

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Language Teaching

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Abstract: This Element aims to elucidate the concept of language teacher agency by exploring the ‘what’ question, offering major conceptualisations of agency and explaining how they shape the way we approach teacher agency. The authors then continue with the ‘why’ question, and elaborate on the reasons language teacher agency matters, based on a discussion of the varied purposes of teacher agency at multiple levels. They also acknowledge that teacher agency does not operate alone, and examine how it intersects with such concepts as teacher identity, emotion, belief, and knowledge. Based on this, they identify ways to promote teacher agency through making changes to contexts and/or actors. They then introduce the concept of collective agency and propose a multilayered model based on an illustrative study. The Element ends with a call for a *trans*-perspective on understanding language teacher agency so as to facilitate the professional development of language teachers.

Keywords: language teacher agency, multilayered model, professional development, collective agency, trans-perspective

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Contents

1 Introduction	1
2 What Is Agency?	3
3 Why Teacher Agency Matters	12
4 Teacher Agency Intersecting with Other Key Constructs	23
5 What Can Be Done to Enhance Language Teachers' Sense of Agency?	37
6 The Significance of Collective Agency	43
7 Advancing a <i>Trans</i> -perspective in Language Teacher Agency Research	53
References	56