

Language Teacher Resilience Across Diverse Geographical Contexts

Derrick Adjei Kankam, *University of Oklahoma (OK)*

Juliana Fosu, *Takoradi Technical University (Ghana)*

Abstract

This study examines three dimensions of language teacher resilience, including personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems, to determine how language teachers in diverse teaching contexts thrive in challenging situations. Using a closed-ended survey, a total of 150 teachers from four different countries were surveyed and quantitatively analyzed with One-way ANOVA. The findings revealed different dimensions of resilience where teachers demonstrate strengths and areas that need to be improved. The outcome of this study has implications for driving professional development for language teachers, educating teachers, making policy changes, and boosting teacher efficiency.

Keywords: *resilience, personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, support systems.*

Introduction

While teacher resilience has garnered significant attention in recent years, empirical research on this topic remains insufficient (Chu & Liu, 2022). The concept of resilience emerges as central to understanding the ability of individuals to withstand adversity and crisis, and for devising appropriate interventions (Capstick, 2018). Resilience refers to the capacity of teachers to thrive in difficult circumstances (Mansfield et al., 2016) or the capacity to face, overcome, and even be strengthened by experiences of adversity (Grotberg, 1997). In other words, it is pertinent to how teachers navigate stress and systemic challenges in educational settings. Understanding teacher resilience is important because teachers are facing more adversity in their professional lives than ever before (Stewart & Reinders, 2024). Besides, an inadequate understanding of resilience has the ability to hinder teachers' psychological well-being, which, according to Han (2022), is linked to students' outcomes, progress, motivation, and participation. Teachers

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who are confident and optimistic are likely to look for their students' strengths rather than focusing on their deficits (Bondy & McKenzie, 1999). Moreover, teachers who lack resilience succumb to illness, depression, or burnout, and some even decide to abandon teaching as a career (Tait, 2008).

Therefore, it is important for teachers who want to thrive in their professional spaces to become conscious about the factors that support their resilience and those that hinder their resilience in the execution of their duties. As indicated by Hiver (2018), resilient teachers utilize all available resources to maintain their personal well-being in the face of adversity and challenging conditions.

According to Bobek (2002), learning from past experiences increases available resources and thus improves one's resilience for dealing with future circumstances. However, building resilience goes beyond offering physical resources to support teachers. It encompasses a trait that occurs throughout the lifespan of all individuals, requiring the use of specific strategies in the face of obstacles and challenges (Serdar Tülüce, 2018).

This research, therefore, studies three dimensions of teacher resilience by analyzing the extent to which personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems influence teacher resilience. The study will involve language teachers from four different geographical contexts to allow for comparison between how the factors indicated above impact their resilience.

Statement of the Problem

Retaining early language career and experienced teachers has been a challenge in many language learning spaces because most teachers are unable to withstand the challenges posed by the teaching profession. Teachers' inability to handle challenges associated with teaching sometimes results in attrition among teachers. High levels of teacher attrition negatively impact student achievement and the school within which the teachers teach (Ingersoll, 2001) because when teachers leave, schools lose valuable teaching expertise that disrupts student learning. Therefore, it is essential to understand the challenges teachers encounter by determining the factors that support or hinder their resilience to offer a direction for support. Given the broader nature of understanding resilience, the current study focuses on measuring resilience from three dimensions of personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems to determine the extent to which these factors influence teachers.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of conducting this study is to measure language teacher resilience through three dimensions of personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems across different geographical contexts to determine the aspects of resilience where teachers demonstrate strength and where they demonstrate weakness in various locations. Determining language teacher resilience is crucial for informing interventions such as teacher education and professional development, stress management, and implementing workplace reforms.

Research Question and Hypothesis

1. In what ways do teachers demonstrate strength and weaknesses in resilience through personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems, and how do they differ across geographical contexts?

Research Hypothesis

There is a difference in the dimensions of resilience of teachers across contexts.

Null Hypothesis

There is no statistical difference in the resilience of respondents across the geographical contexts.

