ALTER(N)ATIVE LITERACIES:
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS’ PRACTICES WITH CULTURALLY
AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS IN
ONE FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN ONTARIO

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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ALTER(N)ATIVE LITERACIES: ELEMENTARY TEACHERS’ PRACTICES WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS IN ONE FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN ONTARIO
Master of Arts, 2009
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Abstract

This case study was conducted in one elementary French-language school in Ontario with 1 administrator, 4 teachers and their culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Through the integration of bhabha’s (1994) notion of Third space, multiple literacies theory (Cummins, 2001; Masny 2009) and by drawing on interviews, observations, and students’ work samples, I conceptualise an alter(n)ative literacies framework to address growing diversity in French-language schools. The term alter(n)ative is developed to express the intertwined benefit of expanding traditional notions of literacy to include alternative language practices and the potential alter-ative effect of re-envisioning the resources children bring to their literacy and language development at school. This thesis argues that teachers can critically (re)interpret official policies concerning French-language schools in order to effectively foster students’ alter(n)ative literacies development. In doing so, teachers affirm the plurality of students’ multiple identities as a foundation for their participation within evolving cosmopolitan franco-ontarian communities.
Acknowledgements

It seems only fitting to me that while I write these words of acknowledgement after I have written my conclusion, they appear at the very beginning of my thesis. Before anything else is said, I first want to express my thanks to the many people who have contributed not only to the completion of this research, but also to shaping my experience as a graduate student and to fueling my desire to continue engaging questions that have emerged along the way. I am thankful for the École Cosmopolite community and in particular, each of the core participants who welcomed me into their classrooms over the six months of this study. It has been a privilege to learn alongside each of you and I remain grateful for your willingness to share your experiences candidly and to provide feedback on my observations and reflections.

This research would not have been possible without the financial support of SSHRC and OGS, as well as the William Pakenham Fellowship from OISE and funding from Massey College. In addition, it has been an indescribable gift to be enveloped in the chrysalis of the Massey community as I wrestled through the process of leaving the elementary classroom as a teacher to embracing a new identity as a graduate student at OISE. I have found many kindred spirits among you and I continue to be thankful that the relationships that formed within the walls of the College extend far beyond them, too.

To l’équipe au CRÉFO, je vous apprécie énormément. Thank you to each of you for warmly welcoming me into your community and inviting me into countless conversations that have shaped this research and sustained me in the process. Dr. Kehra Taleb, thank you for insisting that I apply to OISE and for introducing me to Diane and
Normand in the first place. You have been a wonderful part of this whole adventure. And, I am especially thankful for Dr. Diane Farmer, la directrice du CRÉFO at OISE. It has been an absolute pleasure to learn from you through my work as a research assistant and now as a friend. I cannot say thank you enough for your daily encouragement and for reading my thesis with such enthusiasm and care.

To family and friends, your support continues to overwhelm me. Mom, you read my very first attempts to express myself in pictures and letters as a child and you have faithfully read everything I have written since then. I thank you for always lovingly editing my work – and even more, I thank you for shaping my life story with such devotion. Dad, I trace my fascination with family literacy and language practices back to you. You have taught me that reading and writing take many shapes and forms – and, I have come to treasure all of them as I do you. My fiancé Michael, your love and support make it possible for me to envision alter(n)ative possibilities for our lives and our community. Joy, I am thankful that the ties of sisterhood weave our lives together. Aeri, Ali, Aneesh, Elaine, Karen, Marc, Nancy and Sylvia, you have become family.

To my committee member, Dr. James (Jim) Cummins, I am thankful for your interest in this research project from start to finish and for your feedback and encouragement all along the way.

To Dr. Normand Labrie, my supervisor - thank you for guiding me with wisdom and grace over the past 2 years. I could not be where I am now without your support and insight. Thank you for fostering my alter(n)ative practices in this inquiry - in the process, you have allowed this experience to be an alter-ative one for me.
Dedication

To my parents,

Chandreswar and Marty Toyoko Prasad
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Chapter One:
Setting the Context

In this first chapter, I contextualize my research by providing a brief description of the evolving linguistic portrait of Canada including anglophones, francophones and an increasingly diverse group of allophone citizens. Then, I locate myself within this qualitative study by unpacking my own CLD heritage and my multiple identities as a Canadian student, teacher and researcher. After defining key terms for this study, I then outline the research questions that have guided my inquiry.

Introduction

In 2003, the federal government launched a strategic plan to foster immigration to francophone minority communities. By 2020, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) projects increasing francophone immigration targets from 8,000 to 10,000 individuals annually. This strategic recruitment of immigrants to French minority communities is transforming the face of Canadian francophone communities. French-language schools in Canada, outside of Quebec, must engage not only with the challenges of cultivating French language and culture in minority contexts, but also increasingly with issues surrounding the integration of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. This thesis examines the inclusion of CLD learners within French-language elementary schools in Ontario and in particular, teachers’ perspectives on and practices to support such students’ multiple literacies development in one school in Toronto.

Teachers play an important role in translating educational policies into practice with their students. Teachers negotiate between the theoretical worlds of policy and
curricula and the quotidian realities of CLD students within their classrooms. As immigration trends continue to contribute to the diversification of student populations in francophone minority communities, it is important for researchers and educators to understand both the challenges and resources that CLD learners bring to their learning communities in order to help all learners grow and succeed academically and personally.

