Article

Introduction: Arts integration and community engagement for intercultural dialogue through language education

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1 Opening comments

Beyond description, the intensity and complexity of an individual human life deepens over time. Through academic engagement, the lives of teachers, students and researchers sometimes entwine in mutually enriching ways that result in multiple and ongoing personal and social transformations that propel them, and human society itself, forward in both seen and unseen ways that are sometimes beyond control or understanding. This special issue can be characterized as such. Through it, we put on the brakes, and relocate who we are, what we are doing, who we are becoming, and the respective role(s) we want to play in this world. Through compelling narrative, reflecting upon the many years of accumulating influences that have each led us to this resilient and durable point in time and space, we co-editors attempt to create objective, reasoned space through which to voice understandings gained about the complicated nature and relationship of language and the arts that have been culminating in our lives in, around and through our various joint collaboration(s).

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Our first connection appears in the academic literature in the year 2013 when Porto published a chapter entitled *The visual representation: An instrument for research and instruction in the cultural dimension in foreign language reading* (Porto, 2013) in an edited volume published by Houghton et al. (2013) entitled *Developing critical cultural awareness: Managing stereotypes in intercultural (language) education*. Seven years later, the themes hinted at in the two titles have resurfaced now in this special issue in ways not anticipated at the time. However, our connection goes back further than that. Although we both live on opposite ends of the earth, Houghton in Japan and Porto in Argentina, the doctoral studies of each were both supervised at different times by Michael Byram at Durham University in England, who provides unifying forces that bind us together. Similarly, Méndez García, contributor to this specual issue, got in touch with Michael Byram when she was doing her PhD as a research fellow of the Spanish Ministry of Education.

Despite the hidden functioning of this background academic network, a school of thought so to speak, our views and voices as co-editors are independent, even of each other, only having met each other personally at a conference in Brazil in July 2017. In recognition of our distance, and in an attempt to value both perspectives in relation to the salient themes, there has been no attempt to fuse our ideas together in the introduction to this special issue. Rather, our respective understandings and interpretations of the articles presented are dialogically juxtaposed in the hope of independently illuminating meaningful points in the complementary texts, like separate spotlights under whose gaze readers can explore the same themes not only from different standpoints, but also in relation to their own experience in ways that only they will know.

II Contextual background to this special issue

1 Reflections on the background to the special issue by Stephanie Ann Houghton

a   Baptism of fire. How can prejudice against foreigners be overcome through foreign language education? This burning question initially drove me into doctoral research at the start of the millennium as I personally struggled with prejudice and employment discrimination against 'native speakers' of English in the Japanese university context two decades ago. Seeking a constructive way forward through doctoral research, I developed the Intercultural Dialogue Model (IDM) as a way of developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997, 2021) in practice (Houghton, 2012). In this process, learners move through self-reflection, critical analysis and evaluation of themselves and others with reference to carefully selected overarching standards (e.g. human rights) which leads to transformation of self and society. In this process, the ability to pass judgment through the deployment of critical cultural awareness (i.e. non-prejudiced judgment) is actively cultivated to counter prejudice in various forms (e.g. racism, nationalism, sexism) through education (Houghton, 2012; Houghton & Yamada, 2012). This remains a core tenet of my life's work expressed recently and reflectively through my teaching portfolio (Houghton, 2020a).

Two decades ago, there was no word for prejudice against the 'native-speaker', so I initially struggled to locate my problem in the academic literature. Around 2005, I

discovered the term native-speakerism used by Holliday (2005) to describe employment discrimination against language teachers based on whether or not they are considered 'native-speakers' in a bid to oppose discrimination against 'non-native-speakers'. Notably, language teachers perceived as 'non-native speakers' tend to face pre-employment discrimination at the interview stage, while language teachers perceived as 'native speakers' tend to face post-employment discrimination once they have been employed, often facing non-renewable limited term contracts in Japan, although these kinds of problems seem to be found worldwide. Damian Rivers and I accepted but expanded Holliday's concept of native-speakerism in our co-edited book on native-speakerism in Japan (Houghton and Rivers, 2013) to oppose prejudice and discrimination against 'native-speakers' as well as 'non-native speakers'. This book, and its related work, has since become part of a global shift to reject the 'native-speaker' as a role model for language learners, taking a peace-oriented approach that potentially protects all language teachers against prejudice and discrimination based on perceived '(non) native speaker' status.

In this spirit, I developed a framework for post-native-speakerist education partly by cultivating code-switching plurilingualism (Houghton, 2018) in my classes. Code-switching plurilingualism involves the flexible switching and mixing of multiple languages and other codes such as dialects, for particular communicative purposes, aimed at relationship establishment and maintenance. ICC, intercultural dialogue, post-native speakerism and code-switching plurilingualism are four key terms that encapsulate my work along this flowline, which unfolded through the establishment with Porto of a book series on intercultural communication and language education[1] with major international publisher Springer Nature in 2015 as our interests dove-tailed.

b   Back to basics. However, I found myself nudged into a different direction in 2016 when I was invited to transfer from the Faculty of Culture and Education to the Faculty of Art and Regional Design at Saga University, Japan, where I work. Curriculum planning was needed to bridge culture, English language education, art and regional design, considering university goals, for the formal establishment of the faculty endorsed by the Japanese Ministry of Education. My understanding is that the first application for a Faculty of Art had been rejected ostensibly because art alone is not enough; it needs a social purpose. The new faculty was thus latched onto regional design as one of three options, another of which was internationalization, although I was asked to take an international approach to regional design in my work.

Fleming (2021, this issue) helps me to understand difficulties I experienced in this process. Highlighting a range of possible difficulties in linking arts, language and intercultural education, and ways of overcoming them, drawing on theoretical perspectives to help broaden pedagogic horizons and hone pedagogical processes, he also warns of possible pitfalls in linking language and art education through consideration of the following four questions:

1.   Are the claims for the value of the arts over-stated?
2.   Does the use of the arts in the service of non-art outcomes run the risk of distorting the art form itself?

3. Is there a danger that incorporating the arts in language education will distract from its central purpose?
4. Are there any risks in employing the arts to support the teaching of interculturalism?

Addressing the second question in relation to the arts and aesthetic experience, Fleming (2021, this issue) suggests that the role of the teacher may be devalued. In this sense, the dual dislocation of my work from language to art, and from international to regional has placed me in an unusual position in recent years. Despite relishing the challenge, I admittedly also feel some devaluation of my work has transpired sometimes in tangible ways, notably by the unexpected change in status of some if not all of my courses from compulsory, in the Faculty of Culture and Education to optional in the Faculty of Art and Regional Design, which seems to allow students who want to avoid using English to avoid my courses while pursuing arts-related courses if they so wish, devaluing language education itself in the process. This suggests that the adoption of an art-related focus may indeed distract from the goals of language education (Fleming's third question reflecting on linkage between the arts and language education).