Literature Review

Language teachers deal with uncertainties throughout their careers, such as teaching a language other than their mother tongue, adapting to educational guidelines, moving to new positions, and so on (de Laurentiis Brandão, 2025). In addition to the uncertainties and challenges teachers encounter, they experience burnout, which may require them to be flexible and resilient in the execution of their duties. Teacher resilience can be regarded as the process of adapting positively and continually developing in challenging contexts and circumstances (Razmjoo & Ayoobiyan, 2019). As indicated by Day and Gu (2010 and Howard and Johnson (2004), one potential way to understand teachers' burnout and attrition is to look at the attitudes and behaviors of teachers who stay in the profession and remain committed despite facing challenges and difficulties. This section, therefore, discusses previous studies to offer more insight into the factors that influence teacher resilience.

Gao et al. (2022) used a mixed methods design to study the relationships between teacher beliefs, agency, and resilience during the pandemic to explore the relationships and tensions among these constructs. Ninety-three language teachers were surveyed across seven different regions in China to collect their perceptions and beliefs about challenges and solutions. From the quantitative statistics, teacher beliefs about emotional, physical, mentoring, and support challenges in emergency remote teaching were examined, along with the strategies they adopted to address these challenges during the pandemic. A significant correlation was found among different perceived challenges and solutions. From the qualitative analysis, it was found that language teacher beliefs, agency, and resilience co-evolved through intrapersonal and interpersonal reflections, facilitated by temporal and contextual affordances.

Moreover, de Laurentiis Brandão (2025) conducted a study, utilizing visual narratives from two Brazilian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, highlighting their experiences of resilience during the initial stages of remote teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Their drawings and accompanying conversations revealed the challenges faced and the coping strategies employed, ultimately shaping them as professionals. Some of the challenges identified include overwhelming workload and digital divide, inadequate IT infrastructure, challenges with student engagement, and mental and physical tiredness. The coping strategies employed include collaboration and peer support, adapting and reinventing teaching practices, and self-care. The study concluded that fostering teacher resilience requires initiatives that develop emotional well-being, collaboration, and self-reflection skills, alongside addressing systemic issues like inadequate resources and the low status of English in the curriculum.

Furthermore, Kırmızı et al. (2025) examined the resilience of five English language teachers in Türkiye with experience ranging from 6 to 14 years. Teacher resilience was found to be an unstable trait that fluctuates considerably over time. Factors influencing teacher resilience included language barriers, constantly changing exam systems, uninvolved parents, and the need to handle problems alone, especially in crowded classrooms. Key characteristics that contributed to

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their resilience included the ability to understand students from different perspectives, being well-prepared, engaging in lifelong learning, possessing solid knowledge and confidence, and demonstrating fairness and determination. The study emphasized that support systems and specific personal and professional strengths are essential for teacher resilience because resilience is a dynamic, context-dependent trait shaped by a complex interaction of personal, social, and systemic factors.

In the same vein, Rezazadeh et al. (2023) investigated the factors contributing to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher resilience in Iranian non-profit and state schools using a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed both similarities and differences in the factors influencing teacher resilience across the educational contexts. Teacher resilience in state schools was significantly built by personal competence, high standards, and tenacity. Other factors, such as tolerance of negative affect, the strengthening effects of stress, positive acceptance of change, control, and spiritual influences, also significantly contributed to teacher resilience. Similarly, teacher resilience in non-profit schools was significantly built by personal competence, high standards, tenacity, tolerance of negative affect, strengthening effects of stress, positive acceptance of change, control, and spiritual influences. In sum, while resilience was consistent across both school types, the specific contextual and personal factors that contribute to teacher resilience varied.

Finally, Patterson et al. (2004) conducted qualitative research examining the strategies used by urban teachers to enhance their personal resilience. The findings identified several common strategies employed by resilient teachers to maintain their resilience. These include guiding personal values driven by a set of principles that inform their professional decisions, prioritizing professional development and actively seeking opportunities to pursue it, providing mentoring and leadership to colleagues, taking charge, and solving problems that act as barriers to student learning. The researchers concluded that resilient urban teachers are characterized by strong personal values, a proactive approach to professional growth and problem-solving, and a commitment to mentoring and student-focused practices, all of which enable them to thrive amidst challenging conditions.

