internship director (i.e., professor overseeing the internship), and internship supervisors. In the questionnaire, 11 respondents out of 14 reported using their social capital during their internships, which is more than any other form of capital. Moreover, social capital was the primary form of capital used during seven of the 14 internships completed by the participants, which is also more than any other form of capital. Specifically, **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (first internship), **Katherine** (both internships), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (first internship) reported using social capital more than the other forms of capital. Qualitative data corroborate participants' reliance on their social capital, with participants making far more references to their social capital than to other forms of capital. Specifically, fellow interns, internship supervisors and colleagues, and the internship director played an important role for the participants and helped them navigate their internships.

Fellow Interns

Most participants mentioned relying on their fellow interns to navigate their internship experiences. Having fellow interns at their internship sites was helpful, especially in avoiding confusion and ensuring that they understood their task assignments. **Javier** reported that interning with **Vanessa** helped him be successful during his internship because they would check on each other to ensure that they understood the instructions for the tasks assigned to them, "We

spoke in French for our calls, and if we didn't understand something, we would ask each other".

Vanessa shared similar insights during her second interview:

> It's always nice to have a peer by your side in case you have any questions and have each other's backs. The first [semester], I interned with [**Javier**], and I would say it was a nice experience because it's like having each other's backs and not letting one of us be confused or drown.

Antonio also discussed the role that fellow interns played in providing clarity in his task assignments:

> I do remember coming to [my fellow interns] a few times and just going over what the task was that maybe I did not understand completely or just getting a different perspective, from their expertise or from their department … Getting their perspective on the task was very helpful, especially because they understood where I was coming from given that they were interns as well during the same time. So, getting their opinion and hearing their thoughts was very helpful for me.

Having other interns also facilitated collaboration, which made participants' workload more manageable. When asked about the possibility of being the only intern at his internship site, **Antonio** said that his workload might have been too heavy:

> We were able to compartmentalize all the tasks that were relevant to each intern … Having [my fellow interns] definitely helped with my workload … Besides workload management, it would have been a little chaotic for me to have to deal with [my fellow interns' assigned tasks]. So, dealing with all of that, plus my actual job, and then having to go to my four classes, it would have been too much. So, at some point, I think, the quality of the work would have suffered.

David, who interned with **Antonio** but did not participate in the same focus group session, also said that he mostly used his social capital, especially his fellow interns, "We had similar responsibilities overall, so it helped to bring ourselves up to make sure that we did our job correctly and go over everything we've done so far and see how we can better ourselves on each aspect." During his second interview, **Javier** discussed the fact that he collaborated with **Vanessa**, which was helpful, especially when the semester was busy:

> We worked together a lot that semester, and we would meet up [on campus]. It was about homework, but we would also do work for the internship if we needed to collaborate when it was getting really busy. That was cool … [**Vanessa**] and I were balancing school and work and everything, and there was a lot of stuff to do, but not enough time. And it felt good to know that we were both on the same page … So, we knew we were kind of in this together.

Collaborating with other interns also increased motivation and task engagement for participants like **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (second internship), and **Vanessa** (first internship). **Antonio** wrote in his reflection, "Although [my fellow interns] and I worked in different departments and on different projects, we could see that we were all working towards the same goal of seeing the [organization] grow." During his second interview, **Antonio** said:

> One of the things that I enjoyed the most was working across the aisle with the other interns … [We] worked together on the same task, but we all had different responsibilities, and we approached the task at hand from different angles. But it was nice to see how different parts of a department or business kind of come together to perform or get to the same goal.

When discussing the large event during which he worked alongside **David** and another intern, **Antonio** wrote, “This experience was one of the most enriching of my academic career, allowing me to work closely with classmates whose different contributions and perspectives enhanced our collective learning experience.”

In some cases, having fellow interns increased participants’ confidence and morale. During his second interview, **David** said that his fellow interns helped him navigate his challenge and boost his morale:

> Thankfully, it's not just me who had to deal with this internship alone. I had the help of the other interns who were also my friends beforehand to help me navigate [the internship] and gave me a bit of a morale boost to know that, of course, some mistakes are going to happen, that maybe I might have said this thing wrong in French to a certain person, or maybe I just had to do what I had to do a little bit differently to make it more appropriate to the situation. So, of course, I had a support system that wasn't just [my supervisor]; it was everyone involved in it.

When asked if it would have been harder to be the only intern at his internship site, he said: “I definitely would say it would be a little bit harder in terms of knowing that I'm the one guy with this opportunity, so there's a lot of expectations on me now.” **Antonio** also discussed the role of fellow interns in making him feel more confident:

> I felt as though I was not the only one who was in it. Also, I might not be the only one who might be confused by this week's task. Somebody who feels the same way as me, and I can kind of lean on them for more support.

Having other interns at their internship sites helped **Antonio**, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (first internship), **Nicole** (first internship), and **Vanessa** (all three

internships) feel less lonely or isolated. **Nicole** mentioned the important role that fellow interns played during her second interview, “I had other interns with me, so I was more comfortable being myself.” She went on to say:

> I was really happy to have other people with me that was going through the same experiences. So, the other interns, I was really grateful to have. Although there were a few times throughout the month when I would just be by myself, which was really sad. But thinking about all the other days, I had someone with me, so it was great.

She also said:

> The other interns helped me a lot, actually. They helped me get through the day, and I would do the same for them. Even if they weren't really in the best of moods, or even if I wasn't in the best mood. So, you always try to boost each other up a bit.

Fellow interns helped the participants in the study feel less isolated, especially when the environment felt formal and when participants could not build rapport with their supervisors. **Katherine** said that bonding with her fellow interns was important because she did not have a close relationship with her internship supervisor. **Nicole** had a similar experience and discussed during her second interview the important role that her fellow interns played:

> It really did help to have someone to talk to during our downtime, so it kind of made time go by a little faster if you're there for very long periods of time. And it also made the environment a lot better and fun, in my opinion. We were just laughing, or we would say something in French, or we'd pull up a French video during our downtime and be like, oh, look, this is hilarious. And it was just really fun … The environment was a little bit too formal, and it made it a little bit more fun.

For **Katherine** and **Vanessa**, having fellow interns who identified with the same racial or ethnic group helped them feel less isolated. During individual interviews, **Katherine** and **Vanessa**, who both interned at the same internship site during the same semester, mentioned being grateful to have each other. Both felt isolated at their internship site, which was not diverse. **Vanessa** also mentioned that at her third internship site, which was very diverse, she met many Latinx interns and employees, which helped her feel accepted in the organization. **Katherine** said that she relied on her fellow interns during her first internship, especially **Vanessa**:

> I think it helped because we have some similar backgrounds. So, we kind of understand our culture and how that affects us in our daily lives. We could just connect more, I think, if compared to someone else. I mean, I think I would still at least rely on that person, but it might just be a little different.

Vanessa mentioned the important role that **Katherine** played as well:

> It was nice having [Katherine] by my side because she's another Latina, and it was kind of comfortable having a Latina sister by my side. And us going through this internship together, where we had kind of similar views, and we kind of persevered together. And then [the third internship], it was very diverse. And the interns, there were so many interns, and that was kind of comfortable because it's like, okay. I'm there, I'm not the only intern here. And [Katherine] was also there. I didn't really see [her] that much because she was in a different department, but it was kind of nice having a familiar face in the office.

Ruth, who explained that she enjoyed working alone and tends not to rely on the people around her at work, mentioned growing close to another intern who was from her home country:

> I had only one intern I was close to. She was Nigerian, too. But she was from [a different university]. She was the only one I became close to because she found out I was Nigerian, so sometimes she came into the office, and we talked.

In sum, fellow interns played a crucial role in helping the participants in the study navigate their internships. They provided clarity on task assignments, made participants' workloads more manageable, boosted their morale and confidence, and helped them feel less isolated, especially when the environment was formal or not diverse.

Internship Supervisors and Colleagues

In addition to relying on support from their fellow interns, many participants highlighted the assistance they received from their internship supervisors and colleagues. For some participants, internship supervisors and colleagues were instrumental in ensuring success because they provided the training and supervision that participants needed. **Katherine** explained in her written reflection about her second internship that the support she received from her supervisor, the training, and the orientations were very helpful and contributed to her success, especially at the beginning of her internship: "I did not face too many difficulties, I believe this is because everyone helped me if I had a question and explained processes or how to do something." **Katherine** also said in her written reflection, "At the [organization], everyone is close and nearly knows each other … The work environment was incredible. Everyone was friendly and very helpful when I had questions or needed explanations of processes. My supervisor guided me extensively." Even though her first internship supervisor expressed frustration at things she did, **Katherine** viewed them as learning opportunities because feedback and suggestions were given to her, which enabled her to improve herself, especially when writing emails and communicating in general. In her written reflection, **Katherine** explained that she had a full week of training

during her second internship and explained, “I participated in orientations, which gave me a better understanding of all the things [the organization] helps with.” **Katherine** appreciated the opportunity to receive training and gradually receive tasks to complete as she became more familiar with her role and duties, “After a little while, [my supervisor] started giving me tasks, especially ones I could do weekly.”

The support and feedback provided by internship supervisors and colleagues enhanced participants’ learning and growth because it provided clarity. Specifically, participants noted that the feedback on their French language skills contributed to improvements in their proficiency in the target language. **Javier** explained that his internship supervisor took the time to explain linguistic concepts: “If you didn't understand something, [she] would even say, ‘Let me know, I can explain it again, or we can split it in English, and then we would slip back and forth into French and English all the time.” Although **Nicole** mentioned that the feedback she received was discouraging at times, she wrote in her reflection about her first internship that her supervisor and colleagues took the time to help her improve her spoken French, “Whenever I made a mistake, they would ask me to create new sentences with the correct pronunciation and grammar. After my new sentence, they would explain why a certain word, conjugation, or pronunciation was better.” During the Q&A session following the presentation of her first internship, **Katherine** was asked by an audience member whether it was challenging to complete an internship in a French-speaking environment. **Katherine** made a reference to her internship supervisor:

> She made sure that we were always understanding well … And she would also help us if we didn't say something right or try to get us to correct ourselves. It was definitely a

> challenge at the beginning, but I think, over time, it became easier to understand and speak.