According to the Saga University website, the Faculty of Art and Regional Design[2] aims to equip students to pursue regional development through art considering the meaning of art to include not only fine art and design but also curating, science and economics, but language education is not explicitly highlighted at least in the available information presented in English. It may be implied by the broad purview of the faculty which responds to societal needs for artistic viewpoints in areas such as tourism, mass communication, and regional councils involved in community and regional development. When I started preparing my new curriculum with such ends in mind, I wondered what my artistic focus should be, bearing in my mind that I was not actually an artist. As Fleming suggests above, the emphasis on meaning, use and embodied experience highlights the rich potential for the arts in the language classroom, and the centrality of culture related to language and meaning is a key element in making this connection.

For me, meaning, use and embodied experience all came into play literally in relation to my own physical body. Notably, in the course of generating post-doctoral publications, partly due to a somewhat sedentary computer-facing lifestyle, I had gained a lot of weight in my late thirties and fell into ill health in my forties. But when I started Zumba dance-fitness classes with professional fitness instructor Kazuki Miyata at my local sports club, I lost over 10 kg in around 6 months, regaining my physical strength, health, agility and spirit in connection with the bright, cheerful, expressive Zumba community. I regained my smile, became more beautiful in my own ageing eyes, and looked forward to my new position at work. This is where the actual transformative power of art lay in my life at that time, notably in relation the non-verbal communicative processes characterizing Zumba that seemed to have the power to break down social barriers. When I started preparing my new curriculum, I sought ways of expressing the joyful uplifting feeling of flight experienced during Zumba classes in relation to communication in a broad sense, but there was no word in English to capture that feeling, so I was at a loss for some time.

Zumba ultimately highlighted useful mechanisms through which dance and fitness can be explored. Through collaboration with Kazuki Miyata, I developed and ran numerous intercultural dance-fitness events embedded in whole courses over a number of years that focused on various dance-related themes with NPO Tiempo Iberoamericano (hereafter referred to as Tiempo) in Fukuoka. Academic themes related to verbal and non-verbal communication in relation to native-speakerism (Houghton, 2020b), community-building, gender, improvisation and memorization, the history of dance, cultural preservation and revitalization, and global business branding in socially useful ways, ultimately prioritizing health. It also involved my dressing up in wigs and various fancy costumes to explore identity-related issues connected to the concept 'I am art.' This all provided me with a useful framework within which to understand dance from various standpoints related to intercultural communication as process that involves active self-transformation (Houghton, 2010, 2013; Rivers & Houghton, 2013).

The unfolding academic collaborations with Kazuki Miyata and Tiempo (separately from but in connection with Saga University colleagues, initially Dana Lee Angove and later with Peter Roux, through the informally organized Multicultural Fitness Community[3] at Saga University), culminated in the development of the First International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue through the Arts: Community Development, Education and Policy,[4] which took place on two sites, at Saga University and Tiempo, from 22–25 September 2017. While this was a fully-fledged academic conference with an academic screening committee that attracted academics from Japan and other countries, the financial responsibility and burden for the event was ultimately borne primarily by Tiempo. My application for university funding was denied because the event was not officially supported by my faculty, ostensibly due to a misunderstanding of the funding rules by myself and/or my (then) Dean, Satoko Kosaka, who did go on to support the event personally by participating in an Open Forum and by submitting a report for the resulting commemorative edition (Kosaka, 2018). Partly, but not only for these financial reasons, the event also evolved into a ticketed art festival called the First Intercultural Festival through the Arts,[5] which had its own website separate from the academic conference.

This locus of the control of the website and related promotional materials in this way gradually came under the control, responsibility, and de facto ownership, of Tiempo. When Houghton, Angove and Roux were all at the AILA Conference in Brazil in July 2017, when event preparations were accelerating in Fukuoka, promotional flyers for the event were issued solely in their own name of Tiempo to the exclusion of the Multicultural Fitness Community and its Saga University event organizers, including myself, despite my roles as Organizing Committee Co-Chair and Academic Sub-Committee Chair.[6]

Although this initial problem was corrected after our return, this presentational issue of how to interface with the general public persisted, and ultimately played out through the increasing use of the popular slogan Tiempo 4 All that had initially been coined to name a single program within the event. This slogan came over time to assume the identity of the whole event, and ultimately came to be presented as the unifying concept on the parallel websites for both the conference and art festival as interconnected events as reflected in the title of the commemorative edition published online by Tiempo (Roux, 2018).

Independent analysis by the reader of conference and festival websites, and their respective publications, may illuminate various emergent tensions that can emerge when

language, art, regional design and internationalization combine with alchemic and explosive force that can get out of hand. Again, Fleming (2021, this issue) helps me to understand difficulties I experienced in this process. Warning of possible pitfalls in linking language and art education, he raises the four questions already presented above. Addressing the first question of whether the claims for the value of the arts are overstated, Fleming (2021, this issue) draws on Wittgenstein (1958) to warn against the craving of generality in the arts, through which processes can get out of hand, contemptuous attitudes may be adopted, and thinking can go in the wrong direction.

The presentation of the two websites, as artistic products surviving long after the events that initially generated them, have since become part of the historical record of humanity, and may be left to speak for themselves. They are a riot of colour and creativity across the artistic spectrum, to be savoured all the more as the world finds itself in the isolationist grip of the Covid-19 global pandemic. But the late addition of the slogan Tiempo 4 All as the umbrella concept for the event effectively constituted an act of appropriation of the interconnected conference and festival events by Tiempo that was allowed to happen by virtue of the fact that the financial responsibility and burden for the event had been borne primarily by Tiempo as mentioned before. The power to control the presentation of the resulting artistic products in durable form in the commemorative edition, shaping human memory and the historical record in the process, essentially flowed from the financial situation which was in turn rooted in the lack of funding provided by Saga University for the event in the early stages of event planning. The social influences and processes leading to the generation and evolution of the term Tiempo 4 All are complex and explicable from many competing institutional viewpoints, each with their own power base connected to money, but the general trajectory of the Tiempo 4 All concept seems to illustrate the more general principle, with implications for arts-related language pedagogy, that context and culture do not just become receptacles for meaning but are absolutely central to the generation of meaning (see Fleming's third question reflecting on linkage between the arts and language education), notably in relation to artistic products such as event promotional documents and websites that endure long after the events that generated them have passed.