In conclusion, all the studies examined identified different factors that influence teachers' resilience in the performance of their duties while highlighting strategies used by these teachers to overcome these challenges. Identified factors that affect teachers' resilience include overwhelming workload and digital divide, inadequate IT infrastructure, challenges with student engagement, mental and physical tiredness, language barriers, constantly changing exam systems, uninvolved parents, and so forth. Some coping strategies employed by teachers to sustain their resilience also included collaboration with peers, adapting and reinventing teaching practices, self-care, prioritizing professional development, and so forth.

Conceptual Framework

Given the multifaceted nature of understanding how teachers maintain their resilience in language teaching, a conceptual framework was outlined to guide the collection and analysis of those data.

The conceptual framework encompasses interconnected dimensions, including personal attitudes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems. The personal attitudes and mindset dimension evaluates the inherent capabilities that enable teachers to sustain their resilience in the classroom. Mindset refers to the set of beliefs and perceptions that shape a person's response to a situation.

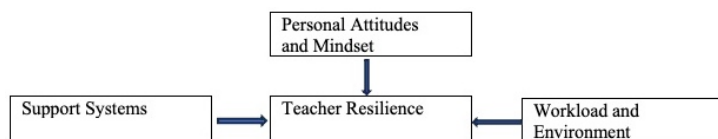
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Attitude is also a mental and neural state of readiness upon which an individual responds to situations. (Singh et al., 2025). The components of this dimension include assessing how well teachers can adapt their teaching methods when needed, seek feedback to improve their practices or grow, and remain motivated despite students' struggles. The second dimension, which is workload and environment, is two interconnected aspects of teacher resilience. Workload refers to the demands placed on teachers, such as the number of classes or students they are responsible for, or the volume of non-teaching tasks they must complete. The environment also describes the conditions under which teachers work and the resources available to them. This component evaluates teachers' access to sufficient teaching resources, their workload levels, and their sense of belonging within their work environment. The dimension of support systems assesses the different types of support available to teachers to maintain their resilience. This includes how supported teachers feel by their school administration, the availability of professional and emotional support from colleagues or counselors, access to professional development, and support from family and friends

The connection between these three dimensions offers a holistic evaluation of teacher resilience to understand the challenges faced by language teachers and how they recover from adversity to sustain long-term engagement in the profession.

Figure 1

Framework for Evaluating Teacher Resilience



Research Approach

This study adopts a quantitative approach in the collection and analysis of the data. Quantitative research methods are concerned with collecting and analyzing data that is structured and can be represented numerically (Goertzen, 2017). It aims to quantify the data and generalize findings from a sample of studies from varied perspectives (Ghanad, 2023).

Methodology

Sampling

Two sampling methods, including convenience and snowball sampling, were used in gathering data for the study. Rahi (2017) describes convenience sampling as a data collection process where the research population is effortlessly reachable to the researcher. As indicated by Simkus (2022), researchers use this method to select participants because of their physical proximity or availability at a given time and their willingness to participate. Snowball sampling was also used to access the target population (teachers) through referrals from existing participants of the study.

Research Population

The population for this study consisted of 150 language teachers selected from four diverse geographical contexts, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ghana. The participants represented varying years of professional experience as well as different educational contexts to reflect hetero-

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geneity in their experiences and capture a broad perspective on teacher resilience.

Data Collection

A survey was used as the main source of data collection in this study. The survey was created and distributed electronically through Qualtrics, comprising closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were made up of Likert scale questions and were developed based on three components of the conceptual framework: personal attitudes and mindset, support systems, workload, and environment. They were all positively worded questions that allowed resilience to be measured in the same direction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 indicated higher resilience.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey data were primarily analyzed in SPSS using One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This statistical technique is performed when the researcher is interested in testing for differences among groups on a dependent variable. Using this statistical technique, the mean differences of the three dimensions of resilience were calculated to facilitate interpretation and comparison.