Throughout this study, I have observed and analysed particularly how elementary teachers in one French-language school in Ontario are responding to the needs of CLD learners through school-based literacy instruction. The Early Reading Strategy Report (2003) highlights that children learning to read in French within francophone minority communities face additional challenges, than do their anglophone counterparts in majority English schools, due to limited exposure to the French language outside of the classroom and a lack of leveled texts appropriate for the franco-ontarian context. The challenges before CLD students in French-language schools are even greater given their need to develop literacy practices in French at school while maintaining diverse home language practice(s) within an English dominant society. As the following literature review chapter details, little research has examined the subjectivities of CLD students in French-language minority schools. As such, this study has sought to engage in dialogue with educators in franco-ontarian schools to develop an explanatory framework to support inclusive elementary literacy instruction in French-language schools that responds to the complex learning needs of increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse students.
Context

Political Divisions: Anglophones / Francophones and In-Between Allophones

According to the 2006 Canadian census, there has been a sharp increase in the Canadian population who do not have English or French as their first language. In fact, one in five Canadians is *allophone*¹ and this heterogeneous population reported speaking more than 200 different languages. The rise in this culturally and linguistically diverse allophone population is largely attributed to the growing immigration of people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French: four out of five immigrants to Canada are allophones. As the same time, it is important to note that a proportion of immigrants who speak other first languages come from “francophone” countries. That is, for example, some immigrants who speak Arabic as their first language, have some knowledge of French as an official language of schooling from their country of origin. In major urban centres in Ontario, some schools report that their students speak more than 75 different languages at home (Early Reading Expert Panel, 2003). Research regarding the integration of CLD allophone learners in mainstream majority English classrooms has received greater attention over the last 20 years (Au, 1998; Auerbach, 1993; Delpit, 1995; Gregory, 1997; Gregory & Williams, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 2000, 2005) and more specifically within the Canadian context (Coelho, 2004; Corson, 2001; Jim Cummins, 2001; J Cummins, et al., 2005; Feuerverger, 1994; Feuerverger & Richards, 2007; Iannacci, 2006). The Ontario Ministry of Education’s release of *Many Roots: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom* (2005) demonstrated its recognition of

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¹ The term *allophone* is used to describe individuals for whom neither English nor French are their mother tongue.
the need to support Ontario educators in building inclusive classroom communities in which CLD students can grow and thrive academically and personally. While this document underlines the critical importance of validating students’ home languages in order to support their academic success in English majority schools, it remains silent about support for CLD allophone children in French first or second language education programs. This absence is critical given the Canadian government’s commitment to recruit and to settle francophone immigrants successfully in francophone minority communities outside of Quebec. This twofold strategic commitment on the part of the federal government augments the growing linguistic and cultural diversity within French-language schools. This study aims to contribute to the growing research on ethnocultural diversity in francophone minority communities and in particular, to teachers’ inclusive instructional practices in the French-language minority schooling context.

The increase of CLD allophone learners in French language schools adds multiple complexities to the mandate of reproducing the French language and francophone culture. CLD allophone learners acquire a double, if not triple, minority status within French-language schools where they are becoming both a linguistic and a cultural minority within an official francophone minority in Canada (Gérin-Lajoie, 1997).

**Complexities of Social and Cultural Integration in Francophone Minority Communities (FMC)**

In his literature review of more than 50 studies concerning francophone immigration in minority communities since 1995, Thomassin (2008) highlights that while the theme of integration recurs throughout existing literature, researchers have focused largely on economic factors rather than cultural aspects of integration, and on pre-
immigration factors rather than on the daily lived experiences of immigrants within francophone minority communities. French-language schools are key sites for cultural reproduction and preservation in francophone minority communities and consequently for immigrant integration (Gérin-Lajoie, 1997). In New Brunswick, Boucharma (2008) has noted that the absence of educational policy regarding the integration of immigrants in French-language schools has led educators to develop teaching practices of their own initiative to meet the needs of their CLD students.

This study examines how CLD allophone learners are constructed through language and educational policy in Ontario and adopts an ethnographic approach to examine how elementary teachers’ in one franco-ontarian school are translating such policies into practice within their classroom spaces. It is situated within the field of New Literacy Studies, where theoretical and pedagogical frameworks have been developed by a number of researchers and research groups that address various aspects of literacy and types of learners. By means of interviews with teachers and classroom observation, it aims at understanding teachers’ views and literacy instruction practices in order to move towards a conceptualisation of an alter(n)ative pluri-literacies framework that integrates the mandate of French-language schools to promote French language and culture, while at the same time, values CLD allophone learners’ home languages and cultural practices.

**Personal Location**

The researcher is the primary instrument in any form of qualitative inquiry: s/he shapes both the gathering and analysis of the data. Merriam (1998) emphasizes that the sensitivity of the researcher – his or her intuition – plays a critical role in the qualitative
case study research because the aim of qualitative research is not to measure but to uncover and explain the nuances of rich and complex narratives. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) explain, my goal as a qualitative researcher is to “do what anthropologists, social scientists, connoisseurs, critics, oral historians, novelists, essayists and poets throughout the years have done… emphasize, describe … compare, portray, evoke images and create, for the reader or listener the sense of having been there” (p. 149). Through this qualitative case study, I engaged educators working in the franco-ontarian minority context and we dialogued about issues of in/ex-clusion, diversity and identity formation within francophone minority schools in order to develop an explanatory framework that comprehends teachers’ tensions between policy and practice and offers a lens for seeing and enacting alternative inclusive pedagogical practices.

My experiences as a tri-cultural Canadian and as a teacher contribute to my sensitivity as a qualitative researcher and my interest in and concern for the in/ex-clusion of CLD learners within the Canadian schooling context. In particular, the research questions for this study originally emerged out of my reflective practice over 3 years as a tri-cultural Canadian elementary English language and literacy teacher in a French international school. Through my classroom practice, I had the privilege of working with many CLD children and their families. My desire to understand how elementary French-language teachers in Ontario can support alter(n)ative literacies in the classroom has grown out of seeing young CLD students develop literacy skills and practices in multiple languages and across multiple modes during their elementary years through collaboration among teachers, students and their families.
In addition, my experience working in a French International school allowed me to become familiar with the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) and its useful distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism:

Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society. Mutililingualism may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school, or education system ... Beyond this, the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other people... he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. In different situations, a person can call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor. (p. 4)

The European Language Framework advocates that students be encouraged to develop a pluri-linguistic repertoire in which all linguistic abilities are affirmed. This (re)conceptualisation of students’ plurality of languages as resource resonates with me as a teacher, and with a number of researchers in the Canadian context who advocate for building students’ language awareness and welcoming home languages into traditionally monolingual classrooms (Armand, 2009; Cummins, 2009a, 2009b; Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Masny, 2009; Toohey, 2009).