Regarding publications resulting from this activity flow, much can be learned from the evolution and impact of the Tiempo 4 All concept which was to establish itself firmly in the title of a commemorative edition (Roux, 2018) published online by Tiempo, which contained short research reports of academic presentations at the conference as well as other festival reports and representative artworks. While the academic conference did not itself generate a published set of conference proceedings, a book contract was made by Houghton and Porto with Springer Nature to publish selected works. However, subsequent withdrawal of chapters by numerous contributors ultimately rendered it untenable, the project collapsed, and the contract was sadly cancelled. Committed to establishing meaningful links between language education and the arts, Porto offered to take the lead on the broader art and language education project by suggesting that we embark together on developing this special issue, and I gladly agreed.

This brought us to the tip of the iceberg where we now find ourselves in space and time. The dual dislocation of my work from language to art, and from international to regional mentioned earlier had thus found itself upgraded to a triple dislocation as the
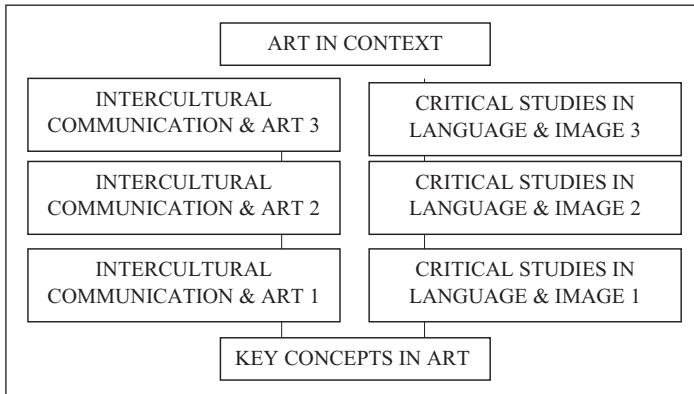
Figure 1. Curriculum overview.

tension between academic and non-academic forces entered the mix in ways that have yet to be resolved. As one step forward in that ongoing process, the publication of this special issue for me relocates the locus of my work back in the field of language education, in connection with the four key terms that have served as fundamental guidelines for my academic life as mentioned earlier: ICC, intercultural dialogue, post-native speakerism and code-switching plurilingualism.

Again, Fleming (2021, this issue) helps me to understand difficulties I experienced in this process through his recognition that the value of the arts can be over-stated, despite their powerful potential impact on education, if the craving for generality shifts attention too much away from particular cases and contexts in ways that can have negative consequences and limit horizons. Further, and more significantly, he claims that over-generalized claims can reduce discrimination and criticality in the classroom, recommending a more focused conception of the value of particular art forms and activities to understand their potential as a counter measure, in ways that can result in more purposeful, focused and targeted teaching.

This leads me to reflect upon my own teaching methodology in terms of the courses used as baseline activities as the above processes unfolded. Since April 2016, I have taught courses for both undergraduate students in the Faculty of Art and Regional Design, and post-graduate students of various nationalities in the Graduate School of Regional Design in Art and Economics at Saga University. Undergraduate courses include Key Concepts in Art, Intercultural Communication and Art 1–3, Critical Studies in Language and Image 1–3, Art in Context (open to international students), Domestic and International Training, seven classes in Art and Society 2 from the 2020 academic year, and a conversion of the Domestic and International Training Program, which involved fieldwork abroad that could not go ahead due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, into a Regional Development Fieldwork course, to be conducted from intercultural standpoints, from the 2021 academic year. Post-graduate courses include Intercultural Communication a and Intercultural Communication b, and MA graduation thesis supervision. An informal conceptual overview of my undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Art and Regional Design is presented in Figure 1 below. When the Faculty of Art and Regional Design opened, I

also self-published a range of textbooks (Houghton, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Houghton, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c), which I adapt to the changing needs of the students in different course-specific ways.

The educational program outlined above evolved into the FURYU Educational Program (FEP) (www.furyu.org) within which I am exploring the preservation and revitalization of traditional performing arts through intercultural dialogue with a central, focus on Alzheimer's disease prevention. Notably, I am researching a traditional performing art in Saga Prefecture called Menburyu, which has been passed down through the generations in and around the area of Kashima city, which lies between Saga and Nagasaki, since ancient times. Menburyu is transmitted orally, so it is endangered in Japan's ageing society because very little has been written down. For preservation and revitalization purposes, I am now exploring the origins, nature and value of Menburyu using Japanese, English as a lingua franca, and local dialects through code-switching plurilingualism, taking a post-native-speakerist approach (Houghton, 2018) from intercultural standpoints. Here, my research fields of 'heritage management' and 'intercultural dialogue' are deeply linked in relation to the performing arts connected to local history with significant international dimensions (Houghton, 2020c).

For cultural revitalization purposes, I started developing 'Menburyu-Inspired Dance-Fitness' (MIDF) with professional fitness instructor Kazuki Miyata in 2018. It incorporates original movements and concepts from Menburyu into aerobic exercise, as well as original dance creation inspired by Menburyu. Taking a practical approach, we hold intercultural dance and food events that link Japanese and international students with local communities, which are currently conducted online. Here, 'health' is linked to Menburyu through intercultural dialogue (Houghton, 2020c).

The FURYU Educational Program is a multi-disciplinary program in which traditional performing arts, intercultural dialogue, health, fitness, technology and art generation are all connected for the benefit of society. By taking part in these activities, I think that we can help to stimulate human memory and creativity, while promoting brain health at the same time. Through a series of initiatives, I hope to equip and inspire educators around the world to help to prevent Alzheimer's disease in the future (Houghton, 2018; Turner, Schaefer, Lowe & Houghton, 2020).

In addition, at post-graduate level, I have supervised three MA graduation theses related to intercultural dialogue conducted in the Graduate School of Regional Design in Art and Economics. Notably, Maeda (2020) used a European educational tool called the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media (AIEVM) to explore intercultural dialogue through art bringing together a group of international students in collaborative artwork that first involved them painting and then describing a picture to express their cultural identity, before then cutting up all the pictures and integrating them in a collage which they presented to express a common intercultural vision. Utilizing Byram's (1997, 2021) ICC model and Houghton's (2012) IDM as referential frameworks for the generation and analysis of both word and image-based data, this project served as a vehicle through which Maeda could examine how intercultural dialogue through art affects people and communication. Notably, her analysis of image data suggested firstly that participants'

artworks contained information that could not be expressed through language alone, and secondly that engagement in collaborative artwork also helped participants to deepen their understanding of each other, developing their ICC through intercultural dialogue in the process.

c   *Back to the future.* Living in international society with its identity-related challenges, I self-regulate by functioning as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 2017) and a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1988), constantly reflecting on what it means to be a human being in this increasingly interconnected world, what is needed both to preserve and revitalize human society at any given time critically, peacefully and dynamically, and how I can impart my understandings to students through research-oriented educational processes that are multi-disciplinary in nature.