David said during his second interview:

> It was definitely easy to get settled because [my supervisor] is really good at her job, and she's also very good at explaining our responsibilities, what systems and software we'll be using to make sure that we do our job well … Off the bat, she knew what my responsibilities were, what my tasks were for whichever day … So, I found my responsibilities to be pretty straightforward. And that was also the reason why we had these weekly meetings so that we had an agenda of what we were going to do for that day or for the week.

In certain cases, the support and feedback provided by internship supervisors and colleagues also boosted participants' confidence. **Katherine** said that receiving feedback from her supervisors during her first internship boosted her confidence when speaking French, "It felt good because sometimes I feel like I don't notice things as often. And I do think that [my French] improved, but I think hearing that from my supervisors really made me more confident." At the end of her internship, **Katherine**'s supervisor praised her for the progress she had made with her French and added, "My colleagues made sure to guide me in the right direction and confirm that we understood what was being communicated to us. You can really see that they care about their interns and their progress." **Nicole** wrote about her second internship, "There were people who helped me with my work and the tasks that were difficult, but also supported my confidence while working. I received a lot of feedback from [my supervisor], so I know how to perform tasks better."

Antonio, **Claudia** (second internship), and **Vanessa** (third internship) reported feeling empowered by their internship supervisors. **Vanessa** discussed the fact that her internship supervisor during her third internship involved her in the decision-making process and encouraged her to make suggestions, "I would make sure to show my voice and my ideas. And they would take it into consideration … They also made you feel comfortable sharing ideas and suggestions. [It was] an open space." **Antonio** had a similar experience and explained that his supervisor consulted with him before assigning him tasks, which he appreciated and made him feel valued, "[My internship supervisor] would ask my opinion on what I think. And then, I had input on what I thought would be the most efficient way to perform the task plan. My input was, I believe, acknowledged and sometimes used."

Antonio, **Claudia** (second internship), **David**, **Javier** (both internships), and **Katherine** (first internship) appreciated the fact that their supervisors were flexible and approachable. **Claudia** explained that her supervisors gave her the option to work on more or fewer assignments based on her availability, which she appreciated. **Javier** emphasized his supervisor's flexibility on multiple occasions, more times than any other participant in the study:

> [My supervisor] was very much transparent, 'You're in school, and I want you to focus on school first … If this is too much, let me know. And if you can't get this done, I can do it, or we can move it to next week,' because she was very proactive towards the work that we did … 'Or if it's not enough, let me know because I want to make sure you're getting enough work.'

Antonio discussed the kindness and approachability of his supervisor:

> I had her phone number. I had her email. She was very easy to reach. So, if I ever got stuck on anything, I had her support. She was very adamant about texting her if I needed

> assistance … She was a very approachable person. She was extremely helpful. She was always there when we needed her. She went above and beyond to make us feel comfortable and at ease.

Some participants reported feeling grateful to have their supervisors and colleagues, especially when conflicts and problems arose. **Ruth** explained that she relied on the support from her team when dealing with a very difficult client:

> But thank God for the operation assistant. He was there, so he told me I should sit down, let him handle it … At some point, I raised my voice at [the client]. And that was when the operation's assistant said that I should have a seat and let him handle it.

Javier mentioned that his supervisor had to step in when his schedule was too busy and that he was getting overwhelmed with his schoolwork, his job, and his internship:

> [My supervisor] had to do a little bit more and said, 'If you can do this, cool. If not, I can do it.' And there were a couple of moments where she kind of had to do some of the things because [Vanessa and I] were busy with school.

Antonio, **David**, **Javier** (both internships), **Katherine** (second internship), **Nicole** (second internship), **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** (third internship) grew close to their colleagues and supervisors, which enhanced their internship experience. **Ruth** explained that her favorite part of her internship was the people with whom she worked:

> The people I worked with were the best. In my mind, I was saying if I had a chance, this is the kind of office I would love to work in. They were more than colleagues. They were like friends. We shared a lot of things. Sometimes [my supervisor] would cook and share with us, bring stuff for us. At some point, we stopped going to the lunchroom to have

> lunch. We kind of stayed inside. We had another room. We could stay and eat lunch together, you know, discuss, talk.

Antonio also discussed the strong rapport he built with his supervisor:

> [My supervisor] took the time to talk to us and kind of get to know each and every one of us on a personal level, and that made it very comfortable to be around her and to be in the internship itself. So, we were given the chance to get accustomed to the position and the internship.

Nicole, who completed a face-to-face internship and a virtual internship, described the rapport she built with her second supervisor. Although her second internship was virtual, she established a stronger rapport with her supervisor compared to her first internship, which was in person:

> Whenever [my supervisor] wanted to give me a different task, [I] would log on to Teams, and we would just talk. Sometimes, we would just talk about something else, and we kind of created a connection in a way. So, I feel like that made her a great person in my point of view compared to [my first supervisor].

Vanessa also grew close to her third internship supervisor:

> For the first [internship], I enjoyed my relationship with [my supervisor]. She's amazing, bubbly, and very welcoming. And I really did enjoy that relationship. I felt like I could go to her if I had any questions. It was very open and honest.

Katherine, **Nicole**, and **Ruth** reported that food played an important role when building rapport with their supervisors. **Katherine** said about her second internship, “Sometimes my supervisor would give me lunch, which was really nice of her; she didn't have to do that.” **Nicole** had a similar comment about the positive role of food during her first internship, “They also

provided snacks in the break room, so that was great." **Ruth** said, "Our supervisor or our colleagues would bring food, and we would eat together."

Some participants also reported that age was a factor when building rapport with their supervisors because they built stronger connections with supervisors who were closer in age to them. **Nicole** said, "I was only really talking to my mentor … she was closer to my age and compared to everyone else. So, I felt more comfortable with her." Although the presence of other interns was very important to **Nicole** during her first internship, she did mention that interacting with only one person, her supervisor, helped her feel comfortable being herself, "I worked from home, and I only had one person to really talk to. So, I was comfortable being myself." In **Vanessa**'s case, age and previous schooling experience were factors that increased the rapport she built with her supervisor:

> The third [internship] was very nice because I got along well with my supervisor because she was close to my age. She was actually one of [my professor's former] students, and we kind of bonded. Like, oh, we had the same professor, and it was just nice to see someone who was in my shoes being in a superior role.

Katherine is the only participant in the study who reported relying mostly on the same form of capital during her two internships. However, she pulled from various forms of support within her social capital. Specifically, she relied on her fellow interns during her first internship because she could not develop a rapport with her supervisor. During her second internship, she grew close to her supervisor but did not feel close to the other interns. Her experience suggests that interns not only have the ability to use various forms of capital but also different forms of support within each capital.

All participants in the study highlighted the support provided by their internship supervisors and colleagues, even if they did not build a strong rapport with them. Participants appreciated the training and orientations, ongoing supervision, and feedback that supervisors and colleagues provided. Several traits, such as age, approachability, and flexibility, informed the extent to which participants relied on their supervisors and colleagues, but none of the participants reported that race and ethnicity were factors informing the extent to which they reached out to their supervisors for support. Although **Vanessa** and **Katherine** appreciated having each other and interacting with another Latina during their internships, they did not report having difficulties establishing rapport with White supervisors. Indeed, they felt very close to some of their supervisors who were White. Regarding the supervisor with whom they did not build a strong rapport, who was White and French, it seems that cultural differences and personality traits affected their rapport rather than race and ethnicity. **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** also reported feeling very close to their supervisor, who was a White woman. Their experiences indicate that race and ethnicity were not factors affecting rapport with internship supervisors and did not inform the extent to which participants used their social capital.

Internship Director

Participants also reported the important role that I played as their internship director in providing support, which was particularly beneficial prior to the internship. Specifically, both **Antonio** and **Javier** mentioned that I promoted internships in class, which not only nurtured their interest in these opportunities but also boosted their confidence. **Javier** explained during his second interview that he had second thoughts about applying for his first internship because he lacked confidence, and that I played a crucial role in encouraging him to apply:

> And then you reached out to me, 'Well, you're dragging your feet about it, even though you should do it, and you know you should do it.' And I was like, 'Yeah, I really should do it.' So, that was the reason why I was like, let me just buckle down, call it a day, and do it.

Antonio also discussed the important role that I played in encouraging him to complete an internship:

> I spoke with you before I submitted the application, and you were a great influence because you helped me see the benefits of having that on a resume. And in our business class, I mean, we talked about resumes a lot. So, it was a great way to apply what we learned in class to a real-life scenario.

Antonio and **Javier**'s experiences underscore the importance of promoting internships and encouraging students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, who tend to lack confidence, to participate in internships. As the findings suggest, several participants might not have applied for their internships had they not received encouragement from their internship director.

Although participants emphasized the important role that I played in promoting these internship opportunities, **Antonio** and **Javier** explained during the focus group that they only heard about these internship opportunities from me, but the other professors never discussed these opportunities in class. **Javier** argued that having all professors promote these internships could help ensure that all students know about these opportunities and can take advantage of them. **Antonio** agreed and suggested that world language programs collaborate with student clubs to promote internship opportunities.