I have chosen to report the findings from this study mainly in English with participant quotes in their original French. In addition, the inter-chapter following the analysis chapters, includes a French poem that I composed using the transcripts of
participant interviews and focus group discussion. My language choices to represent the findings of this case study in both English and French, and through the alternative genre of poetry are motivated not only by the fact that English is my first language, and the research participants teach in a francophone context but also because I situate my conceptualisation of alter(n)ative literacies as contributing to the dialogue within the field of New Literacy Studies (NLG, 1996) in English and the more recent emergence in Canadian francophone research on pluri-literacies development and Multiple Literacies Theory (Masny, 2009). I hope that this study will stimulate further discussion of inclusive literacy practices for all learners – anglophone, francophone and allophone – in Canadian classrooms.

**Key Definitions**

The purpose of the following section is to define *key concepts* that frame this study and guide the collection of data and its analysis. I begin by deconstructing the census category *allophone* and in so doing, define the terms *diversity* and *inclusion* for this study. Subsequently, I explain my use of the terms *policy* and *teachers’ perspectives*. These definitions clarify terms within the subsequent research questions that guide this study.

*Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD), Allophone, Diversity and Inclusion*

Like Heydon and Iannacci (2008) and Herrera and Murry (2005), I use the term *culturally and linguistically diverse* (CLD) to describe students who might otherwise be labeled as second or additional language learners. The construct “CLD students” has been proposed as an asset-oriented conceptualisation of students who do not come to school
already proficient in the language of the instruction. The term CLD foregrounds the cultural and linguistic resources that such learners bring with them and can contribute to their communities of learning. A number of factors contribute to the rise of CLD students in French language schools. The aim of this research is to support teachers in their work of scaffolding CLD learners’ pluri-literacies development.

The original Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) recognized the contribution of non-British and non-French cultural groups to Canada’s linguistic and cultural identity. Yet, because such groups had only loosely been defined as a tangential “third force” or “third element” (1969, p. 10) within Canada, the RCBB did not have any statistics upon which to make accurate estimates of their presence and contributions to Canadian social realities. In their final report on “The Other Ethnic Groups”, the RCBB clearly expressed that

linguistic variety is unquestionably an advantage, and its beneficial effects on the country are priceless. We have constantly declared our desire to see all Canadians associating in a climate of equality, whether they belong to the Francophone or Anglophone cultural groups. Members of ‘other ethnic groups’... must enjoy these same advantages and meet the same restrictions. Integration, with respect for both the spirit of democracy and the most deep-rooted human values, can engender healthy diversity within a harmonious and dynamic whole. (p. 14)

The RCBB sought a term to describe individuals from other cultural backgrounds who had neither English nor French as a first language. Professor Jean Darbelnet proposed the term “allophone” as the umbrella category for Canadians who spoke first languages other than Canada’s two official languages. He reconstructed the term from the French “allogène” which refers to people “d’une origine diffrérente de celle de la population autochtone, et installé tardivement dans le pays” (Robert, 1993, p. 51) and the English
use of the suffix “-phone” to denote speaker (i.e., anglophone - English speaker; francophone - French speaker) (Makey, W., personal communication, June 23, 2009). In retrospect, Darbelnet’s application of the French “allogène” in the Canadian context would have applied to all citizens who were not members of Canada’s first nations peoples - English, French and other language backgrounds. Instead, the term was used to separate people who spoke languages other than Canada’s recognized official languages English and French.

Makey originally opposed the term “allophone” as a sociocultural language category because within the field of French linguistics, the term allophone means “one of several similar speech sounds belonging to a phoneme. Each allophone is the form of the phoneme used in a specific context” (Robert, 1993, p. 69). Nonetheless, the term allophone became a heuristic category in the 1970s and 1980s for which Canadian census data could be gathered to track Canada’s linguistic duality and at the same time its cultural diversity. Since its appropriation into official language discourse in Canada, the term has also been applied in other linguistically diverse contexts governed by policies of official bilingualism (McConnell, G., personal communication, June 23, 2009).

From a post-colonial theoretical perspective, the term allophone creates a homogenizing, essentialist categorization of difference for all Canadians who have a non-official language as their mother tongue. The sense of other-ing, in Spivak’s (1988) terms, inherent in the label allo-(other-)phone renders it problematic: individuals in Canada who do not speak English or French as a first language are reduced into one group that is described as “other” than official; they are defined by deficit because of their lack of an official first language. According to the 2006 Canadian census, nearly 20
percent of Canadians are allophones and over 200 languages are included within this category. A diversity of linguistic and cultural experiences are represented under the term allophone. *Diversity* in this sense is used to describe multiple, heterogeneous, individual characteristics and experiences.

Although I recognize the term allophone to be problematic for the variety of aforementioned reasons, I use the term within this study to mark a particular distinction regarding the different kinds of diversity facing francophone minority schools. I employ the term allophone to distinguish between linguistically diverse French-language rights holder students who speak different degrees and varieties of French than standard school French and CLD *allophone* students who speak home languages other than French or English. This study aims to expand discussions to acknowledge the growing diversity of home languages and cultures that allophone students bring with them into the French-language schools. I approach the concept of inclusion from a holistic perspective of integration and rather than one of mere tolerance. Davies (2008) notes this critical distinction by highlighting that tolerance presupposes that the tolerator has a negative attitude towards a phenomenon: “if we do not find anything wrong, we have nothing to tolerate” (p. 2). *Inclusion* in schools requires that diversity not simply be tolerated but rather that the complexities of difference collaboratively be examined, valued and incorporated within learning communities. Inclusive practice goes beyond a resignation to tolerate increasing diversity within the classroom to identify and integrate the resources that linguistically and culturally diverse learners bring within them as assets for their personal and collective learning.
Policy

This study reviews policy in a variety of forms: federal official language policy, provincial educational policies and school-based polices. In addition to these formal policies enacted by their respective governing bodies, individuals and communities formulate, and subscribe to personal policies. Teachers have classroom policies regarding language use and cultural inclusion within the classroom as evidenced through signs on classroom walls, through oral teacher-given directions, student-student interactions, student handbooks and work samples. Regardless of whether policy is institutional or individual, policies shape teaching practice and structure learning communities.