Linking the arts to language education to foster generous and enquiring attitudes towards difference and diversity, viewing them as a constant source of inspiration, delight and constructive challenge as Fleming suggests provides an exciting and intriguing approach despite the difficulties I have experienced so far, outlined above with reference to Fleming (2021, this issue), regarding the triple dislocation of my work from language to art, international to regional, and academic to non-academic as mentioned earlier.

By bringing different schools of thought into contact, I strive to identify new issues, connections and points of concern from the clash and gaps emerging between them, taking a future-oriented view of society that informed by both past and present understandings. In this way, I hope to motivate students by transmitting and absorbing them into my excitement at exploring liminal yet dynamic zones, taking students with me on my research journeys, hopefully inspiring, equipping and empowering them to embark on their own in the process.

Universities are and should ultimately be research-oriented to push the limits of human knowledge, breaking barriers in the process. While I broadly align my teaching philosophy with the stated aims of the Faculty of Art and Regional Design presented online in English as noted above, I fundamentally cherish and protect academic freedom and freedom of expression both for myself, and my students. I actively encourage students to challenge the power structures that limit them through the development of criticality and social action, which may include challenging my own views and position as a teacher, and the university institution itself.

I cultivate students' artistic methodologies and sensitivity in post-modern ways through the reflective ICC development through intercultural dialogue, taking a post-native speakerist approach that connects people and products through art as a vehicle for self-expression and message transmission. I strive to establish meaningful links between language, image, communication and community, contributing to regional and international development in the process. To avoid getting bogged down with what can be enveloping, choking powerplay, I choose instead to refer my work to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)[7] as an overarching referential value-laden framework for curriculum development, linking the following components: health, quality education, gender equality, peace justice and strong institutions, and sustainable cities and communities.

In this way, I am seeking a constructive way by drawing upon my doctoral research in which I developed the Intercultural Dialogue Model (IDM) as a way of developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997, 2021) in practice (Houghton, 2012) as mentioned earlier. To recap, people move through self-reflection, critical analysis and evaluation of themselves and others with reference to carefully selected overarching standards such as human rights, which leads to transformation of self and society guided by UN SDGs for example.

Within this framework, I connect with art and regional design through performing arts (dance) and fitness respectively, centring on Alzheimer's disease prevention, since both bilingualism and aerobic exercise (including dance) seem to help prevent or delay Alzheimer's disease development to some extent. I ultimately placed this goal at the centre of my curriculum since around 40% of potential Alzheimer's disease cases seem preventable through simple lifestyle management that can feasibly be approached through education at all levels in enjoyable and artistic ways. In this way, I align my teaching philosophy with my changing perceptions of social needs in Japan's rapidly ageing society and the world while looking after individual needs perceived and actual. My aim is to inform, empower and activate foreign language teachers around the world to view their activities as a form of Alzheimer's disease prevention taking a post-native-speakerist approach that includes code-switching plurilingualism (Houghton, 2018; Turner et al., 2020).

2 Reflections on the background to the special issue by Melina Porto

a   The quest for this special issue. This special issue is the corollary of a quest to explore the connections among language education, the arts and community engagement. My co-editor, Stephanie Ann Houghton, has just described part of the point of the iceberg that brought us together in informal conversation about these interconnections originating in her work in the new Faculty of Art and Regional Design at Saga University, Japan, back in 2016, and her preparatory work for that with students in the (now closed) Faculty of Culture and Education at the same institution. Her organization of the First International conference on Intercultural Dialogue through the Arts: Community Development, Education and Policy, which took place on 22–25 September 2017, found us working together as members of the Academic Committee. Based on this conference and under her leadership, a book proposal co-edited by ourselves was accepted by Springer Nature. For a variety of quite striking and disappointing reasons, that book project collapsed after almost two years of hard work.

Being about to drop the book project altogether due to demoralizing feelings and exhaustion, particularly in Stephanie's case after her huge efforts since the conference, I insisted in the beginning of 2019 that we should reframe our idea to make it a special issue for a language education journal. We switched roles and I became the leading co-editor. Our special issue proposal was turned down once before it was accepted by the editors of *Language Teaching Research*, Hossein Nassaji and Maria del Pilar Garcia Mayo.

To our surprise, the call for abstracts for this special issue did not engage interest. We received only six abstracts of which one was off-topic and we invited the five authors to

submit their articles for consideration. In the process, two of the abstracts were withdrawn and three articles were submitted, of which only two were accepted. We invited Professor Michael Fleming to contribute an introductory, theoretical piece and are grateful to him for helping us move this special issue forward. A year-long, time-consuming, exhausting, and many times gloomy process of declined invitations followed. We were interested in hearing voices other than those coming from language and intercultural education teachers and researchers and we consequently contacted educationalists, artists, art educators, arts and cultural studies scholars, literacy and community literacies specialists, among others. Our endurance has helped us accept that we are sadly not offering these voices here.

b My journey. Personally, my interest in these connections evolved over a period of over 25 years. I began teaching at university (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, or UNLP, in Argentina) in 1994 as an assistant teacher in an English as a foreign language course for prospective teachers and translators of English. This was a compulsory course and students were required to write a 350-word narrative text in two hours. Instruction was aimed at developing students' linguistic competence. Between three and five 'serious' language mistakes meant failing the test. Those requirements were the same I had experienced as a student myself in that teaching and translation programme with the note that the accepted 'serious' mistakes were no more than three then. As I was promoted to teaching positions with increased decision-making responsibilities in that course over these 25 years, I introduced changes at different times such as the move from product to process writing and the use of genre-based pedagogies, intercultural perspectives in language education with a multiliteracies, multimodal, arts-based and translingual approach, a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) orientation using literature as a basis to address citizenship and human rights concerns, and an intercultural citizenship perspective connecting language learning and students' engagement in social and civic action in the community during their college education (Byram, 2014; Byram et al., 2017). My co-authored article in this special issue (Porto, Golubeva & Byram, 2021, this issue) illustrates these orientations.

These developments have been resisted by the institution where I work for a variety of reasons. While I have nonetheless been able to accommodate these perspectives in the course I teach, one powerful limitation is that I am not allowed to consider the work I ask my students to do for assessment purposes. To pass the course, the accountable narrative test is still in place with variations involving a comprehensive assessment grid that considers other aspects beyond the linguistic in terms of 'serious mistakes'. The underlying implication for all actors involved is that the intercultural, multiliteracies, multimodal, arts-based, translingual and intercultural citizenship perspectives on which the course builds are indeed subservient to monolithic conceptions of English and of language proficiency (Hall, 2013, 2019). Their praxis and theoretical basis are not part of the education that future professionals of English (teachers, translators, interpreters, researchers) are currently getting in this setting.