Moreover, **Antonio**, **Claudia**, and **Javier** highlighted the fact that I facilitated opportunities for them to volunteer at their future internship site, usually by helping during an event, which inspired them to apply and helped them prepare for their internships. **Javier** highlighted the importance of attending or volunteering during events organized by internship sites and suggested that world language programs emphasize these opportunities:

> The events that I did gave me a little bit of a taste or a feel of what it might be like with [the internship site]. But then on top of that, I was like, well, doing this and working with these people, and getting to meet the people you would potentially be working with, who would be in charge of you and the work that you would be doing. I thought that was cool … I was definitely inspired by the events that made me feel comfortable because I have anxiety.

Javier also highlighted the importance of reflecting on the events he attended, which I had asked him to do in writing:

> You also emphasized the fact that you can put that [event] on your résumé. That's good professionally. And I like the fact that you made us type up what we did, the importance of it, and what we learned from it. I think that you should keep doing that because that makes us reflect on it, and makes us think, did I like doing that? Would you I it again? Would I want to intern with those people? And that's what made me really decide, I want to go to [my internship site].

Participants' experiences suggest that offering opportunities to gain exposure to the internship sites before applying for an internship can boost students' confidence and increase internship accessibility.

Participants also explained that I facilitated opportunities to meet current interns, which inspired the participants in the study to apply for their internships. These encounters occurred through classroom visits and internship information sessions in which interns presented their internship experiences. These presentations, which later served as a data collection method in this study, helped the participants familiarize themselves with the positions available at each internship site and address some of their concerns, which included fears of being unable to manage their workloads and use the target language in a professional setting. Having opportunities to discuss these concerns with current interns, particularly during the Q&A sessions that followed the presentations, inspired the participants to apply for their internships.

Navigational Capital

Data collected through the questionnaire indicates that nine participants reported using their *navigational capital*, which is defined by Yosso (2005) as students' "skills of maneuvering through social institutions [and] ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind" (p. 80). However, during the focus groups, none of the participants identified it as the primary form of capital on which they relied. These findings suggest that, while the majority of participants in the study used their navigational capital, it was not the primary form of capital on which they relied to navigate their internships.

Antonio, **David**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** mentioned that their past work experiences helped them navigate their internship environments. **David** talked about his experience being beneficial during his internship, especially when he had to work as a host or receptionist during events his internship site organized, "I'm glad that, due to my experience as a receptionist, I found the job relatively easy. I know how to greet clients, give directions, explain unclear information, and communicate." **Antonio** also referred to his previous work experience:

> I'm not a young kid who just came out of high school and went straight to college. I've been working for how many years? Who knows? So, I guess my level of professionalism and approaching this [internship], not just as a class, but as a responsibility, a job that I have to perform, helped me get through the tasks.

Ruth also referred to her previous work experiences as assets during her internship:

> It was easy for me to adapt because I already had experience working at a front desk. So, I kind of knew what [my supervisors] wanted. It was something I had been doing for a long time. It was seamless for me; it wasn't hard at all.

When asked whether her internships were not too difficult to accommodate in her schedule, **Vanessa** explained that she was able to navigate her internships because she is used to combining various responsibilities, "It wasn't too intense at all because I'm used to managing two different things. So, I would do that, and then I would do my job … So, it wasn't too much. I'm used to juggling."

Several interns explained that their first internship experience helped them navigate subsequent internships. **Javier**, who returned to the same internship site, mentioned on several occasions that his first internship helped him be successful during his second internship, which was far busier than the first one. **Claudia** also explained that her internships built upon each other: "The first [internship] was a beautiful experience because they just showed me what skills I was lacking professionally, but in the second [internship], I had the chance to show those skills and improve them." Their experiences underscore the benefits of completing multiple internships.

In some cases, time spent abroad, especially in French-speaking countries, helped participants navigate their internships. **Katherine**, who did a study abroad program in France,

said, “I think the study abroad definitely helped for [my first internship] because I was more comfortable around speaking French all the time, and then I was just more accustomed to the French culture.” In **Antonio**’s case, working as a flight attendant and traveling around the world made him more adaptable, including in his career choices, “exposure to this world and its diverse people has made me believe that limiting myself and my career opportunities is not in my best interest.”

Antonio, **Claudia**, **David**, **Javier**, and **Katherine** also referred to the knowledge they acquired in school, which helped them navigate their internships. **Antonio**, **David**, and **Javier** highlighted the fact that they learned more about networking and LinkedIn in class, which was beneficial during their internships. **Claudia** also said:

> I had a lot of clients from Africa. And thanks to the literature courses, thanks to the readings that I did in previous classes, I learned a lot about and have previous knowledge of African cultures.

Katherine also made several references to a course on Francophone Human Rights she took, which helped her gain knowledge on some of the challenges that French-speaking communities face around the world. **Antonio** and **Javier** made references to courses on French for International Business that they took and in which they learned the importance of networking, especially on LinkedIn. **Antonio** explained that he saw an internship as an opportunity to apply the knowledge he had gained in class, “In our business class, … we talked about resumes a lot. So, it was a great way of applying what we have learned in class to actually use it in a real-life scenario.

Antonio, **Claudia**, **Katherine**, **Ruth**, and **Vanessa** also mentioned that coming from diverse backgrounds helped them navigate their internships. **Katherine**, who interned at an

organization helping refugees, said that having a family who migrated to the United States helped her empathize with the organization's clients:

> [Clients] are coming from other countries, and it's their first time here. So, I think I kind of understand even though I was born here, but I kind of understand that whole process, and it could be scary for people when they first come here.

Antonio discussed his experience as an immigrant, which enabled him to adapt to unfamiliar environments:

> I think that once you go through a learning experience starting from the beginning, that kind of helps you move forward whatever challenges you may face. So, coming from a different country and learning a new language definitely helped me feel more secure in myself when starting something that I had never done before, which is doing an internship and being in that environment. It's a foreign environment that I had already been exposed to, so it was not as intimidating as it could have been, given that I had been in unfamiliar terrain before. So, I do think that kind of helped give me some strength.

Ruth also discussed her experience as an immigrant and explained that it was relevant to her internship:

> I remember one of the directors of the migration directory usually travels to Libya to bring back Nigerians who were stuck in the desert. Some of them have been used as slaves … I kind of understood their journey. So, it was easy for me as a migrant, even though I would say I didn't experience what they experienced [because] some of them came in as refugees … I didn't experience that, but I still understood what they went through.

She also explained how growing up in an ethnically diverse environment helped her:

> Back in Nigeria, we have a lot of ethnic groups … We have a lot of mixed people. So, I'm used to that. I think if I had been in a non-diverse office, I would have adapted, but it would not have been interesting to me.

During her second interview, **Vanessa** discussed her ability to navigate predominantly White spaces:

> The first two [internships] were not very diverse. It was mostly Europeans and White people. And it didn't make me feel any type of way because growing up, I went to an all-White school, and I kind of just used to being around White people … And I don't let it affect me in the way that I used to when I was younger, where I would feel kind of intimidated or try to hide my Latina side. But at this point, I kind of grew out of that.

Most participants in the study used their navigational capital, which was reinforced by their previous work experiences, including past internships, their knowledge acquired in school, their diverse cultural backgrounds, and their ability to navigate non-diverse spaces.

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital refers to the "knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). In other words, resistant capital refers to students' ability to advocate for themselves and their communities. In the questionnaire, half of the respondents reported using their resistant capital, but only one participant, **Claudia** (first internship), reported it as the form of capital she used the most. As previously mentioned, none of the participants reported facing discrimination, although some preferential treatment toward White interns was reported.

During the focus group, **Claudia** reported using her resistant capital as her primary form of capital during her first internship. When discussing the fact that her internship supervisors

preferred to assign tasks to the intern who was a native speaker of English, **Claudia** referred to her ability to block negative thoughts when she faced discrimination:

> It didn't bother me. And I reflect on why they asked [the other intern] and not me. I'm very open-minded and say, oh, yes, of course. There is a difference, but I have to say that because I have previous experience coming to the USA, what I learned from those experiences is that I'm Latina and, sometimes, you feel like in new environments, even if you are in a park or if you are in a restaurant, sometimes, you feel like people are talking about you or maybe if you say something too loud, people are like, 'Oh, she's so nice, she makes a lot of noise,' things like that. But from my previous experiences, I learned to block that aspect. So, for example, if someone is being mean to me, I just block that in my gut. It's something that I don't need in my life, so I just block it and continue. I have to admit that right now, and during that time also, I didn't pay a lot of attention. Maybe someone preferred to ask someone [else] to do this, and it's because I was not qualified according to their mindset; I don't pay attention to that.

Claudia emphasized her ability to resist and advocate for herself, which she has possessed since she was a child:

> I'm from Colombia … a country where you need to stand up and fight for yourself, otherwise, everybody is going to step on you, and that kind of culture about advocating for yourself, your mom and your dad teach you when you're little … I think that because of my culture, I'm different, and my mom raised me to be very independent … If you need something, just go ahead. If you don't like something, just express it.

She also explained that the ways in which she portrays herself and her culture are very important to her, especially when advocating for herself:

> But what I learned arriving in the USA and probably in [graduate school], was more about just relaxing. Sometimes, you're going to advocate, but you need to be careful with the way you are advocating. Because of my cultural background, if I advocate and don't do anything the right way, I'm going to represent my culture as crazy, and they're not going to take me seriously. They're going to say, 'Oh, she's Latina, she's crazy, she's complaining about a lot of things.' It's that kind of stigma that just, because I saw it with other people when they were advocating for themselves and nobody took them seriously. I think it's because they want us to advocate, but they want us to advocate in their way, so you have to be smart. I have to say that a lot of things that came with me, from the little [girl] to the person that I am today, helped a lot with the experience of the internship.