Findings

Data were gathered from language teachers teaching in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Ghana for the purpose of identifying how the three factors discussed earlier influence their resilience. Table 1 (next page) shows the distribution of the demographics of the respondents.

As indicated in the Table 1, the respondents from the USA constitute 22.1% of total responses, Canada 25%, Ghana 35%, and the UK 18%. The respondents included people of different sexes, including 35.9% male, 61.3%female, and a total of 2.8% of people of other sexes. They also included teachers with different levels of education, including .7% of teachers with a doctorate, 31.7% of teachers with a master's, 38.7% of teachers with a bachelor's, 8.5% of teachers with associate degrees, among others. Additionally, the teachers had varied teaching experiences ranging from 1 year to more than 10 years in teaching languages such as English, French, and Spanish.

Results from the Analysis

Several processes were involved in analyzing the data. First, data collected on the three dimensions of resilience were computed to determine the total values for each dimension. The means were then calculated using One-way ANOVA.

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Table 1

Respondent Demographics

Demographic Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Countries of Participants	USA	31	22.1
	Canada	35	25.0
	Ghana	49	35.0
	Uk	25	17.9
	Total	140	100
Gender	Male	51	35.9
	Female	87	61.3
	Non-binary / third gender	2	1.4
	Other	2	1.4
	Total	142	100
Level of Education	High school graduate diploma or equivalent	18	12.7
	Some college but no degree	11	7.7
	Associate degree		
	Bachelor's	12	8.5
	Master's degree	55	38.7
	Doctoral degree	45	31.7
	Total	1	.7
		142	100
Teaching Experience	1-5	62	44
	6-10	41	29.1
	10+	38	27
	Total	141	100

Table 2

Total Dimensions of Resilience by Country

		Descriptives					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Personal Attributes and Mindset	USA	31	7.1935	3.38053	.60716	5.9536	8.4335
	Canada	34	4.2941	3.87321	.66425	2.9427	5.6455
	Ghana	42	5.9762	3.87920	.59857	4.7673	7.1850
	UK	25	5.0800	3.63914	.72783	3.5778	6.5822
	Total	132	5.6591	3.83003	.33336	4.9996	6.3186
Support systems	USA	31	4.4839	3.41439	.61324	3.2315	5.7363
	Canada	34	3.0294	2.72458	.46726	2.0788	3.9801
	Ghana	41	4.2927	3.44415	.53789	3.2056	5.3798
	UK	25	5.3200	3.38772	.67754	3.9216	6.7184
	Total	131	4.2061	3.31133	.28931	3.6337	4.7785
Workload & Environment	USA	31	3.5806	2.30614	.41419	2.7347	4.4265
	Canada	34	3.2059	2.15715	.36995	2.4532	3.9585
	Ghana	40	5.4500	3.84274	.60759	4.2210	6.6790
	UK	25	3.1200	2.04776	.40955	2.2747	3.9653
	Total	130	3.9692	2.94639	.25842	3.4579	4.4805

From the table above, it can be seen that the respondents from the USA demonstrated higher resilience with regard to the dimension of personal attributes and mindset, with a mean of 7.1. On the contrary, the respondents from Canada recorded the lowest mean of 4.3 in this dimension. With the dimension of support systems for teachers, respondents from the UK recorded the highest mean of 5.3, with the least being 3.0 for the language teachers in Canada. Moreover, the dimensions of workload and environment also show a highest mean of 5.4 for the respondents from Ghana, with the least being 3.1 for the respondents from the UK.

Furthermore, a look at the between-groups mean below in Table 3 on the next page shows a p-value of .016, a value higher than the alpha level of .05. This value shows a statistical significance and indicates that a mean difference exists between the groups. The differences in means suggest that differences exist in the dimensions of resilience analyzed among the respondents.

Moreover, the total resilience for each of the groups was calculated by adding the values for the three dimensions. Table 4 shows a total mean of 15.3 for the respondents from the USA, with the least being 10.5 for the respondents from Canada. These figures indicate that the respondents from the USA demonstrated high resilience in their responses among all the groups surveyed.