In the face of the few professional development opportunities aligned with these perspectives locally during the last two decades, my evolving conceptualizations of language, language proficiency, English, language education and teacher education have

been nurtured by conversations with, as well as advice and support from, experts such as Henry Widdowson (during my MA studies at Essex University, UK, in 1994–95 and since then); Michael Byram (during my PhD studies at Universidad Nacional de La Plata in 2010–11 and since then); Allan Luke (during my work as Editorial Board member for the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* in the late 1990s and my involvement in different roles with the International Literacy Association in those times); Suresh Canagarajah (during a co-taught postgraduate seminar at UNLP in 2012 funded by a Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence Program awarded to me by the journal *Language Learning* and since then); Hugh Starkey and Audrey Osler (during a co-taught postgraduate seminar at UNLP in 2014, jointly with Michael Byram and Suresh Canagarajah, funded by British Council in Argentina and since then); Claire Kramsch (during a co-taught postgraduate seminar at UNLP in 2018 (funded by a Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence Program awarded to me by the journal *Language Learning*); Leticia Yulita (during our work in transnational intercultural citizenship projects since 2012); and with Anthony Liddicoat, Bernadette Holmes, Michael Byram, Harry Kuchah Kuchah, Adrian Holliday and Leticia Yulita (during a co-taught postgraduate seminar and workshop at UNLP in 2020 funded by British Council in Argentina through a Higher Education Links Workshop Grant awarded to Leticia Yulita and myself). During 2020, I also engaged in conversations around these conceptualizations with Allan Luke (again after 20 years), Graham Crookes and Hilary Janks, to whom I am indebted for reminding me of the inescapable difficulties and resistance involved in critical language education in any of its multiple forms. For enacting an arts-based language curriculum (in this case in higher education) is a critical endeavour. Furthermore, I have been illuminated by supporting, enriching and inspirational conversations with my Argentinian colleagues Silvana Barboni, Griselda Beacon, Darío Banegas and Amanda Zamuner, among many others. Last but not least, my willing and enthusiastic students during all these years have also been a crucial pillar. In sum, these opportunities, which have paved the way toward the developments in this special issue, arouse from my agency and were not sufficiently catered for by the university or the setting.

If there is something I have learned through these conversations, it is not to view resistance and obstacles as failure but as opportunities to build further developments and grow. This requires perseverance, courage and endurance. Benesch (2020) states that negative emotions arising from mismatches between teachers' beliefs and policy and institutional expectations can act as a springboard for activism and become transformational. In my case, the theoretical pillars upon which this special issue rests acted as lighthouses guiding my way.

Always contextualized in the language course I teach in higher education for future language professionals, several breaking points have occurred during these years that have led me to this special issue. The first one (1999–2011) was the use of visual reformulations (instead of 'representations') as a way in which students could respond personally and affectively to the literary narrative texts in English set in the course syllabus. These visual reformulations allowed students to combine linguistic and non-linguistic (artistic) means and resources to make their meanings (for instance, drawings, mind-maps, cartoons, charts, paintings, collage, videos and more), distancing in this way from narrow views of language learning in terms of linguistic competence and accuracy. Their understandings of textual

content were fluid, dynamic and involved much more than what the texts offered: students imbued their reformulations with their views, feelings, fears, aspirations, past experiences and more, challenging in this way existing conceptualizations of 'reading comprehension' in a foreign language (Porto, 2003; Porto & Byram, 2017).

The second development (2013 to the present) involved the use of multimodal reformulations of the literary texts but now with the additional aim of sensitizing students to issues of human suffering, human rights abuse and citizenship concerns within a social justice conceptualization of language education (Porto & Sauer Rosas, 2017; Porto & Zembylas, 2020a, 2020b). In these years, students have created drawings, paintings, cartoons, collages, comparative charts, tableaux, and acrostics using varied materials including paper, cardboard, cotton, glitter, pencils, colour pencils, watercolours and canvas. They have resorted to several techniques leading to diverse outcomes such as handmade paintings, handmade art crafts, digital artwork, details in 3D, black and white artwork, posters, videos and flyers. Sometimes they have also created music scores and videos dramatized by themselves. They have used their creations to engage with their communities and take action in the world: sensitize relatives and friends about human suffering, design Instagram campaigns against discrimination or in favour of gender equality and so on. Further recent developments have embedded this kind of student work within theories and pedagogies of discomfort (Porto & Yulita, 2019; Porto & Zembylas, 2020a, 2020b; Porto et al., 2021, this issue).

A third strand of work began in 2011 under Michael Byram's initiative to implement his intercultural citizenship theory (Byram, 2008, 2014) in transnational pedagogic projects. One example is the Malvinas project in which Argentinian and UK-based college students addressed the theme of the Malvinas/Falklands war to aim at peace and the reconciliation of both countries. They worked collaboratively through telecollaboration using the foreign languages they were learning (English in Argentina and Spanish in the UK) to create bilingual artistic artefacts with this aim. They engaged with their communities by delivering talks in community centres, designing awareness-raising leaflets and distributing them in their town, among other civic actions (Porto, 2014, 2019; Porto and Yulita, 2017). Other projects in the same higher education setting, also arts-based and community-action oriented, addressed the military 1976 dictatorship in Argentina (Porto and Byram, 2015; Yulita and Porto, 2017) and mural art and graffiti (Porto, 2017, 2018a). This last project involved Argentinian college students and Italian peers who built a corpus of mural art and graffiti in their towns (La Plata and Padua), discussed these art forms as artistic expression or vandalism using English as lingua franca, and created their own murals and inverse graffiti in their town, as well as digital murals, as their social and civic actions. One group of students worked with public secondary school peers to transform their decaying classroom by painting murals on its walls. Finally, another project was set in a primary school context and addressed environmental issues, showing that intercultural citizenship with an arts-based basis can also be implemented with children and with students with lower levels of linguistic competence in the foreign language (Porto, 2016, 2018b; Porto et al., 2017). The children created awareness-raising posters, leaflets and videos, designed and hung a street banner and were interviewed by a local journalist.