Teachers’ Perspectives and Pedagogical Practices

Teachers’ perspectives and beliefs shape their pedagogic practice within the classroom. Bouchamma’s (2008) findings in New Brunswick suggest that teachers’ perspectives on linguistically and culturally diverse newcomers are dichotomous: teachers either view the increasing presence of allophone students as advantageous or disconcerting. Gérin-Lajoie (2008) argues, however, that educators’ discourses on student diversity are more complex and just as multi-faceted as are their individual definitions of franco-ontarian culture. This study examines how teachers’ pluralistic perspectives vary regarding their conceptualisations of franco-ontarian culture and identity, student diversity and literacy and how their personal beliefs shape their teaching practice in the French-language minority school setting.
Research Questions

The goal of this research is to move towards a conceptualisation of an alter(n)ative literacies framework to support elementary French-language school teachers as they work with increasingly diverse student populations in minority francophone communities in Canada. This case study of ethnographic-nature concerning teachers’ views and practices within one elementary French-language school in Toronto is guided by the following interconnected research questions:

1. How are culturally and linguistically diverse allophone learners constructed through educational policy pertaining to French-language schooling in Ontario (federal language policy, provincial French-language school policies (Aménagement Linguistique) and curricula in French and English, district school board policy and local school policy)?

2. How do elementary French-language school teachers’ interpret such policies with respect to CLD learners in their classrooms?

3. What are teachers’ perspectives on the implications of CLD learners and literacy instruction in French-language schools?

4. What pedagogic strategies and resources do teachers draw on to support the multiple literacies development of CLD learners in their classes?
Chapter Two:
Language(s) and Literacy/ies:
A Literature Review

This literature review chapter is divided into five movements: first, I review the history of official languages and multiculturalism in Canada, as well as, French-language schooling in Ontario; second, I trace the (re)conceptualisation of Literacy from a singular definition concerned with the discrete skills of reading and writing towards a pluralized approach to literacies involving multiple modes and social practices. Third, with greater specificity for this case study, I examine the emergence of multiple literacies research in French and in particular, in francophone minority settings. Fourth, I analyze the recent shift from discussions of biliteracy towards a conceptualisation of “les pluri-littératies” (Dagenais & Moore, 2008). Finally, I bridge my analysis of official linguistic duality and cultural diversity with the field of new literacy studies by adopting bhabha’ notion of Third Space as an analytic lens through which French-language teachers can identify alternative pedagogical approaches to support CLD learners pluri-literacies development.

Canadian Language Context

Canada’s Official Language and Multiculturalism Policies

In 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) was established by the Government of Canada to examine three areas: bilingualism in federal offices, the role of organizations in facilitating English-French cultural relations, and opportunities for Canadians to become bilingual in English and French (Laing, 2008). The deliberations of the RCBB gave rise to the enactment of the first Official Languages Act by Canadian Parliament in 1969. The main purpose of the Act was to establish
institutional bilingualism and provide Canadians with official services in both French and English. Apart from civil servants, Canadians were not required to be bilingual but personal bilingualism was encouraged (Edwards, 1993). Canada’s linguistic duality was fortified through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, and the revised Official Languages Act of 1988. Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guaranteed official linguistic minorities the right to minority language education for their children. The provision of section 23 has allowed minority language groups to win minority school governance across Canada (Behiels, 2004).

An overview of official language policy in Canada must also consider the concurrent development of official multiculturalism. Due to opposition to the Official Languages Act from ethnic minorities and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s opposition to the conception of Canada as a bicultural country, Trudeau established a policy of official multiculturalism in 1971 (Carey, 1997; Hayday, 2005). This policy established official multiculturalism in a framework of English-French bilingualism such that Canada would have two official languages but no official culture (Edwards, 1993). Trudeau then made a federal commitment to “assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada’s official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society” (Mady, 2007, p. 730). Whereas Canada’s linguistic duality was intended to bridge English and French relations, multiculturalism endeavoured to make space for allophones (Edwards, 1993; Mady, 2007). Even though the policy of official multiculturalism recognized the contributions of linguistically and culturally diverse allophones to Canada’s identity as a multicultural nation, it is important to note that the government only guaranteed support for allophones to acquire one of Canada’s official languages – English or French, rather than both
languages. Thus, while the enactment of Article 23 of the Charter of Rights subsequently allowed francophone minorities to win governance of French language schools outside of Quebec, linguistically and culturally diverse allophones have had considerably less support for maintaining their first languages, as well as for accessing Canada’s official linguistic duality.

**French-Language Schools in Ontario**

Although the largest proportion of francophones outside of Quebec are concentrated in Ontario, the process of achieving governance of French-language schools in Ontario has been arduous (Behiels, 2004). In 1912, the Conservative government passed Regulation 17 which limited the use of French as a language of instruction to the first year of schooling up to Grade 3. Although the directive was later repealed in 1927, French-language high schools were not officially recognized under the Education Act until 1968. Ontario now has eight French-language Catholic school boards and four French-language public school boards. The latter public school boards were only established in 1998. Historically, French-language schools in Ontario have played a vital role in transmitting and preserving French language and culture for largely francophone students.

Since the 1982 enactment of article 23 of the Charter of Rights which guaranteed first language instruction to official language minorities, French-language schools have been increasingly concerned with the challenges of reproducing (standard/school) French language and culture among francophone students with varying French language competencies (Martel, 2001). Article 23 allowed significant proportions of students for
whom English was their home language to enroll in French language schools: some such students came from exogamous marriages where one parent was francophone and the other anglophone, other students’ francophone parents may have integrated within the anglophone majority and have limited French competency or no longer speak French at all (Gérin-Lajoie, 1997). Issues of linguistic heterogeneity within French-language schools consequently became defined in terms of students’ different varieties of French and their level of proficiency in opposition to the French linguistic norm of the school system and the anglophone majority context in which such schools exist.

Today, the clientele of French-language schools has further diversified to include not only francophone students and rights-holders according to article 23 of the Charter of Rights, but also anglophone students whose parents apply to have their children in the French-language school system and children whose parents have non-Canadian origins (Farmer, 2008, Gérin-Lajoie 2008, Heller, 2001). French-language minority schools today face complex challenges to respond to the pluralistic reality of the milieu in which they are located. A number of studies have recently examined the growing linguistic and cultural diversity within official francophone minority communities: most notably, Belkhodja (2008) edited a special issue of Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens which brings together a range of Canadian research under the rubric of “Immigration and Diversity in Francophone Minority Communities”. Double or triple minority allophones – linguistic, and in some cases, visible minorities, within official francophone minority communities have become the focus of closer study (Farmer & Labrie, 2008; Gérin-Lajoie, 2002, 2003, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie & Jacquet, 2008; Jacquet, Moore, & Sabatier, 2008; Makropoulos, 2004; Tanaka, November, 2005). In the fifth movement of this
chapter, I will examine more closely the literature on third space and identities as an analytical lens for this research. Before doing so, however, it is helpful to understand how the field of literacy/ies studies has come to be defined first through anglophone research and subsequently in francophone contexts.