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Table 3

ANOVA Table for Statistical Significance of the Dimensions of Resilience

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Attributes & Mindset	Between Groups	148.945	3	49.648	3.585	.016
	Within Groups	1772.714	128	13.849		
	Total	1921.659	131			
Support systems	Between Groups	80.795	3	26.932	2.544	.059
	Within Groups	1344.640	127	10.588		
	Total	1425.435	130			
Workload & Environment	Between Groups	130.230	3	43.410	5.527	.001
	Within Groups	989.647	126	7.854		
	Total	1119.877	129			

Table 4

Total Resilience for Each Group of Respondents

Descriptives								
Resilience								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
.71(GH)	43	15.0000	8.54122	1.30252	12.3714	17.6286	1.00	36.00
1.00 (CDA)	34	10.5294	6.28242	1.07743	8.3374	12.7215	3.00	23.00
1.14 (USA)	31	15.2581	6.44447	1.15746	12.8942	17.6219	5.00	27.00
1.39(UK)	25	13.5200	5.51604	1.10321	11.2431	15.7969	4.00	21.00
Total	133	13.6391	7.19463	.62385	12.4051	14.8731	1.00	36.00

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A test for statistical significance between the groups for resilience yielded a p-value of 0.022. Since this value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and infer that there are statistically significant differences in population means.

Table 5

A test for statistical significance between the groups

ANOVA					
Resilience					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	490.031	3	163.344	3.322	.022
Within Groups	6342.646	129	49.168		
Total	6832.677	132			

Discussion and Implications

The study examined the resilience of language teachers across four different geographical locations concurrently by using a closed-ended survey. Three dimensions of teacher resilience, including personal attributes and mindset, workload and environment, and support systems, were analyzed. A Comparison of the means for these dimensions indicated aspects where the respondents demonstrated strengths and areas where they demonstrated weaknesses.

Overall, the respondents from the US were more resilient in the area of their personal attributes and mindsets towards their jobs. Having good personal attributes and a positive mindset is an important aspect of language teaching as it directly influences the teacher's motivation for the job and the kind of learning experiences that students receive. A teacher who has a positive attitude and mindset for teaching will most likely demonstrate excellence in teaching, patience, and empathy for students, and support them to grow academically.

On the other hand, the respondents from Canada demonstrated less resilience in the aspect of personal attributes and mindsets, recording the lowest mean in the group. Recording a low personal attitude and mindset suggests a lower interest in teaching. Such a situation may stem from several factors that have been left unaddressed for a considerable length of time. Low personal attributes and negative mindsets toward teaching can lead to a lack of enthusiasm for teaching and can lower the quality of instruction. Such teachers may also struggle to connect with their learners or care for their learning needs and ultimately lower their learning outcomes. Therefore, addressing a poorer attitude and mindset for teaching is important for promoting teaching and improving learning outcomes.

Regarding support systems, respondents from the UK showed higher resilience in this area. Having a strong support system is very beneficial, especially for teachers who are new to the profession. Having support is key in helping teachers access necessary resources, feel a sense of belonging, receive advice, and get emotional support. Support systems can come from colleagues, school leadership, counselors, friends, family, and others, which is essential for professional growth, emotional well-being, and effective teaching and teacher success. On the contrary,

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the respondents from Canada recorded low resilience in support systems. This indicates that they receive minimal help that supports them in doing their jobs. This could account for their lower attitude and mindset toward teaching.

Additionally, in terms of workload and environment, respondents from Ghana showed more resilience than other groups in this aspect. The impact of workload and environment on teachers can be profound when these conditions do not favor teachers. Teachers with a moderate workload can better engage with their students, manage student behaviors, and teach effectively. They may not feel overwhelmed, as excessive work can cause burnout or stress. Likewise, working in a good environment improves teachers' ability to function effectively and improves their well-being. Understanding how these three dimensions influence teachers' overall resilience has implications for school districts, leaders, and teachers in language education. Recognizing where teachers excel in their duties and where they struggle is important for highlighting key areas to focus on when designing professional development for teachers. Knowing areas where teachers show resilience and weakness is also beneficial for making policy changes or putting in place measures that mitigate their challenges and support their growth. In teacher education, knowing the dynamics of other teachers' resilience helps them to shape their own teaching selves to become better teachers.