Finally, evolving from the foregoing, one last development was the enactment of intercultural service learning (Rauschert and Byram, 2017) outside formal education,

specifically in the non-governmental organization (NGO) *La Máquina de los Sueños* ('The dream machine'), located on the outskirts of La Plata city in Argentina during 2017–18. Volunteer university student teachers of English, in collaboration with their university teachers and myself, taught 10 workshops using intercultural literature in English for 40 underserved children aged 8–12 years who received different kinds of aid from the NGO. The workshops had linguistic, intercultural and citizenship aims, addressed through socially relevant themes, always introduced using a storybook in English, such as identity issues, child rights, difference and otherness, beauty, responsible pet ownership and world peace (Porto, forthcoming a).

The proposed tasks, based on multiliteracies, multimodality, creative and artistic expression, and translanguaging (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley, Moore, Simpson & Atkinson, 2018; Cope and Kalantiz, 2015; Moore, Bradley & Simpson, 2020), encouraged children to use all their available resources, linguistic and otherwise (visual, digital, auditory and performative, including movement, music, dance, mimicry, singing, playing, acting, drawing, painting, handwork, crafts-making, collage, tableaux) to comprehend English and the themes and make their own meanings. In all cases, a final action stage involved children in the design of a small civic or social action to get their messages across to the community beyond the NGO. For instance, they created masks showing varied social identifications and drawings of themselves and their families in order to raise awareness about diversity and identity rights among their families and neighbourhoods; they designed posters representing peace around the globe, showing how 'peace' is said in a variety of languages, to foster it as a democratic value; they created dough art and monsters (out of reusable objects and materials such as wool, toilet and kitchen rolls, yogurt containers, lids, old newspapers, magazines) to show that 'it's ok to be different'; and they illustrated poems and posters about animal care to raise awareness of the importance of animal protection.

This link between the children's language learning that occurred in the NGO and their community engagement in the here and now is a pillar in intercultural citizenship education (Byram et al., 2017). Furthermore, from the perspective of the teacher educators and student teachers involved, this project enacted a social justice basis in language education (Byram and Wagner, 2018; Lamb et al., 2019) and contributed to the teacher educators' professional development and the student teachers' development of a situated social justice praxis (Porto, forthcoming b).

III This special issue

We have provided contextual background to the development of this special issue from the complementary vantage points of ourselves as co-editors. Next, we give an overview of the theoretical background that guided our collaborative endeavours, we provide an overview of this special issue and highlight possible ways forward in the future.

1 Theoretical basis

What is intercultural dialogue?

> Intercultural Dialogue: [E]quitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures, is the

essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations. (UNESCO, 2017)

Departing from this definition of intercultural dialogue from UNESCO, we were inspired by multiple possible lines of enquiry relating intercultural dialogue to arts education when envisioning this special issue, some of which are listed below:

- promote the development of intercultural dialogue and understanding through the arts;
- provide a range of conceptual tools to situate artistic expression and community engagement within language educational contexts;
- explore the links and the complex ways in which new forms of literacy involving artistic expression, embodiment, movement, and community engagement are part of language educational discourses and can contribute to building democratic, peaceful societies;
- unpack problems presented by restricted forms of literacy in language education programs around the world, which downplay the important role of language education in developing students' competences for democratic culture;
- challenge conventional forms of meaning-making in language education and propose new ones based on performativity, embodiment, enactment, undoing, becoming and community engagement;
- propose alternative paradigms aimed at overcoming problems presented by restricted forms of literacy in language education; and
- challenge and problematize traditional methodologies for language research by examining alternatives such as visual and arts-based methodologies.

Art can be a medium for intercultural dialogue (Gonçalves, 2016). Intercultural dialogue can be enhanced by nurturing intercultural communication processes in foreign, world or modern languages and the novel point raised in this special issue is that arts integration has a role to play because it can foster community development that includes modern language use and constructive responses to otherness in various forms. Sulentic Dowell and Goering (2018, p. 87) define arts integration as 'a pedagogical approach combining a core curricular concept with an art form (or art forms) such as visual art, music, theatre, or dance'. Mutual understanding and respect for people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be promoted through participation in, and enjoyment of, the arts in ways that can enhance self-understanding and expression, verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication, the development of intercultural communicative competence through critical engagement with different others, and action in the world aimed at problem solving and promoting social transformation on various levels in democratic societies.

These interconnected dynamics can all both enable, and result from, community-based social interaction in dynamic intercultural spaces oriented towards the promotion of foreign/world/modern language learning and use through new educational and policy initiatives based upon informed visions of the future. But what does this mean in practice? How can it happen through artistic engagement? And to what effects? What is the

role of languages and language education, and how can education in these areas be enhanced through linkage with the arts and community engagement?

Starting with fundamental questions, what are possible theories and definitions of art, and how can the arts be justified in education from educational, research and historical standpoints? How can the arts and creativity be used and assessed in education in different subjects? Such questions are explored in detail by Fleming (2012), but very few texts are available that explicitly explore links between the arts and language learning for intercultural dialogue. In their edited volume entitled *The Routledge international handbook of intercultural arts research*, Burnhard et al. (2016) present wide-ranging theoretical, practical and research-based perspectives on intercultural arts. Overall, the editors aim to engage intercultural artist-researcher-educators, critically, socially and ethically, by shaking up and democratizing artistic practice and thought, disturbing power relations in the process, to empower and give voice to the powerless through broadly conceptualized artistic interculturality. They engage indigenous perspectives to problematize theory within and beyond coloniality, with reference to indigenous art and museum spaces before exploring post-colonial discourse to expose underlying power dynamics.

Then, they embrace embodied, affective, material dimensions of art research before exploring performative, political and ethical perspectives thereupon. Notably, the 'performative turn' in education is especially strong in the field of foreign/second language teaching according to Crutchfield and Schewe (2017), who explore the extent to which performative approaches can achieve deep intercultural learning, emphasizing the role of the body as a learning medium. The volume also addresses fluid performative practices across global contexts with reference to gender, and interlinked research and pedagogy. Finally, the editors showcase various intercultural arts research and methodological approaches within specific projects through exploration of voice, ethics, language, audio and visual culture and the language-culture nexus.

In their (2016) edited volume entitled *Art and intercultural dialogue*, Gonçalves and Majhanovich explore links between intercultural dialogue and art in a three-part structure as follows: (1) The power of art: general dimensions (2) Art as medium: dissent, dissection and agency, and (3) Dialogue through art: Cases, projects and voices. Gonçalves and Majhanovich (2016) examine the power of art in intercultural dialogue focusing on art and diversity, education through art and the role of technology. Gonçalves (2016) shows how art may act as a cultural mediator and be taken as resource for intercultural cooperation and social justice, which echoes Byram's (1997, 2014, 2021) concepts of intercultural mediator and intercultural citizenship linked to the base concept of intercultural communicative competence. Gonçalves argues that 'art is both personal (an expression of feelings, ideas and experiences of the artist) and a product of multiple authorships, as the cultural background of the artist is one of its layers, thus making art a meaningful language'. In turn, López and Ouis (2016) explore links between the concepts of the intercultural, art and technology as key features of intercultural education.