**Literacy/ies**

**From Literacy to Multiliteracies**

The emergence of the field of New Literacy Studies over two decades ago marked the beginning of a (re)conceptualization of literacy from the decontextualised skills associated with reading and writing towards literacy as social practice. This movement away from an autonomous model towards ideological models of literacy problematizes the traditional binary opposition between Literacy and Illiteracy and has created an openness towards a plurality of linguistically and culturally diverse literacy practices (Street, 1984). Martin-Jones and Jones’ (2000) view of multilingual literacies further elucidates the connections between multilingualism and New Literacy Studies. The evolution of Hornberger’s continua of biliteracy (1990-2007) provides a heuristic framework for addressing critical multilingual literacies development for language minority learners (Hornberger, 1990, 2003, 2007; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000).

While Hornberger, Martin-Jones and Jones and Street offer important theoretical models for bi- and multilingual literacies, the pedagogical conceptualization of multiliteracies put forth by the New London Group and Cummin’s development of academic expertise are also critical to developing an alternative literacies framework to support diverse language learners’ literacy development. Masny’s multiple literacies
framework (2001, 2005) and most recent Multiple Literacies Theory integrates key theoretical and pedagogical elements to offer a multiple literacies framework for minority language learners and francophone schools (Masny, 2009; Matlais, 2008). After reviewing, theoretical and pedagogical literacies frameworks, I explore how these frameworks may be integrated to develop an inclusive pluri-literacies framework for allophone learners in French language-schooling contexts.

The reconceptualisation of Literacy from its singular form to its plural form in New Literacy Studies can be traced back to Street’s (1984) critical distinction between “autonomous” and “ideological” models of literacy and his definition of literacy to include all of the social practices associated with conceptions of reading and writing. The traditional “autonomous” model of literacy views literacy as the neutral, universal, technical skills involved in reading and writing the academic essay-text. The emergence of New Literacy studies has challenged this narrow view of literacy by recognizing that literacies vary according to their contexts: “the autonomous approach is simply imposing western conceptions of literacy on to other cultures or within a country those of one class or cultural group onto others” (Street, 2003, p. 77). The ideological model of literacy is sensitive to variance within and between different cultural literacy practices. Accordingly, literacy is ultimately about knowledge: “the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being… [Literacy] is always contested, both its meaning and its practices… [Literacies] are always rooted in a world-view” (Street, 2003, p. 78). New Literacy Studies has expanded the exploration of a plurality of literacy practices outside the school context and has invited educational practitioners and researchers alike to consider critically a
broader understanding of reading and writing across cultural contexts (Collins, 1995; Collins & Blot, 2003; Gee, 1996; Street, 2003). The conceptual shift towards literacies as multiple has problematized the traditional binary opposition of Literacy against Illiteracy (Macedo, 2000; Masny, 2005; Street, 1984). By recognizing the practice of multiple literacies outside the traditional notion of school-based literacy, New Literacy Studies critique an a-social and a-historical understanding of literacy as discrete reading and writing skills and has allowed for the emergence of more culturally sensitive literacy frameworks that incorporate bilingual and multilingual contexts, as well as, the ways in which the proliferation of information and communication technologies has transformed reading and writing practices.

Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) draw upon a sociolinguistic perspective of bilingualism and New Literacy studies to frame a critical collection of ethnographic studies on multilingual literacies. While the studies within this volume share a social view of language and literacy practices of linguistic minority groups in multilingual settings in Britain, Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) suggest their resonance with linguistic minority groups in other powerful monolingual ethos contexts. They provide a fourfold explanation for entitling this volume “multilingual literacies” rather than bilingual literacies:

1. Multilingual literacies most accurately describes the communicative repertoires of participants and the linguistic minority groups reflected in the studies.
2. Multilingual literacies encompasses the multiplicity and complexity of communicative purposes associated with the various spoken and written languages within a group’s repertoire.

3. Multilingual literacies suggests the plurality of paths to the acquisition of spoken and written languages within any linguistic minority household or local group.

4. Multilingual literacies focuses attention on the multiple ways in which people draw on and combine the codes in their communicative repertoire when they speak and write. Whereas bilingual evokes a two-way distinction between codes, multilingual indicates potential access to several codes.

While the studies within this volume highlight the ubiquity of multilingual literacy development, Martin-Jones and Jones underline the complexities confronting educators and New Literacy Studies researchers to integrate multiple languages and literacies together within the school context. Martin-Jones and Jones contribute critical insight into the multilingual spaces inhabited by allophones in French language programs in Canada. Allophone children engage in multilingual literacy practices in French and English at school, within the school’s community and the broader Canadian social context, as well as, in diverse cultural literacies at home in their heritage language(s) and through activities in other cultural and/or religious sites. In particular, Kenner’s (2000) schematic representation of the multi-layered linguistic worlds of two preschoolers offers a way of beginning to think about the multi-dimensional and multi-variant linguistic worlds of
allophone children. Kenner places the child at the centre of nested linguistic spheres emphasizing the centrality and interrelation of identity to language and literacy.

Nancy Hornberger’s afterward for Martin-Jones and Jones’ (2000) Multilingual Literacies elucidates the intersections of her continua of biliteracy with Martin-Jones and Jones definition of multilingual literacies and the studies within their collection. Hornberger (1990) has defined the term biliteracy as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around written material. An individual, a situation, and a society can be biliterate” (p. 213). Hornberger’s (1990) conception of the continua of biliteracy deemed contexts for biliteracy development successful according to the extent to which they allowed individuals to draw on the three continua of biliterate contexts, development and media:

every instance of biliteracy is situated along a series of continua that define biliterate contexts (the micro-macro, oral-literate, and monolingual bilingual continua), individual biliterate development (the reception-production, oral language-writing language, and first language-second language transfer continua), and biliterate media (the simultaneous-successive exposure, similar-dissimilar structures, and convergent-divergent scripts continua). (1990, p. 213)

The notion of continuum emphasizes balanced attention to both ends of the continuum and all the points in between. Although one can identify points on the continuum, “those points are not finite, static or discrete. There are infinitely many points on the continuum; any single point is inevitably and inextricably related to all other points and all the points have more in common than not with each other” (1990, pp. 274-275).

Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2000) proposed an expansion of the continua model which takes into account not only biliterate contexts, media and development but
also, the content of biliteracy. Biliterate content addresses the following three continua: minority-majority language, vernacular-literary usage, and contextualized-decontextualized ends. In addition, in their consideration of their research in Philadelphia’s Cambodian and Puerto Rican communities, Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester point to the need to consider critically power relations in the continua model. They argue that educational policy and practice regarding biliteracy implicitly privileges one end of the continua over the other. The purpose in highlighting power imbalances on the continua is “not to reify that power but rather to emphasize that the privilege can be transformed through critical reflection by various actors involved – educators, researchers, community members, and policy makers – of how their own everyday biliteracy practices do or do not exercise and maintain power” (p. 100). Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester’s critical consideration of transformation is particularly significant for linguistically diverse minority learners because it reveals that power and value associated with various languages is socially and culturally constructed.

Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester attribute their incorporation of power relations within their nested model of the intersecting continua of biliteracy in part to the contribution made by the New London Group (NLG) to the field of literacy studies. The New London Group (1996) set forth a pedagogy of multiliteracies with a vision for designing social futures that both incorporates the proliferation of information and communication technologies into a broader understanding of literacy and takes into account the complex negotiation of a multiplicity of discourses necessary in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, globalized societies. The NLG (1996) proposes a complex quadratic multiliteracies framework involving the following components:
situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. In brief, situated practice refers to the use of local resources from students’ life worlds, work places and public spaces; overt instruction refers to scaffolded learning and helping students develop metalanguages with which to describe their multiliteracies practices; critical framing concerns helping students engage in reflexive practice about their learning and interpretation of social and cultural contexts; and, transformed practice engages students to internalize their meaning-making process and transfer their understanding to other contexts and cultural sites. The intertextuality of these four components within New Literacy Studies’ discursive reconceptualisations of literacies and the emergence of related frameworks highlights the theoretical work that has already been invested in scaffolding multiple literacies development of CLD learners in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Cummins’ model (2001) of the development of academic expertise for linguistically diverse learners also integrates the main components of multiliteracies pedagogy. In his model, teachers empower students to examine critically power relations and engage in transformative practice by creating collaborative learning spaces which maximize cognitive engagement and identity investment. Cummins’ conceptions of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) have highlighted the significant difference between developing a functional proficiency in a language and mastering a language such that one becomes capable of fluently engaging with more cognitively demanding tasks (2001). Through his work with minority and heritage language learners, Cummins has advocated for Ruiz’s (1998) view of language-as-resource versus diversity-as-problem and examines ways in which
information and communication technologies can be utilized in powerful ways to scaffold both multiliteracies and multilingual literacies development. In particular, Cummins’ work concerning identity texts demonstrates the ways multilingual and multi-modal literacies can be used to support and engage CLD learners meaningfully across the curriculum, particularly in monolingual schooling contexts. I will return to Cummins’ notion of identity texts in Chapter 6 as one example of how Third or alter(n)ative learning spaces empower linguistically and culturally diverse students to express their multiple literacies meaningfully as individuals and contributing members of their communities.

*From Analphabétisme to les littératies*

While the development of the field of New Literacy Studies has created greater acceptance and an inclusive conceptualisation of literacy/ies as multiple and as social practice, research on multi-literacies over the past two decades has largely focused on anglo-dominant settings. For example, Gregory and Williams (2000) examination of city literacies addresses the growing polyglot mix of students who bring a diversity of linguistic and cultural experiences to their anglophone classrooms in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Over the last decade, a critical redefinition of *l’analphabétisme* towards *la littératie* has emerged in francophone contexts, Fernandez (2005) provides a detailed background in his Education for All report for UNESCO of literacy in francophone countries, situations and concepts. He underlines the linguistic specificity of francophone literacy and traces the original use of the term illiteracy, and its variants in French, *l’analphabétisme*, *illétrisme* and the *illétré*, until the 1960s as “a person, man or woman aged 15 years of age and over, who does not know how to read or write”. In 1989, Canada jettisoned negative notions of illiteracy to adopt a positive
approach founded on the benefits of “alphabétisme”. It is critical to note that until the
1990s, economic, social and cultural concerns regarding literacy pertained to (young)
adults over the age of 15; whereas, the shift, particularly within francophone scholarship,
towards the study *la littératie* and *les littératies* has engaged a broader range of
populations from early childhood throughout adulthood, enacting diverse practices to
read, write and communicate in their social worlds. In recent years within Canada in
particular, the study of multiple literacies or *les littératies* including a plurality of modes
and languages has also garnered greater attention in francophone minority and French-
language learning contexts. Masny’s (1999) pedagogical framework of *les littératies
multiples*/“multiple literacies” was first developed for an early childhood language and
literacy program for minority-language students in French-language schools in Alberta.
Masny’s (2005, 2009) adapted multiple literacies Venn diagram model promotes
personal, school-based, community, and home literacies while foregrounding critical
literacies. Masny sets forth her multiple literacies framework as an alternative beyond
Freire. By positioning herself beyond Freire, Masny evokes Freire and Macedo’s (1987)
conceptualization of literacy as reading both the world and the word, but then moves
beyond Freire’s paradigm of modernity to situate herself within a transformative
postmodern paradigm. Whereas modernity is marked by a sense of finality,
postmodernism, for Masny, heralds an evolving time and space for transformation. She
consciously employs *multiple* literacies in order to deconstruct the binary opposition
through the juxtaposition of IL/literacy and redefine postmodern literacies as socially
constructed, context-specific and deeply personal: “an individual’s reading of the world,
the word, and self in the context of home, school, and community creates possibilities to construct and reconstruct his or her way of being” (Masny, 2005, p. 177).