Strategies for Sustaining Teacher Resilience

Several strategies can be adopted by language teachers to maintain their resilience. At the individual level, teachers may use reflective journals to record daily teaching experiences and reflect upon successes and challenges they encounter. Consistent reflection upon what goes well and what does not is useful for creating self-awareness and allowing teachers to adjust to different situations. Reflective journals have been particularly effective in encouraging reflective thought. They provide inspiration and motivation to teachers who use them to reflect on past experiences that were successful or meaningful to them, thereby increasing their desire to continue teaching (Lindroth, 2015).

Emotionally, practicing mindfulness and managing stress can be used as an important strategy for regulating teachers' emotions and sustaining their well-being. Practicing mindfulness involves being intentionally aware of oneself, experiences, and putting aside emotions or thoughts. Mindfulness helps in becoming fully present at a place and becoming conscious of what is going on in the body, mind, and the present environment (Hanh & Weare, 2017). Mindfulness practices have been successful in improving psychological goals and learning goals relating to language learning (Zeilhofer, 2023). Mindfulness allows teachers to be active in the execution of their duties by reducing anxiety and emotional exhaustion.

Teacher education programs need to move beyond focusing entirely on pedagogical education and development to incorporate coursework on stress management, work-life balance, well-being, and emotional regulation to equip teachers with skills to navigate the realities of the teaching profession. Emphasizing the psychological and emotional aspects as important components of teacher education is necessary for positioning new teachers to regulate themselves and their emotions in unpredictable circumstances involving frustration, exhaustion, and disengagement with the profession. As asserted by Pozo-Rico et al. (2023), effective teacher education builds resilience and strengthens teachers' capacity to withstand challenges arising from professional practice. Furthermore, building positive interpersonal relationships in one's work environment is also useful for sustaining resilience, especially for new teachers. New teachers who establish a relationship of mentorship with experienced teachers will be able to minimize

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their challenges through the advice and directions they receive from the experienced teachers.

At the institutional level, school leaders can sustain teacher resilience by not overwhelming teachers with workload. Assigning reasonable class sizes with realistic instructional expectations will reduce burnout and increase teacher efficiency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, language teachers, both new and experienced, go through various forms of challenges at a particular point in their jobs. While many are able to regroup themselves and overcome the adversities they face, some fail to withstand the challenges, leading to burnout, confusion, and even attrition. Therefore, understanding the factors responsible for language teacher challenges and putting in place measures to resolve them is crucial for building teacher resilience and supporting successful teaching careers. This is because resilient teachers are able to bounce back from setbacks and maintain their motivation and energy levels (Li, 2023). As indicated by Mullen et al. (2021), resilience is about showing optimism, bouncing back from adversity, or bettering oneself through challenges. Beyond professional successes, supporting teachers to thrive in their difficult moments has implications for promoting positive relationships with students and promoting students' overall learning outcomes. This is because resilient teachers can make the right instructional decisions, select the right resources, teach effectively, and support struggling students. Therefore, school administrators, policymakers, and all stakeholders of language education need to integrate developing teacher resilience as an important component of all language education in all language learning contexts by looking beyond resilience as an individual responsibility and putting in place support systems to help address the ongoing teacher shortages and the higher levels of teacher attrition.

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Derrick Adjei Kankam is a PhD candidate studying Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum with a concentration in World Languages Education and an instructor at University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. He has taught French for several years at the College and high school levels. His research interests include issues of identity representation in language education, teacher resilience, classroom assessment techniques, motivation, and inclusive education.

Juliana Fosu is an Assistant Lecturer at the Faculty of Media Technology and Liberal Studies at Takoradi Technical University in Ghana. She has a passion for teaching languages and culture at different levels of education. Her research explores language pedagogy, cultural studies, and teachers' professional efficiency.