Other participants referred to their resistant capital without ranking it as the form of capital on which they relied the most. **Vanessa** discussed the resilience she had during her three internships:

> I would say [my resilience] was present in most of [my internships] because I just didn't want to bring myself down and put myself into a corner. If I were feeling uncomfortable, I'd find other areas where I could be comfortable and not hide myself … I would just say perseverance and not bringing yourself down because you're the minority in the internship.

She also explained being very proud of her heritage and even said that she would have spoken out had she experienced discrimination during her internships:

> I am proud to be a Latina. And because I'm in a White-dominated environment, I'm not going to hide my small accent. I'm not going to stop being me just because of the

> environment. And, thankfully, I didn't experience any discrimination or micro-discrimination [during my internships]. If I did, I would speak up about it.

During her second interview, **Ruth** discussed her ability to cope with racism:

> I don't depend on people around me. It can be racist towards me, and I won't even know about it because whatever you do, it doesn't affect me if I want to be there. You can do whatever you want; it does not affect me. So, it might have happened [during my internship], but I didn't realize it was happening … People around me, to some extent, don't determine how I feel. I tend to focus on my work … I don't depend on people around me. They don't affect how I do things. I mean, I can be alone. I don't mind being alone. That's the kind of person I am.

Interestingly, **Antonio** and **David** did not view the lack of diversity at their internship site as a challenge per se but rather as an opportunity to represent their community. **David** explained that the networking events he attended as part of his internships were not very diverse, which encouraged him to become a representative and advocate for his community:

> I never really thought about Hispanic people learning French, especially while I was in the internship. Every time I went to different events … I would see lots of people of many different backgrounds from African American backgrounds, from African backgrounds, all sorts of different countries, but I didn't really see a lot of Hispanic people out there … I'm definitely one person that likes to cause that change in some way or another. I love to be that opportunity for anyone to put themselves out there, see if they can change some form of societal norms, or not make things always be the same traditional way.

Although resistant capital was not the capital on which participants relied the most, which could be attributed to the fact that few of them reported facing discrimination during their internships, it proved to be an important driving force, especially in non-diverse internship environments.

To summarize key research findings relating to the three research questions, the participants in this study reported various internship outcomes that related to the ACTFL's *World Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies*. Certain goal areas and competencies were emphasized in most internships, such as *Cultures*, *Professionalism*, and *Career and Self-Development*, but the extent to which the other goal areas and competencies were emphasized varied greatly based on the internship context. Additionally, the participants in this study reported a wide range of challenges, several of which related to race, identity, and language. Specifically, the participants reported challenges with adaptability, the use of the target language, rapport with supervisors, preferential treatment toward White interns, feelings of isolation, lack of confidence, task-based issues, limitations related to internship modalities, and financial hardship. Finally, the participants used a wide array of capitals from Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth, with *social capital* emerging as the primary form of capital on which participants relied to navigate their internships. The findings also indicated that participants' use of their community cultural wealth was contingent upon the internship contexts.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the participants in the study highlighted a wide range of internship outcomes, both within the frame of the ACTFL's *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies*. Although findings about the *World Readiness Standards* suggest that *Cultures* was among the most salient outcomes discussed, it is important to note the difficulty in separating the standards into individual goal areas, as they are often interconnected (NSCB, 2015). However, the emphasis on the *Cultures* standards, and to a certain extent the *Communities* standards, as outcomes of these internships is arguably the most relevant to the field of World Languages due to reported concern over the lack of emphasis on *Cultures* (Berry, 2026; Chun & Evans, 2016; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Glisan & Donato, 2017; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Kearney, 2009; Soler & Tecedor, 2018) and *Communities* (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Cutshall, 2012e) in classroom instruction, suggesting the importance of internships to achieve students' expressed desire to engage with the *Cultures* and *Communities* goal areas (Magnan et al., 2012). Regarding the eight NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies*, findings varied greatly based on the internship contexts and the task assignments. However, several competencies were consistent. *Professionalism* and *Career and Self-Development* were among the most emphasized competencies across internships, and *Leadership* was the least emphasized competency across internships.

Of the challenges reported by participants, several were related to race or ethnicity. However, it appears that challenges were also greatly influenced by the nature of the internship site operations, the roles and tasks assigned to interns, the internship modalities, with virtual

internships leading to stronger feelings of isolation, and supervisors' management styles and cultural backgrounds.

Regarding community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), participants drew upon multiple forms of capital. *Social capital*, which included fellow interns, supervisors, colleagues, and the internship director, was the primary source of capital for half of the participants in the study. *Aspirational capital* and *linguistic capital* were also significant forms of capital. Overall, participants' use of their capitals depended on the internship environment, and they demonstrated the ability to switch capitals based on the context.

Internship Outcomes

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the participants highlighted a wide range of internship outcomes, both within the frame of the ACTFL's *World Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies*.

World-Readiness Standards

Communication. Findings reveal that *Communication* (along with *Cultures* and *Communities*) was among the most emphasized goal areas that participants mentioned as an outcome of their world language internships, which is consistent with previous research studies that have shown that *Communication* tends to be the main focus of world language courses (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Cutshall, 2012e; Miller, 2019). However, the three standards within the *Communication* goal area were not emphasized equally, with more emphasis on interpersonal communication (spoken more than written) and interpretive (listening more than reading) than presentational communication, which was emphasized the least. Most participants made references to the interpersonal mode of communication and indicated more confidence in their spoken French, which they claimed became more fluent and spontaneous, but

written French was rarely mentioned. Participants referenced the interpretive communication mode, emphasizing listening far more than reading. The social events that participants attended, as well as the interpretation services they provided to clients, were particularly helpful in boosting participants' confidence when communicating in the target language. Lastly, only a few participants made references to the presentational mode of communication, which they mostly used to create content for social media platforms and websites.

Overall, the participants in this study reported that their internships improved their confidence when using the target language and made references to their communication abilities rather than the four traditional language skills (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking). This finding suggests that internships can be an effective approach to fostering the communicative nature of the target language rather than focusing on language skills in isolation, which is precisely the goal of the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015). The study also indicates that although most participants improved their interpretive communication skills, these improvements were not as significant as the progress made in their interpersonal communication skills, most likely because they were more confident about their interpretive skills when the internships started.

Cultures. Findings from this study also suggest that world language internships can prepare students for cultural competence and understanding. Indeed, the *Cultures* goal area had the highest mean scores on both the Likert scale and the ranking scale. Moreover, most participants made many references to the improvement of their intercultural competence during the study. Given the well-documented lack of emphasis on cultural content in world language courses (Berry, 2026; Chun & Evans, 2016; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Glisan & Donato, 2017; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Kearney, 2009; Soler & Tecedor, 2018),

world language internships can be an effective strategy to align world language curricula with the *Cultures* goal area and its standards. Findings also reveal that the participants were more confident in their ability to connect cultural practices to cultural perspectives than in connecting cultural products to cultural perspectives, which does not align with previous research that shows that cultural products, such as food and holidays, are often more emphasized than cultural practices and perspectives in world language courses (Drewelow, 2011; Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Glisan & Donato, 2017). Therefore, world language internships can foster students' understanding of cultural practices and perspectives, which can be an effective addition to traditional world language courses.

Connections. Findings also suggest that these world language internships aligned with the *Connections* goal area and confirm that allowing students to focus on their interests can help them realize that many career opportunities are available to speakers of the target language (Cutshall, 2012c), as demonstrated by several participants in the study. Indeed, the internships enabled participants to gain knowledge and experience in various fields, such as business, marketing, education, international relations, and humanitarian aid, and realize that proficiency in the target language can open career opportunities in these fields. However, the *Connections* goal area was not valued by the participants as much as *Communities*, *Communication*, and *Cultures*, which is consistent with previous research findings (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Cutshall, 2012c; Magnan et al., 2012; Miller, 2019).

Comparisons. Similarly, the *Comparisons* goal area was not emphasized as much as *Communication* and *Cultures*, which is also consistent with previous research findings (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Cutshall, 2012d; Miller, 2019). Indeed, *Comparisons* was the goal area with which the participants felt the least confident. Fewer participants made explicit

references to language and cultural comparisons during the study. However, the *Language Comparisons* standard seems to have been emphasized more than the *Cultural Comparisons* standard, even though the *Cultures* goal area was the one in which participants reported improving the most. Therefore, these internships may have fostered cultural knowledge, with participants learning about cultural products, practices, and perspectives of a given culture, but not the ability to compare cultures with one another. As was the case with the *Connections* goal area, participants did not seem to value the *Comparisons* goal area outcomes to the extent of the *Communities*, *Communication*, and *Cultures* goal areas, which, again, is consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Cutshall, 2012d; Magnan et al., 2012).

Communities. One key finding of the present study is that these world language internships seemed to have fostered the outcomes of the *Communities* goal area. Based on the mean scores on the Likert scale and ranking scale, *Communities* was the third goal area in which participants improved the most. Moreover, most participants made references to their increased engagement with the Francophone community and realized that this community was far larger and more diverse than they had previously imagined. These internships also encouraged several participants to continue learning French after graduation and use it professionally. These findings differ from previous studies that have found that *Communities* is often the least emphasized goal area in world language courses (Abbott & Phillips, 2011; Berry, 2016; Cutshall, 2012e). Furthermore, previous research suggests that *Communities* is the goal area that is most valued by students (Magnan et al., 2012). Therefore, world language internships can be an effective approach to provide students with community experience while meeting their learning needs and

goals, which can have positive effects on student recruitment and retention in world language programs.

Career Readiness Competencies

The findings suggest that world language internships can foster students' career readiness, which traditional world language courses seldom accomplish (Duggan, 2009; Simonsen, 2022). Therefore, world language internships can help prepare world language students for their intended careers, which is a commonly stated overarching goal of world language education (ACTFL, 2020). Indeed, most participants in the study reported having made progress on all eight of the NACE's (2021) *Career Readiness Competencies,* with some competencies being more emphasized than others.