In addition, she incorporates aspects of additive bilingualism and global education. Additive bilingualism is purposefully incorporated to ensure that individuals achieve high levels of competence in French and English. Masny highlights from her work in French-minority language contexts that individuals often have high levels of competence in English but to maintain a high level of competence in French, partnerships are vital between home, school and community. Masny also draws on aspects of global education to draw attention to the realities that

a postmodern globalized world is one in which we situate ourselves in nonlinear time and space, one that favours high levels of technology, and one in which English has become the privileged language… minority communities must situate themselves and consider the tensions between local, traditional, and contemporary values as well as social and cultural capital that globalization engenders. (2005, p. 179)

Masny’s multiple literacies framework invites an openness towards questioning, difference, and transformative reflexivity about being and becoming.

Although Masny’s multiple literacies framework clearly supports biliteracy development for francophone students in minority settings, a number of questions arise if we interchange the minority francophone learner at the centre of this framework for a CLD allophone learner. Does this framework equally support allophone learners’ plurilingual literacy development in French, English and their diverse home languages? How does the schematic Masny’s (2005) Venn diagram represent, and perhaps even more critically, account for power relations that are similar and/or different for allophone
learners versus francophone minority learners? Cummins’ work explicitly identifies that language, literacy and learning are inextricably linked to and shaped by societal, institutional and classroom power relations. How does Cummins’ model of academic expertise address the double minority status of allophone learners in French-language schools? How does official language policy governing French-language schools allow for teachers to create identity texts with their students to support multiple literacies and the expression of a plurality of identities? How might Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester’s nested continua of biliteracy help expand an explicit pluri-literacy/ies framework for allophones learners?

**Multi-Literacies to pluri-littératies**

Within the last decade a growing number of researchers within francophone contexts in Canada, as well as, in Europe and in Africa, have begun to engage questions regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and the development and practice of multiple literacies. Masny (2001) highlights, in particular, the relationship between the evolving definition of what constitutes texts and the multimodal culture within which they are constructed in the twenty-first century. She argues that “l’écrit est un système de notation (ou de représentation), tout comme le système de notation en musique, en mathématiques, en chimie et en français” (2001, p. 14). Thus, she establishes a literacy relationship between the multidimensional process of writing and its product or representation through text. *La Culture de l’Écrit: Les défis à l’école et au foyer* (2001) brings together studies with a particular concern to address the integration of social, community and personal literacy practices across the curriculum in the francophone minority settings across Canada. While this collection is the first to engage pedagogical questions relating
to literacy development in French-language minority schools, linguistic diversity is still engaged through the binary logic between francophone minority tensions within an Anglophone majority in Canada. CLD learners remain marginal figures in such discussions.

Daniel Coste (2005) bridges emerging international research in francophone settings under the rubric of “Plurilinguisme et Apprentissages”. This collection of theoretical and practical research highlights both the breadth and depth of pedagogical issues emerging in response to growing linguistic and cultural diversity of increasingly mobile populations. A range of perspectives on plurilingualism are explored, and Simon (2005) in particular, critically examines the role of the school/teacher in creating open learning spaces in which the plurality of CLD learners’ voices can be validated and affirmed as resources for their learning and identity. She sets forth a comprehensive framework that illustrates the interwoven and collaborative roles of the school, community, and family with the individual learner to develop “un répertoire plurilingue” (Simon, 2005, p. 142). Danièle Moore (2006) further contributes to the development of a pedagogical approach to plurilingualism in her work, “Plurilinguismes et école: langues et apprentissage des langues”. Moore draws on European examples with keen attention to promote language learning and the development of students’ plurilingual competence against the backdrop of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages launched in 2001 by the Council of Europe.

In the Canadian context, Dionne and Berger (2007) bring together research on multiple literacies from linguistic, family and cultural perspectives within French-language schools. They engage questions not only concerning teachers’ preparation and
pedagogical approaches, and family and individual learners’ practices, but also methodological issues of multiple literacies research across the curriculum. Dagenais and Moore (2008) highlight the expansion of multilingual literacies research within both anglophone and francophone contexts and Canadian scholarship. Based on their work in both francophone and French immersion contexts, they advocate for the adoption of the French term “les répertoires plurilittératiés” as a heuristic lens for new literacies research and pedagogy for increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse students in a globalized knowledge economy.

Drawing on the work of Deleuze (1968; 1969; 1990) and Deleuze and Guattari (1980; 1991), and from educational research in francophone communities over the last decade, Masny (2009) consolidates her theoretical framework for les littératies multiples (TLM) for the 21st century. By way of concluding, Masny along with Waterhouse, present a case study of one CLD student, Estrella, who prior to her enrollment in a French-language school kindergarten class in Ottawa, spoke Spanish with her mother, Portuguese with her father and English with her friends. The case of Estrella reflects the experience of growing numbers of students enrolled in French-language minority schools who draw on more than one language and multiple literacy practices at school, at home and in their wider communities. Masny and Waterhouse (2009) suggest that French-language schools need to respond to growing cultural and linguistic diversity by expanding multiple literacies practices to allow students to respond creatively in potentially unanticipated ways: “Les processus créatifs permettent aux littératies d’aller au-delà des littératies multiples, de les prolonger, de les transformer et de transformer les apprenants” (p. 359). While they identify a substantive gap in minority educational
research concerning the pedagogical implications of increasing CLD learners in French-language schools, they advocate that an openness to transformative literacy practices of students like Estrella offer “une voie différente pour formuler la recherche sur le langage et les littératures et élaborer des stratégies d’enseignement et d’apprentissage de manière à offrir des possibilités et des perspectives autres sur l’apprentissage du langage et des littératures” (Masny & Waterhouse, 2009, p. 359).

Purcell-Gates (2007) also argues that research adopting a complex view of literacy as multiple and social must include questions of languages, discourses, and texts: “whose languages are privileged within the different domains of schools, workplaces, legal institutions, media and others? Which texts and discourses (and whose) are similarly privileged?” (p. 11). Within the linguistically and culturally diverse Canadian context, literacy frameworks are clearly needed not only for minority English language learners in anglophone majority schools, but also increasingly for linguistically and culturally diverse allophone students in minority francophone schools.