The volume also explores the notion of art as a medium by examining the influence of art on social images, conflict and mediation to reveal the dual nature of art as a double-edged sword. While art can be seen somewhat passively in terms of cultural products and representations, it can also function as an active social agent. Like language, it can be used not only as a tool for agency and dissent, but also as a cultural medium with shaping

force that can actively influence cultural representations and dialogic processes. Dragićević Šešić and Tomka (2016) highlight the role of critical participatory art in questioning and provoking large institutional structures through artistic activism, which they suggest is departing from anti-institutionalism towards a reconceptualization of the role of the artist and cultural activists as active agents in the formation of the responsible democratic state. This concern with the role of art and activism as acts of democratic citizens represents a new avenue in language research.

The volume showcases various projects and case studies that suggest practical ways of using art to mediate and promote intercultural dialogue in educational settings, and cultural and rehabilitation programmes. Significant educational themes are touched upon, such as identities, representation, citizenship (Savva and Telemachou, 2016), non-violence and the perspective of the impoverished (Alvarado Castro, 2016), festivals, cross-cultural expressions, heritage with cultural landscape management (Martins and Carvalho, 2016), cultural interventions, collaborations, and community building through the arts and (inter)cultural dialogue (Ballengee Morris and Carpenter, 2016) and various other intercultural educational research projects using, for example, murals to facilitate transformative intercultural dialogue (Caetano et al., 2016).

Such diverse themes are touched upon in wide-ranging projects with specific thematic foci such as the role of the arts and the media in everyday life (Savva and Telemachou, 2016), the use of intercultural theatrical techniques to promote understanding of immigrant otherness through street performance and theatre (Alvarado Castro, 2016), linkage between cultural festivals, green architecture, landscape and intercultural dialogue developed through design, music and dance (Martins and Carvalho, 2016), ownership and access to water, indigenous spiritual spaces, game building, and pedagogy (Ballengee Morris and Carpenter, 2016). The projects reported target specific groups through student teacher education (Savva and Telemachou, 2016), active social inclusion of immigrants (Alvarado Castro, 2016) and the homeless (Campagnaro and Porcellana, 2016). They also showcase the work and views of university art education teachers (Saura, 2016) and researchers (Ballengee Morris and Carpenter, 2016).

In a special issue on arts integration in *Pedagogies: An International Journal* (Volume 13/2) guest editors Sulentic Dowell and Goering (2018) explore the potential of arts integration 'to transform education by nurturing students' creativity and critical thinking' (p. 85). Contributions explore various dimensions such as a conceptual framework for analysing, discussing, and designing arts integrated learning; in-service and professional development experiences in arts integration; and spoken word poetry, dance and multimodal literacy responses to literature as instructional strategies. The editors conclude that 'the study of art forms such as music, theatre, dance, or visual art paired with curricular concepts from the disciplines of language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies can provide rich learning experiences for students' (Sulentic Dowell & Goering, 2018, p. 89).

Two recent special issues in *Language and Intercultural Communication* are particularly relevant to us. In 'Art matters in languages and intercultural citizenship education', guest editors Gonçalves Matos and Melo-Pfeifer (2020) argue 'for a place for the arts in language and intercultural citizenship education (. . .) [because] [T]he arts can help us find ways to look through the complexities of current issues and problems and (re)build

a sustainable future, together' (p. 290). The editors argue that the integration of the arts, language and intercultural education, and intercultural citizenship education 'explores sustained imagined worlds; stimulates empathy; promotes the critical development of languages towards dialogue; inspires social, cultural, and political action; and demands transformation' (Gonçalves Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020, p. 289).

In the special issue on 'language, intercultural communication and social action', editors Ladegaard and Phipps (2020) highlight 'the potential for social and political action' in the field (p. 70) with 'an approach that combines research commitments with an ethically responsible social activism agenda, which encourages intervention at the sociocultural and political levels whenever possible' (p. 75). The focus is mainly research-based as the editors describe what such research commitments should look like and what they should comprise in their view.

In our special issue, we complement their research and advocacy focus with attention to teaching and pedagogy. Drawing on Byram et al. (2017) and Porto et al. (2018), we refer to this social activism as 'community engagement', 'action in the world', 'action in the here-and-now', where the emphasis is on engaging students at all levels of education in becoming socially and civically involved in their social milieu in transformative ways integrating languages, language learning and the arts in creative ways. We concur with Phipps and Ladegaard (2020, p. 219) that '[T]he elements of rhetoric, aesthetics, artistry and performance in language as vehicles for social action, as well as forms where social action is represented, will need to find a stronger place.'

2 Overview of this special issue

Based on the theoretical background outlined above, this special issue addresses salient issues in relation to the development of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2021) and intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008, 2010; Byram & Wagner, 2018; Byram et al., 2017) in foreign/world/modern language education. It explores various themes related to intercultural dialogue through the arts and community engagement, or what can be called 'embodied intercultural dialogue', by drawing on these aspects: the use of the body as a bridge for intercultural exchange; language education and the development of intercultural communicative competence through drama, literature, dance, music and other forms of art; and intercultural citizenship through the arts, with strong reference to community development and community engagement. With an emphasis on research-based educational methodology, we attempt to justify, refine and hone educational links being established between language education and the arts at all levels of the educational process, highlighting the need to clarify teaching aims, learning objectives and teaching methods, as well as curriculum, syllabus and teaching materials design.

The special issue begins with a much-needed overview by Michael Fleming (2021, this issue) of theoretical questions and particular challenges to be faced when attempting to integrate the field of language education with the arts, particularly as these impact on intercultural theory and practice. His discussion of the view that the arts can be used to support the teaching of interculturalism within the context of language education involves consideration of risks, for instance the dangers of unintentionally reducing any culture to the level of stereotype, perhaps through craving generality. The author supports the value

of arts education for interculturalism not only through the exploration of the arts of other cultures but also through the development of a positive, enquiring, and empathetic attitude to difference that involves decentring and the development of intercultural communicative competence. In this process, the ability to see things in new ways, and by implication to engage in new things, is cast as an important element towards which the arts can contribute by fostering generous and enquiring attitudes towards difference and diversity.

Porto et al. (2021, this issue) present an intercultural telecollaboration project in the form of a Covid-19 case study to show how discomfort can be channelled through the arts, exploring links with pedagogies of discomfort, intercultural education, self and social transformation, arts-based methods, telecollaboration and the Covid-19 crisis that involved the generation of and discussion about collaborative artwork that encouraged participants to look outwards and connect with the world outside via online channels. The authors highlight the powerful humanistic role of education involving artistic expression and community engagement in order to channel discomforting feelings productively at personal and social levels.