Professionalism was the most emphasized competency, which was the case across most internships. It had the highest mean scores on both the Likert scale and the ranking scale. Moreover, it was one of the competencies to which participants referred the most during the rest of the study. Most participants reported that their internships helped them gain professional experience and become more professional, especially when communicating in person or via email. *Career and Self-Development* was another competency that was emphasized across most internships. Specifically, most participants reported that their internships helped them clarify their career goals, increase their employability, and build a network.

Additionally, the findings suggest that *Leadership* was the least emphasized competency across most internships. Indeed, only a few participants were given responsibilities and agency over their work. It was mostly the case when participants had well-defined roles and were assigned high-stakes tasks. Regarding the other five competencies, the extent to which participants improved depended greatly on the internship contexts and was informed by the

nature of the internship site's operations, the internship modalities, the tasks that were assigned to participants, and management styles. Most participants enjoyed collaborating with colleagues and fellow interns, which helped them navigate their internships. However, *Teamwork* had the seventh-highest mean score on the Likert scale and fourth-highest mean score on the ranking scale, which suggests that although most participants enjoyed collaborating with colleagues, their progress in this area was not as significant as it was in other competencies.

As far as *Communication* goes, participants reported becoming more confident communicating in a professional setting, especially when interacting with colleagues, clients, and partners. Interestingly, several participants felt more confident about their increased communication skills in English than their communication skills in French, which could be attributed to the fact that several participants did not use the target language extensively during their internships, which can be problematic for world language majors, especially given their strong motivation to improve their communication skills in the target language.

Regarding *Technology*, participants reported having improved their technology skills, making references to multiple tools and software. However, *Technology* had the second-highest mean score on the Likert scale and the third-lowest mean score on the ranking scale. These findings suggest that the participants may not have valued technology as much as the other competencies or that they did not feel as though they improved in this area as much as in the other competencies.

Equity and Inclusion was either strongly emphasized or not emphasized. Indeed, participants from one internship site, the organization helping refugees, reported outcomes relating to this competency, but participants working in other internship sites did not. Moreover, although *Critical Thinking* had the third-highest mean score on the Likert scale and the fifth-

highest mean score on the ranking scale, fewer participants made references to their critical thinking and problem-solving skills during the rest of the study. The extent to which participants improved in the *Critical Thinking* competency mostly depended on the tasks assigned to them as well as the management style used by their supervisors. Indeed, the supervisors who entrusted the interns with a wider range of tasks and gave them agency over their work reported more outcomes that related to the *Critical Thinking* competency.

These findings are consistent with previous research studies on internships. As previous research has shown, the present study suggests that internships can facilitate career and self-development (Di Meglio et al., 2022; Nunley et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2016), increase career adaptability (Ocampo et al., 2020), and employability (Baert et al., 2021). It also confirms that internships can boost students' confidence (Renschler et al., 2023), especially students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Thompson et al., 2021). The study also confirms previous findings that have shown that job characteristics, such as the variety of skills and activities, responsibilities and independence, and professional growth, increase internship outcomes and internship satisfaction (Hora et al., 2017; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018).

The present study highlights that internships have multiple benefits for students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities, which confirms previous research findings that have found that internships are beneficial for these students (e.g., Lake, 2023; Thompson et al., 2021; Worlgram et al., 2021). As stated in Chapter 2, an important theme in the literature on the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized communities is that internships boosted their confidence and helped overcome their self-deficit views and imposter syndrome, which was the case for several participants in this study. Moreover, this study corroborated previous research findings (e.g., Renschler et al., 2023) that showed flexible

internships to be beneficial, especially for students from historically marginalized communities, because they are more likely to work paid jobs, face financial hardship, and support their families financially (Storlie et al., 2016). Moreover, the study confirms that internships can help students from historically marginalized communities build various skills (Wolfgram et al., 2021), give them opportunities to help their communities and give back (Kinzie et al., 2021), and explore fields of interest, network, and build their résumés (Thompson et al., 2021). However, this study sheds light on the important role that internship contexts and features play in the development of each *Career Readiness Competency*, which has not been emphasized in previous studies.

Internship Challenges

The participants in the study reported various challenges during their internships, some of which were related to race, identity, and language. Specifically, these challenges concerned adaptability to a new environment, language barriers, rapport with internship supervisors, preferential treatment toward White interns, feelings of isolation, lack of confidence and imposter syndrome, issues with tasks, workload management, internship modalities, and financial difficulties.

Several participants had difficulties adapting to their internship environment, particularly during their first internship, in very formal or culturally different settings, when their roles were not well-defined, and when they did not receive extensive training and orientations. Furthermore, issues related to the use of the target language emerged. Interacting in French was challenging for some participants, negatively affecting the rapport they built with their supervisors. Conversely, several participants had limited opportunities to communicate in the target language, which was one of the most disappointing aspects of their internships.

Findings indicate that challenges in building rapport with supervisors, especially those from France, reinforced existing stereotypes about French people. Several participants also reported feelings of isolation, particularly during virtual internships or when they were the only individuals identifying within their racial or ethnic group at their internship sites. This was especially true for participants who identified as Latina. Their stories and the importance of the social context during their internships align with Crump's (2014) argument that "local language practices and individual stories are connected to broader social, political, and historical practices and discourses through nested relationships that are woven together through webs of social relations." (p. 220).

Some participants struggled with their lack of confidence, imposter syndrome, and fear of failure, particularly at the beginning of their internships, when they had to use the target language with native speakers, or when they were solely responsible for performing certain tasks. Therefore, the study confirms previous research findings that found that students from historically marginalized communities often struggle with a lack of confidence and self-deficit views during their internships (e.g., Lake, 2023; Phillips & Saxon, 2018; Thomson et al., 2021). Participants also expressed a desire for more information and practical training before starting their internships, aligning with O'Connor et al.'s (2021) study on intern satisfaction and preparedness.

While previous studies highlighted structural barriers, such as heavy course load, lack of internship opportunities in the field, commute, and need to work a paid job as discouraging factors (e.g., Hora et al., 2021; Hora et al., 2023), these barriers did not refrain participants from participating in their internships; however, several of these factors made their internships challenging. Managing workload and commute was particularly challenging for several

participants in the study, especially given that all participants had jobs and were taking classes simultaneously. That said, some participants also reported that their internships were too short or that their workdays did not include enough hours to gain the trust of their supervisors, which is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Horal et al., 2021).

Unlike other studies (e.g., O'Connor et al., 2021; Siebert et al., 2013), the participants did not report feeling exploited by their internship sites or that their internships were used as work placements rather than learning experiences. However, three participants reported having to perform tasks that were relevant only to their organizations, aligning with previous studies that found that internship stakeholders often have different needs than those of students (e.g., Finley, 2023; Thorp & Goldstein; Sauder et al., 2019). Moreover, none of the participants reported that their internships were culturally irrelevant, differing from previous research findings about the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized communities (e.g., Finley & McNair, 2013). Since all participants were French majors, it is possible that none of them felt that their internships were culturally irrelevant, as all internships offered some level of interaction with the French language and Francophone cultures.

To conclude, several of the internship challenges faced by the participants were related to languages, with the use of the target language being particularly difficult for some participants. However, proficiency in a language other than French and English, such as Spanish, was reported to be an asset. Although issues related to languages were highlighted by the participants, the extent to which internship challenges related to race and identity were not as clear. For instance, the participants who reported preferential treatment toward White interns explained not being entirely sure that these treatments were motivated by race. Several participants also clearly stated that they do not like to approach their life experiences with a race-oriented mindset.

Furthermore, the extent to which participants' self-deficit views and imposter syndrome are informed by race and identity is not clear. However, their experiences, specifically in terms of lack of confidence, self-deficit views, imposter syndrome, and feelings of isolation, are consistent with the literature on internships (Lake, 2023; Phillips & Saxon, 2018; Thomson et al., 2021) and should not be overlooked. Also, perceived preferential treatment toward White interns is particularly concerning and deserves to be investigated further. Therefore, LangCrit (Crump, 2014) was relevant to investigate internship challenges, but language, race, and identity seem to have informed more internship outcomes than challenges, as we will discuss in the next conclusory section.

Community Cultural Wealth

The participants in the study reported using various forms of capital (*aspirational*, *linguistic*, *familial*, *social*, *navigational*, and *resistant*) from Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth to navigate their internships. As discussed previously, *aspirational capital* is viewed as students' ability to maintain hopes and dreams, especially under difficult circumstances, *social capital* as their ability to use their social network, *linguistic capital* as their capacity to develop communication skills, *familial capital* as their ability to draw from one's familial and community networks, *navigational capital* as their capacity to navigate social institutions, including predominantly White spaces, and *resistant capital* as their ability to advocate for their equal rights and collective freedom.

Social capital was the form of capital on which participants relied the most during their internships, which was consistent across most internships. Indeed, *social capital* was the primary form of capital during half of the 14 internships that participants completed. Participants relied on the support provided by their fellow interns, internship supervisors, colleagues, and the

internship director. *Navigational capital* was another form of capital that was consistent across most internships. Participants relied on their aspirations, dreams, goals, and resilience to navigate their internships, especially when facing challenges. *Resistant capital* seems to have been used less frequently, which could be attributed to the fact that most participants reported that they did not experience discrimination, except for the participants who mentioned perceived preferential treatment toward White interns.

Overall, the use of the different forms of capital depended on the internship context. For instance, it appears that the participants who interned in non-diverse environments tended to rely more on their *aspirational capital* and *resistant capital*. For participants who interned in diverse environments, *social capital* seems to have been the main support because they could build rapport with individuals to whom they could relate racially and/or ethnically. The internship modalities also appear to have made a difference in the capitals participants used. For instance, several participants who completed virtual internships relied on their *aspirational capital*, most likely because they could not rely on their *social capital* as much. Even within their *social capital*, participants used different sources of support, which varied based on the context. Specifically, the participants who could not build rapport with their internship supervisors turned to their fellow interns for support, which was less likely to occur when participants had a strong rapport with their internship supervisors.

The study confirms previous research findings that students from historically marginalized communities possess and utilize various forms of capital, such as *familial capital* and *navigational capital*, to navigate their internships (Liou et al., 2016; Pérez, 2014; Storlie et al., 2016; Straubhaar, 2013). Most participants reported using multiple forms of capital: four participants reported using all six forms, one reported using five, two used four, five reported

using three, and one used two forms of capital. Additionally, four out of five of the participants who completed more than one internship reported using different primary forms of capital for each internship, highlighting their ability to draw from diverse assets based on the internship context.

Contrary to previous studies (Liou et al., 2016; Pérez, 2014), *familial capital* was not the primary form of capital for any of the participants. One possible explanation lies in the nature of the internships, which may have required participants to rely more heavily on their social capital, or the unique personalities and experiences of the participants. *Social capital* emerged as the primary form of capital during half of the 14 internships completed by the participants. Therefore, the study confirms the significant role of internship supervisors in shaping the internship experiences (Ali et al., 2022; Hussien & La Lopa, 2018), particularly for students from historically marginalized communities in world language programs. These insights emphasize the importance of creating supportive and inclusive internships in which students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities can thrive and utilize their assets.

Implications

Based on the findings, the study has several implications for internship directors and internship site supervisors, which includes aligning world language internships with world language standards and career readiness competencies, avoiding discrimination and preferential treatment, addressing feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome, developing flexible internship modalities, reducing internship expenses, creating application and onboarding processes, and providing ongoing supervision and flexibility.

Aligning Internships with Standards and Competencies

The study found that participants reported various internship outcomes, both within the frame of the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015) and the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021). Nevertheless, several standards, such as *Presentational Communication*, and competencies, such as *Leadership* and *Critical Thinking*, were not always emphasized. Therefore, based on these findings, I recommend that internships align with a field-specific set of standards, such as the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (NSCB, 2015), and career readiness frameworks, such as the *Career Readiness Competencies* (NACE, 2021). Internship directors can design intern performance evaluations that incorporate these standards and competencies to ensure that the internships align with each standard and competency so interns can get a more comprehensive internship experience. Doing so could help interns develop certain skills that were not always emphasized during the internships under study, such as *Presentational Communication*, *Leadership, Equity and Inclusion*, and *Critical Thinking.*

Because the participants in the study were French majors, the use of the target language warrants special caution. The lack of emphasis on the French language in some of these internships was particularly problematic for participants in the study, given that they had all expressed it as a primary learning goal and reported that the prospect of improving their French motivated them to apply for their internships. Specifically, the participants in the study indicated that they did not engage in presentational communication and were not exposed to written French, so these modes of communication warrant special attention from world language internship stakeholders. Although several participants shared feelings of disappointment that their internships did not involve enough exposure to the French language, it is important to note that some participants reported that the use of the target language made it difficult for them to

ask questions, reach out for help, and develop rapport with their supervisors. Therefore, I recommend that exposure to the target language be well-planned and articulated, especially for students who lack confidence in their language skills. As with any world language course, scaffolding and carefully planning the use of the target language can help ensure that students understand their task assignments and thrive within their organization. I suggest that internship directors in world language programs discuss the use of the target language with internship supervisors to ensure that exposure to the target language is both emphasized and scaffolded. As previously stated, internship directors might want to consider developing intern performance evaluations to be completed by internship supervisors that include communication in the target language as one of the primary criteria for evaluation. For instance, these assessments could evaluate interns' interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communications as outlined in the *World-Readiness Standards* (NSCB, 2015).

Avoiding Discrimination and Preferential Treatment

Several participants reported preferential treatment toward White interns as well as instances in which they were referred to the wrong nationalistic group (e.g., assuming that Spanish speakers are Mexican). Although these behaviors may not have been racially motivated and may not have been done to cause any harm, they underscore the need for extra caution when working with students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities. Although most participants in the study seemed somewhat comfortable navigating predominantly White spaces, the participants who interned in diverse spaces felt less isolated and more confident, which increased their internship satisfaction and, in certain cases, encouraged them to pursue a career in the field.

I recommend that internship directors consider diversity at the internship site and investigate strategies to develop an inclusive internship environment, especially when designing internships for students from historically marginalized communities. They can discuss the unique characteristics of the students they serve, including race and ethnicity, to ensure that internship supervisors, particularly those working in non-diverse environments, can avoid making students feel excluded and provide opportunities for them to thrive. For instance, if internship sites are not diverse, which internship directors have little control over, internship directors can attempt to pair students from the same racial and ethnic groups so they can intern with someone to whom they can relate racially and ethnically.

Addressing Feelings of Isolation and Imposter Syndrome

Most participants in the study struggled with a lack of confidence and imposter syndrome, which is consistent with the literature on the academic experiences of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities (Anya, 2020; Charle Poza, 2013; Coetzee et al., 2014; Cokley et al., 2013). For instance, several participants reported feeling surprised when they were accepted into their internship programs and did not understand why they were chosen over other candidates. Additionally, several of the participants in the study might not have applied for their internships had they not received support and encouragement from their internship director. Their experience is a reminder that students, particularly those from historically marginalized communities, may need additional support and reassurance from their internship directors when applying for internships. Hence, I suggest that internship directors take the time to meet with students who are considering applying for internships to discuss their concerns while providing guidance and reassurance.

Feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome increased when participants needed to use the target language, which aligns with studies finding that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities have more communication apprehension (Coetzee et al., 2014). The study also found that diverse environments, rigorous application and onboarding processes, clear roles and tasks, rapport with supervisors, and opportunities to interact with fellow interns, especially when they belonged to the same racial and/or ethnic groups, contributed to increased confidence.

Even though feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome were greatly influenced by the internship contexts and the unique personalities of the participants, I suggest that internship stakeholders investigate strategies to reduce such feelings, particularly when designing internships for students from historically marginalized communities, as these feelings can negatively affect students' internship experiences. As findings indicate, *social capital*, which included fellow interns, was crucial in ensuring success for most participants in the study. For this reason, I recommend that internship directors facilitate the development of a community in which interns, regardless of the sites where they are interning, can interact with one another through meetings, group chats, and social media pages. These strategies can help ensure that interns do not feel isolated and have opportunities to talk about their internships with peers. Moreover, I suggest that internship directors create an alumni network so current and prospective interns can meet and interact with former interns and receive additional support and be better prepared to complete their internships.

Moreover, several participants reported that the opportunity to meet their future internship site supervisors during volunteering events boosted their confidence and encouraged them to apply for their internships. Their experiences suggest that offering opportunities for

interns to gain exposure to the internship sites before starting their internships can encourage them to apply for internships and improve internship access. Therefore, I recommend that internship directors collaborate with internship supervisors to give students opportunities to volunteer at the internship sites that interest them.

In summary, addressing feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome is essential for enhancing the internship experiences of students from historically marginalized communities. Finding diverse and inclusive work environments, providing peer support, and offering additional reassurance and support can boost interns' confidence and internship satisfaction.

Developing Flexible Internship Modalities

Participants in the study had very different views on internship modalities, which were shaped by their work schedules, the distance between their homes and their internship sites, and their personal preferences. Several participants in the study reported that conducting an internship virtually was convenient because they lived far from their internship sites or had to work full-time jobs while also taking college-level courses. Alternatively, the participants highlighted internship challenges related to virtual internship modalities, such as limited rapport with internship supervisors and colleagues, and feelings of isolation. Although several participants in the study initially wanted to do an internship remotely, they pointed out the limitations of doing an internship virtually and wished they could have gone to the office at times and built rapport with their internship supervisors, colleagues, and fellow interns. That being said, some participants who completed a virtual or hybrid internship explained that they could have never handled an in-person internship because they worked full-time. Therefore, the present study recommends that internship modalities be flexible based on interns' goals, preferences, and schedules. Internship directors might want to develop internships that provide some flexibility in

terms of modality, with the hybrid model appearing as an effective compromise, especially for students who have a paid job in addition to their internships.

Regarding scheduling, it appears that having a limited number of hours on site negatively affected task assignments. Indeed, several participants reported that having too few hours in a day reduced the number of tasks assigned to them, which also reduced their engagement and internship satisfaction. Therefore, I suggest that internship schedules be flexible. Internship stakeholders might want to discuss internship modalities and scheduling with interns and supervisors to find a good balance in the number of hours to ensure that interns can perform their tasks and be trusted by their supervisors without feeling overwhelmed. Moreover, flexibility also entails revisiting prior modalities and scheduling arrangements throughout the internship if needed.

All participants in the study who completed more than one internship appreciated the opportunity to gain more professional experience, which broadened their minds and helped them discover new areas of interest. Moreover, participants usually felt more confident during their subsequent internships. Therefore, I recommend that world language programs allow their students to complete multiple internships or year-long internships, particularly if these programs have limited course offerings. For several participants in the study, completing another internship was the only solution they had to graduate on time, as several courses had been canceled because of low enrollment. However, the two participants who returned to the same internship site reported some redundancy in task assignments, which reduced their engagement and internship satisfaction. For these reasons, I suggest that internship directors consider developing multi-semester internships and ensure that interns who return to the same internship site have new learning opportunities.