Méndez García and Cores-Bilbao (2021, this issue) use the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media (AIEVM) (Barrett et al., 2013) to enhance and integrate art-based education and intercultural dialogue, exploring the roles of both deliberate training and incidental learning in its use, and links with intercultural literacy, intercultural development, intercultural mediation of images and visual literacy in the process. Viewing teachers as dialogical facilitators of learning, and art educational action as a way of analysing artistic manifestations within the social, aesthetic and political discourses of different cultural groups, they provide a critical overview of the potential of the AIEVM considering implications for its global implementation in ways that comprise prospective courses of action to supplement this instrument to sharpen users' visual literacy and boost deeper intercultural reflection in the process.

In the case of Méndez García and Cores-Bilbao (2021, this issue), the analysis of text-related images is involved. In differing but complementary fashion, Schat, van der Knaap and de Graaff (2021, this issue) report an educational design research project on arts integration for intercultural competence. Treating the text itself as an art object under investigation, they explore literary texts without accompanying images, and suggest key principles for an integrated intercultural literary pedagogy (IILP) of potentially wide application. Within this educational design research approach, intercultural competence, educational design research, literary pedagogy, foreign language teaching, and CLIL are linked in ways that involve the processing of literary texts through dialogic tasks with peers in the target language to foster intercultural development and appreciation of its social relevance.

Finally, in their epilogue, Harvey and Bradley (2021, this issue) address the theme of engagement at the intersection of language and the arts when engagement is understood 'as the creation of connections between disparate groups in order to enable and advance intercultural understanding'. They suggest future developments that might arise for research in intercultural and arts-based engagement beyond the examples included in this special issue. Such future work needs to consider ontological and epistemological dimensions of key notions in the field, such as language, understanding, dialogue, and identity,

leading to awareness of the importance of coming to terms with the impossibilities of understanding and the welcoming of uncertainties.

IV Ways forward

Through this special issue, we attempt to foster the ability to see things in new ways, and engagement in new things, by linking the arts to language education to foster generous and enquiring attitudes towards difference and diversity, viewing them as a constant source of inspiration, delight and constructive challenge in the process as Fleming suggests. Our hope is that this special issue contributes to answering some of the questions that inspired us initially:

- What is the significance of arts-based language education as a tool for understanding, mediation, and communication across and beyond cultures?
- How can art in combination with foreign/world/modern languages act as intercultural mediators for dialogue?
- What conceptual and methodological approaches, from particular disciplines and contexts, can be useful considering the complexity in the dynamics of intercultural communication, cultures, communities, languages, identities and the arts?
- How are language learning, education and research, artistic expression and political activism related? What possibilities do they offer when combined in language education? What ethical and political considerations are involved?
- In view of the foregoing, how are social justice aims justified as part of arts-based language education in schools and universities engaged with their communities?
- In which ways can language learners and teachers in particular settings use their artistic creativity and imagination to fight injustice and oppression?
- What boundaries are challenged and broken when language education, arts integration and community engagement are combined?
- What are the specific contributions that language education and research can make?
- What is the cultural, political, economic, social, and transformational impact of such integration involving language education, the arts and community engagement?

We contend that further work is needed to explore possible responses to these questions in multiple and varied contexts. We reinforce and expand both Phipps and Ladegaard's (2020, p. 218) '[N]otes towards a socially engaged LAIC', and Gonçalves Matos and Melo-Pfeifer's (2020) perspectives on socially engaged art in language and intercultural education as we complement their views by emphasizing a significant role for language teaching and pedagogy. In our view, this role involves increased attention to:

- The creation of spaces in classrooms, schools and universities for cultivating political, ethical, and social justice responsibilities for changing socially unjust societies through social and civic community action by students (Byram et al., 2017; Schwieter & Chamness Iida, 2020).

- The exploration of the micro-dimensions of the classroom but also of other spheres of knowledge, or funds of knowledge (Cho & Yi, 2020; Moje et al., 2004), such as homes, churches, clubs, libraries, neighbourhoods, squares, parks, recreation areas, sports centres, community centres, and others. These are the informal, everyday, out-of-school contexts where students live their lives and learn. This exploration 'connect[s] schools with the social and ecological dimensions of places' (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10), represents a critical place orientation in language teaching drawing on Gruenewald (2003, 2004) and involves looking at what students say and do, beyond speaking, listening, reading and writing, in these contexts. Critical place pedagogies give importance to the places that learners inhabit and value, places they identify with and which are significant to their identities, places which they historicize and contextualize through their particular life stories, with attachments to other humans but also to their surroundings, the natural world, the animal world, objects, popular culture, every day practices and so on.
- The embracement of critical forms of education (Crookes, 2021) as they encourage students to identify and name a problem they consider significant; link it to their lives through discussion with others; access relevant information by engaging research and inquiry skills; analyse and interrogate local practises through discussion and reflection; evaluate the social effects of their habits and customs; and imagine possibilities for making a positive difference by taking small social or civic actions. In this way, students are stimulated to engage in 'righting what is wrong – in transformative redesign' (Janks, 2018, p. 98) through expansive literacy practices (Pahl, 2007, 2014) that take into account artistic expression, multimodality and translanguaging (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley, Moore, Simpson & Atkinson, 2018; Cope and Kalantiz, 2015; Kress, 2010; Moore, Bradley & Simpson, 2020).
- The affirmation of the transformative possibilities of language education as affect, emotion and imagination (Bigelow, 2019), fostered by the arts (Bradley et al., 2018; Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bresler, 2007; Ewing et al., 2014; Moore, Bradley, & Simpson, 2020) become strategic sites of ethical and political transformation, for instance through critical language education and community engagement.
- Last but by no means least, the creation of spaces in classrooms, schools and universities to raise awareness of and sensitize students to the ontological and epistemological dimensions of concepts such as language, understanding, dialogue, and identity, so that they can de-centre their thinking and begin to welcome the impossibilities and uncertainties involved (see Harvey & Bradley, 2021, this issue). In this way, they can discover a sense of direction and motivation that will be inspiring and challenging enough to encourage them to find creative ways of inquiring, and working towards, the utopia of a better, democratic, just and sustainable world.

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Notes

1. https://www.springer.com/series/13631
2. http://www.saga-u.ac.jp/english/academics/faculty_Art.pdf
3. https://www.facebook.com/stephaniesensei1
4. https://tiempo.jp/simposio/conference.html
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