Reducing Internship Expenses

Several participants reported having to incur expenses during their internships. Although they viewed most of these expenses as investments rather than challenges, internship stakeholders can investigate ways in which they can reduce internship costs to increase internship accessibility. For instance, the Career Services Center at the university where the study took place has a virtual closet where students can order professional items of clothing for free. Internship directors might not have control over gas expenses, but encouraging internship sites to design hybrid or virtual internships, especially for students who live far from their internship sites, might help lower internship expenses. Because compensation has been found to increase internship satisfaction (McHugh, 2017) and students from historically marginalized communities tend to come from backgrounds with fewer resources (Sullivan et al., 2024), internship directors can increase internship accessibility by investigating strategies to compensate interns for their work (e.g., paid internship, grants). Lowering other costs, such as providing lunch to interns or waiving background check fees, can also contribute to making internships more accessible, especially for students who have limited financial means.

Creating Application and Onboarding Processes

Several participants in the study highlighted the value of having an interview, not only to clarify expectations but also to get more information about the company or organization. They also highlighted the important role of internship descriptions in helping them select the right internship site for them and understand their role within the organization, thus increasing their adaptability. The participants who did not have a clear internship description or did not go through a thorough application process reported more struggles with adaptability. Therefore, I recommend that internship directors ask prospective interns to reflect on their goals, which can

be done in writing, and conduct research on the company *before* submitting their applications or accepting an internship offer. This preliminary work can help them identify the organization and internship that align best with their learning needs, career goals, and values. Moreover, several participants in the study wished they could have asked to explore new areas and units within the organization, but they did not know what their options were at the time. Therefore, the preliminary work of researching their internship site can also facilitate the exploration of new learning opportunities. Internship directors can also provide support when designing résumés and practicing commonly asked interview questions through mock job interviews.

Several participants also highlighted the important role of orientations and training in providing clarity on roles and tasks as well as in creating opportunities to build rapport with colleagues. Therefore, in addition to a comprehensive application process, I recommend that internships have a rigorous onboarding process, which includes orientations and training. Several participants also reported struggling with certain tasks and technological tools, which reduced their task assignments. Hence, I suggest that world language programs identify the needs of internship sites and investigate how they can provide support to students before the start of their internships. For instance, they can offer workshops on commonly used software, such as Excel, as internship sites may not have the time or human resources needed to provide such training.

Providing Ongoing Supervision and Flexibility

The feedback and ongoing supervision provided to the participants increased their confidence and internship satisfaction because it offered opportunities for growth and clarity. However, the feedback provided on communication skills in the target language was intimidating for several participants, which is not surprising given that research has shown that students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities often lack confidence in their linguistic

skills and have more communication apprehension than White students (Coetzee et al., 2014). Therefore, I suggest that ongoing feedback and supervision be provided to interns, but that feedback on language skills be provided with caution so it does not reinforce students' self-deficit views.

Several participants in the study did not have a full understanding of their roles, especially at the beginning of the internship. In certain cases, task assignments even shifted toward the end of the internships based on the seasonality of the organizations' operations. Yet, the participants in the study who performed a wide range of tasks appreciated the opportunity to learn new information and skills. Therefore, I suggest that internships use a combination of consistency and flexibility in roles and task assignments. Having a well-defined role with some opportunities to collaborate and explore new areas seems to be the most effective approach to ensure that interns learn and grow without feeling overwhelmed. Internship directors can facilitate such a combination by ensuring that the roles and task assignments are well-defined and by discussing opportunities for growth with internship supervisors, particularly when interns do not feel comfortable asking to explore new areas, which was the case for several participants in the study.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present case study provides valuable insights into the internship experiences of world language students and offers unique contributions to the existing literature on internships and world language studies. However, further research on world language internships is needed to grow our understanding of the internship experiences of world language students, especially students from historically marginalized communities.

First, conducting studies in research contexts that differ from the one explored in the present case study could provide additional insights into the internship experiences of world language students. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the present study was conducted in a large metropolitan area located in the Southeastern United States, a region known for its cultural diversity, including one of the largest Black communities in the United States. Students enrolled in universities located in other contexts, such as rural or suburban areas, and other states and regions might have different internship experiences.

Moreover, the present study was conducted within a large public university that has a predominantly Black institution (PBI) designation. Given the strong contextual factors that informed the study and the unique study body at this institution, the findings may have limited transferability to other institutions of higher learning, especially those serving a significantly different study population. For this reason, more research is needed on world language internships in a broader array of institutions, including historically Black colleges and institutions (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HIS), and predominantly White institutions (PWIs).

In addition to varying institutional research contexts, there is a need for more research across different world language programs. The present study focused on the internship experiences of students in one French program. Students pursuing other languages as their majors may also have a different experience from the participants in the study. This study's research context featured a large and vibrant Francophone community, which provided a range of internship opportunities related to the French language and Francophone cultures. Moreover, French is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world, with 29 countries having French as an official language, most of which are in Africa. Therefore, the Francophone

community is large and diverse, which may not be the case for other languages. Students enrolled in world language programs that do not offer the same opportunities to interact with the target language, cultures, and communities outside of the classroom may have different internship experiences.

Another area for future research involves studying the experiences of current interns. Although the presentations and written reflections that participants submitted upon completion of their internships were analyzed and used to stimulate recall during the individual interviews, the fact that participants had already graduated when the study took place may have limited their ability to recall some details of their internship experiences. Future studies might want to investigate internship experiences while students are completing their internships and use observations, which could add new insights into world language internships.

The primary goal of the present study was to give students from historically marginalized communities an opportunity to describe their internship experiences and amplify their voices, which has rarely been done in previous studies. As a result, the perspectives of internship directors and supervisors were not included in the present study. However, as recommended by Sauder et al. (2019), more research focusing on the perspectives of various internship stakeholders (e.g., interns, internship supervisors, and internship directors) is needed to provide a multidimensional understanding of internships. Future research on world language internships might want to include the perspectives of various internship stakeholders and use a multidimensional approach.

Lastly, comparative research between world language students with internship experience and world language students without internship experience might also provide additional insights into the outcomes and potential limitations of world language internships. The present study only

recruited students who completed an internship, which did not provide significant insights into the barriers that prevent internship participation for students from historically marginalized communities in world language programs. Therefore, more research is needed on the obstacles that prevent world language students from participating in internships so internship stakeholders can help reduce these barriers to increase internship equity and accessibility.

In conclusion, while the present study makes unique contributions to the literature on world language internships, there is a need for additional research conducted in diverse contexts and settings, as well as research that includes various perspectives, such as internship supervisors, internship directors, and student learning languages other than French. By expanding the scope of future research studies, researchers can deepen our understanding of world language internships and contribute to making these internship opportunities more accessible and equitable for all students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Internship Presentation Instructions

As a final assignment for our internship course, you will prepare a presentation during which you will present your internship experience. You are encouraged to include information about your internship site, your role, the tasks you completed, the outcomes of your internship, and any potential challenges you may have faced and overcome.

The internship presentations will be on [date] at [time]. Please enter the Webex meeting at [time] so we can test microphones, cameras, and screen-sharing features.

This is the link you will use to join as panelists:

Password:

Please submit your PowerPoints on iCollege by [date] at [time] so I can review them.

You will start by presenting the internship site, then each intern will present their internship experience. Only one student from each internship site will share their screen. Please identify this person now.

Presentations will be in **English**.

Schedule

1:45: Start of the practice session (host and panelists only)

2:00-2:05: Brief introduction (host)

2:05-2:20: Internship Site 1 (Interns 1 and 2)

- 2:05-2:10: Presentation of the organization (Interns 1 and 2)
- 2:10-2:15: Intern 1's experience
- 2:15-2:20: Intern 2's experience

2:20-2:35: Internship Site 2 (Interns 3 and 4)

- 2:20-2:25: Presentation of the organization (Interns 3 and 4)
- 2:25-2:30: Intern 3's experience
- 2:30-2:35: Intern 4's experience

2:35-2:45: Internship Site 3 (Interns 5 and 6)

- 2:35-2:40: Presentation of the organization (Interns 5 and 6)
- 3:40-2:45: Intern 5's experience
- 3:45-2:50: Intern 6's experience

2:50-3:15: Q&A with the audience (everyone)

Please do not exceed your speaking time. I would recommend that you use a timer.

Organization of Your Presentation

Part 1: Presentation of the organization (five minutes per group)

- Each group will collaborate to prepare a five-minute group presentation of their internship site with a PowerPoint/Google Slides/Prezi (with pictures, colors, important information, etc.).
- Here are some questions to guide you when preparing your presentation: What is the internship site? Is it part of a larger network? What are the missions of the internship site? Which contributions do they make in the Atlanta metro area and the local Francophone communities? Are there any career opportunities in these organizations for students who speak French or another world language? Anything else you can think of that may be interesting to our audience?
- Feel free to share any pictures.
- Make sure that each person gets to talk when presenting the internship site. All voices should be heard.
- Please dress professionally.

Part 2: Individual presentations (five minutes per person)

- After the group presentation of the internship site, each intern will present their experience for 5 minutes (do not exceed your speaking time).
- You may discuss your role(s), the tasks you completed, the skills you developed or enhanced, the events you attended, your internship's positive outcomes (e.g., in terms of skills), the potential challenges you faced and overcame, etc.
- Feel free to share pictures and anecdotes with the audience.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Appendix B: Written Reflection Instructions

Instructions

As a final assignment for this course, you will write **one reflection in French**. The reflection should be **5 pages in length (double-spaced, font Arial or Times, size 12),** and include a **title page**. The 5-page limit is exclusive of the title page and any references or appendices you may include. Please use APA (7th edition) to format your reflection.

You are expected to reflect on your experience as an intern. Your reflection may include the description of your company/organization, work environment, role(s), tasks assigned, skills gained, potential challenges, and takeaways.

The reflection is due on [date], at [time].

Rubric

	Extending	Proficient	Developing	Emerging
Task Completion	Accomplishes the task (page number, addresses all topics listed in the instructions) and includes details that are clearly connected to the development of the task.	Accomplishes the task (word count, responds to all questions in the prompt, includes the required structures) and includes some details that are generally connected to the development of the task, but there may be minor irrelevancies or lack of details.	Accomplishes the task partially and includes few details, some of which may be only loosely connected to the task. There are some irrelevancies.	Attempts to accomplish the task, but the task is not fully accomplished. Makes some reference to it but provides few or no supporting details.
Organization	Exhibits a logical and coherent sequence throughout; provides a clear sense of a beginning, middle, and end. Makes smooth transitions between ideas.	Exhibits a logical sequence; provides a beginning, middle, and end.	Attempts to provide a logical sequence and/or the beginning or ending is abrupt or unclear.	Exhibits little order; provides a series of separate sentences and/or disconnected ideas.

Content Quality	Reflection is thoughtful, carefully written, and demonstrates significant depth or self-reflection on internship experience.	Reflection is carefully written, and generally demonstrates significant depth or self-reflection on internship experience.	Reflection demonstrates some depth or self-reflection on internship experience.	Reflection lacks depth or self-reflection on internship experience.
Language Control	Demonstrates a high degree of control of the language structures and conventions. Few errors that do not hinder overall comprehensibility.	Demonstrates control of language structures and conventions. Some errors that do not hinder overall comprehensibility.	Demonstrates some control of language structures and conventions. Errors do hinder overall comprehensibility and/or there are numerous errors.	Demonstrates little control of language structures and conventions. Many errors that impede overall comprehensibility.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview 1 – Background and Introduction to Internship Experience

1. Can you tell me more about your background? Where did you grow up?
2. How do you identify racially and ethnically?
3. Can you tell me about your school experience? Was it positive? Negative? Why?
4. When and why did you start learning French?
5. Can you tell me about your experience learning the French language? Overall, was it a positive experience? Negative? Why?
6. Do you speak languages other than English and French?
7. Do you have anybody in your family who speaks French?
8. What did you want to be when you were growing up? Did you have any career or professional aspirations?
9. Why did you choose to study at this university?
10. Why did you choose to pursue a major in French?
11. Why did you decide to participate in this internship? What were you hoping to gain in terms of skills and competencies? What were your goals?
12. How did you get to your internship site? Was it easy?
13. Did you have any expenses associated with your internship?
14. What support did you have outside the organization to help you complete this internship?
15. Did you live at home, in a dorm, or your own home?
16. Do you have children? Were you a caregiver for family members during your internship?
17. Did you have a job during your internship? If so, what was your job, and how many hours did you work?
18. How was your internship schedule? Did you work full days? Was your internship virtual, in-person, or hybrid?
19. Was this modality effective? Do you wish anything had been different about the modality of your internship?
20. Can you describe the main tasks and activities you completed during your internship? What did a typical day look like?
21. Which tasks were most engaging and which were least engaging? What did you enjoy the most? The least?

Interview 2 – Internship Experience

1. Did you receive ongoing feedback? If so, was it helpful?
2. Were you asked what you wanted to do, or were you mostly told what to do? Were you comfortable asking to explore other things?
3. Were there other interns there? If so, did that help? Had you been the only intern, would it have been harder for you to navigate this internship?
4. What skills or competencies did you develop the most during this internship?
5. How was your internship relevant to your French classes?
6. How often did you use the French language? How did you use it (e.g., written, spoken)?
7. Did your French improve? How?
8. What was most positive about your internship experience? What did you like the most?
9. What was negative? Did you encounter any challenges during your internship? What was difficult about your internship?

10. How did you address these challenges?
11. What support did you have within the organization?
12. Please describe your rapport with your colleagues and internship supervisor. Did you have a good rapport with them?
13. Did you work with people (e.g., colleagues, internship supervisor) with whom you could identify in terms of race and/or ethnicity?
14. How comfortable were you being your true self during the internship? Did you feel like you belonged in the organization?
15. Did you experience any discrimination? Were there any uncomfortable situations or incidents that you suspect were connected to your race or ethnicity?
16. Do you wish anything had been different during this internship?
17. Did you meet your goals? Did this internship meet your expectations?
18. Did it help you clarify/change your career goals?
19. What are you currently doing professionally?
20. Do you think this internship made you better prepared to apply for a job and find a job in your field?
21. How was your internship related to your current job, and how did it prepare you for things you are currently doing professionally?
22. What role does the French language play in your current life?

Appendix D: Focus Group Protocol

Introduction

Thank you all very much for joining us today and for taking the time to participate in this group discussion. Before we start, I wanted to go over a few housekeeping items. First, please know that this session is being recorded. The recording will be stored in a password-protected file on a password-protected computer. I also wanted to go over some ground rules before we continue:

1. There are no right or wrong answers. I want to know about your internship experience, so feel free to share what is most relevant and important to you.
2. You do not have to share only positive things about your experience. I am also interested in knowing about any potential challenges you faced and overcame.
3. Respect all voices and perspectives. Everyone is different, so you do not have to agree with everyone.
4. Please do not interrupt your peers and use the "raise hand" feature when you want to contribute to the discussion.

Warm-up Activity

Although I know all of you, you may not know each other. Could you please introduce yourself to the group and tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, and your internship experience (internship site, field)?

Questions

1. What was most positive about your internship?
2. What was most challenging about your internship?
3. How did you navigate these challenges? What form of capital did you use the most? – Introduce the six forms of capital.
4. What advice do you have for future interns at this internship site?
5. What advice do you have for your internship director?
6. What advice do you have for your internship supervisor?

Closing

Thank you very much for participating in this group discussion today. I will soon be sending a transcript of this conversation so you can tell me if there are things you would like to clarify.

Appendix E: Questionnaire

If you completed more than one internship, please submit a questionnaire for each internship. I will send a second questionnaire that will be anonymous in case you want to report anything else about your internship.

Part 1: Internship Outcomes

I. World-Readiness for Learning Languages

Please indicate if the internship helped you with each of the following statements by choosing whether you "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", or "strongly disagree" with each statement.

1. Communication: My internship helped me communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes.

2. Interpersonal Communication: My internship helped me interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.

3. Interpretive Communication: My internship helped me understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

4. Presentational Communication: My internship helped me present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

5. Cultures: My internship helped me interact with cultural competence and understanding.

6. Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: My internship helped me use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

7. Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: My internship helped me use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

8. Connections: My internship helped me connect the French language with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations.

9. Making Connections: My internship helped me build, reinforce, and expand my knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.

10. Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: My internship helped me access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the French language and Francophone cultures.

11. Comparisons: My internship helped me develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.

12. Language Comparisons: My internship helped me use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and my own.

13. Cultural Comparisons: My internship helped me use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and my own.

14. Communities: My internship helped me communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

15. School and Global Communities: My internship helped me use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.

16. Lifelong Learning: My internship helped me set goals and reflect on my progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.

17. Please rank the following statements from the most accurate to the least accurate (1 being the most accurate and 5 being the least accurate).

    - Communication: My internship helped me communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes.
    - Cultures: My internship helped me interact with cultural competence and understanding.
    - Connections: My internship helped me connect the French language with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations.
    - Comparisons: My internship helped me develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.
    - Communities: My internship helped me communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

II. Career Readiness

Please indicate if the internship helped you with each of the following statements by choosing whether you “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with each statement.

18. My internship helped me proactively develop myself and my career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of my strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without the organization.

19. My internship helped me clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

20. My internship helped me identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

21. My internship helped me demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

22. My internship helped me recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

23. My internship helped me know that work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

24. My internship helped me build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

25. My internship helped me understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

26. Please rank the following statements from the most accurate to the least accurate (1 being the most accurate and 5 being the least accurate).

    - My internship helped me proactively develop myself and my career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of my strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and outside the organization.
    - My internship helped me clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
    - My internship helped me identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
    - My internship helped me demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

- My internship helped me recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
- My internship helped me know that environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
- My internship helped me build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.
- My internship helped me understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Part 2: Community Cultural Wealth

27. Which of the following strengths/resources/capitals did you use to (1) be successful in your internship and (2) overcome the challenges and difficulties you may have faced? Please select all the responses that apply.

    - Your aspirational capital: Your aspirations, resilience, ability to maintain hopes and dreams in the face of adversity
    - Your linguistic capital: Your communication skills, the languages you speak, your diverse background, your ability to communicate with various communities in various settings
    - Your familial capital: Your family, your friends, and your community
    - Your social capital: Your peers, fellow interns, colleagues, professors, and/or internship supervisor
    - Your navigational capital: Your ability to navigate unfamiliar spaces, as well as spaces that are not diverse
    - Your resistant capital: Your confidence, your ability to resist/oppose discrimination, your ability to advocate for yourself and your community

Part 3: Following Up on Individual and Group Interviews

28. After completing this questionnaire, are there additional positive outcomes of your internship (in addition to the ones we discussed during the individual interviews) that you would like to report now? If so, please elaborate.

29. After completing this questionnaire, are there additional internship issues or challenges (in addition to the ones we discussed during the individual interviews) that you would like to report now? If so, please elaborate.

Appendix F: Interactional Analysis of Focus Group Data

Group component	Aspect of interaction for analysis
What?	What topics/opinions produced agreement?
	What statements seemed to evoke conflict?
	What were the contradictions in the discussion?
	What common experiences were expressed?
	Did the collective interaction generate new insights or precipitate an exchange of information among participants?
Who?	Whose interests were being represented in the group?
	Were alliances formed among group members?
	Was a particular member or viewpoint silenced?
How?	How closely did the group adhere to the issues presented for discussion?
	How did group members respond to the ideas of others?
	How did the group resolve disagreements? How were emotions handled?
	How were non-verbal signs and behaviors used to contribute to the discussion?

Note. Adapted from Stevens (1996).