The following discussion proposes to begin to address this gap by exploring bhabha’s theoretical notion of Third Space as an alter(n)ative lens through which I analyze the literacy spaces and practices of teachers and students throughout this case study.
Bridging Literacies Through Third Space:
An alter(n)ative Pluriliteracies Framework

Third Space as Productive Cultural Identity Space

The notion of “third space” was first coined by post-colonial literary theorist Homi K. bhabha (1994) to describe the enunciative space of meaning that is mobilized through the intersection of two post-colonial cultural spheres: namely, the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized. The temporal act of cultural enunciation, “the place of utterance ... crossed by the différence of writing” is central to bhabha’s conceptualisation of Third Space in post-colonial literature: “It is this difference in the process of language that is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that the meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent” (pp. 52-53). bhabha’s analysis of post-colonial literature, particularly of V.S.Naipaul’s writings, reveals the complexities post-colonial figures’ encounter in the process of (re)defining themselves and articulating their hybridized identities after colonialism. It is significant that his analysis concerns the third space identity expressions of liminal figures who historically were denied the power to voice their own narratives; this enunciative process, however, is not simply a telling of a past identity, but rather the new (re)formulation of a hybridized identity, undeniably shaped by the past, articulated in the uncertain present to envision a different kind of future. According to a post-colonial paradigm, the notion of third space resists clear definition by any one cultural group, instead it functions as an in-between space of cultural ambivalence. bhabha (1994) explains,

all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation... Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself... constitutes the discursive conditions of
enunciation that ensure that all meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (pp. 54-55)

It is bhabha’s attention to the multiple significations of cultural signs and the ways in which such signs can be (re)read through the passage of third space that I find particularly germane for my critical reading of language and education policies pertaining to the integration of linguistically and culturally diverse immigrant children in French-language schools: Third space offers liminal figures the possibility to engage and appropriate language(s) of power to articulate or - énoncer - in new ways their pluralistic identities. Allophones have historically occupied an ambivalent in-between space under Canada’s official linguistic duality. Moreover, linguistically and culturally diverse allophone learners inhabit liminal spaces within francophone minority communities and in particular, in French-language minority school classrooms.

I use Third Space as an analytic lens in this study through which to examine elementary French-language school teachers’ perspectives on and literacy instruction practices with CLD allophones, and to conceptualise an inclusive alter(n)ative literacy/ies framework for franco-ontarian minority settings. Over the past 5 years, third space theory (bhabha, 1994) has been adopted within literacy research as a way of examining spaces “in-between” two or more competing discourses or literacy conceptualisations (Cook, 2005; Levy, 2008, Moje et al., 2004; Pal & Kelly, 2005). In particular, Caron-Réaume (2007) has applied the notion of third space as a theoretical frame for analysing mother tongue biliteracy practices in French and English of participants from two Grade nine language/literacy classes in a minority French-language secondary school. Drawing on Moje’s (2004) work on developing third space literacy across the curriculum at the
Caron-Réaume (2007) advocates that “third space” offers a productive lens through which to examine inherited colonial illiteracy in the francophone minority context of Winfield-Wessex, Ontario.

I frame my analysis in this study in response to bhabha’s (1994) post-colonial theorisation of Third Space and in alignment with Canada’s identity as a post-colonial settler nation (see Hutcheon, 1988; Soderlind, 1991). In a post-colonial and post-modern era of globalization, Canada’s historiography must comprehend its histories of colonization by the English and by the French, as well as the narratives of its CLD allophones (First Nations peoples, immigrants, refugees, etc.). Thus, I seek to build on Caron-Réaume’s (2007) contribution to third space theorisation as it pertains to francophone minority settings by examining how elementary teachers can foster the inclusive learning environments in which CLD learners’ multiple third space identities coalesce productively. A pluralistic literacies framework can allow us to move beyond facile traditional binary oppositions between I/Other, Us/Them, and anglophone/francophone toward a more inclusive also-and approach to language and identity within classrooms. I purposefully construct the term alter(n)ative literacy/ies to make explicit the ways in which words or signs can be read differently: I seek to draw out the multiple meanings of the word alter(n)ative as in alternatives or different, legitimate choices and options to traditional mainstream school literacies, as well as, to evoke the sense of alter-ative change or empowering practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners in French-minority settings (Bochner, 2000). I invoke the poetic function of language by placing the (n) within parentheses, both to signify and to visually highlight the transformative nature of bhabha’s in-between notion of third space – what
happens to our reading of the word and in the Freirian sense, of the world, when we look deeply into alternative options? By putting the letter “n” of the word alternative in-between parentheses, I suggest that the effect can be alter-ative – teachers can create alter(n)ative spaces in their classroom communities that empower all members, including CLD students and their families, to engage meaningfully by using their multiple literacies to articulate their whole identities.

I draw on the notion of pluri-literacies to foreground my recognition that school literacy instruction in the elementary years necessarily draws on both the autonomous sense of literacy as the skills associated with reading and writing texts and the ideological sense of a plurality of literacies bearing expression through diverse social practices. Reading research generally differentiates between the elementary primary years from kindergarten through Grade two and then the junior years from Grade three and beyond: primary students develop emergent, early and fluent literacy skills as they learn to read and write during this first stage; then, junior students must increasingly read a multiplicity of genres in order to learn across the curriculum in the years beyond Grade three. This study takes this distinction into consideration and examines French literacy instruction at the primary level within one franco-ontarian school in the highly diverse urban centre of Toronto. Inclusive teaching practice is defined by the creation of collaborative spaces in which all learners can succeed academically, socially and personally. Garcia (2007) advocates that a pluri-literacies approach includes “not only literacy continua with different interrelated axes but also an emphasis on literacy practices in sociocultural contexts, the hybridity of literacy practices afforded by new technologies, and the increasing interrelationship of semiotic systems” (p. 217). My
conceptualization of an alter(n)ative pluri-literacies framework serves as an analytical lens through which I examine, along with teacher participants, how all learners can be empowered to draw upon diverse resources from their multi-layered linguistic and cultural worlds to support their pluri-literacies development in the minority French-language schooling context.
Chapter Three:
Research Design

This chapter describes the strategic design of this research project to gather and analyse data in response to my questions regarding the inclusion of CLD learners in French-language elementary classrooms as set out in Chapter 1 and situated within the broader research context in Chapter 2. First, I begin by explaining the research strategy guiding my decision to conduct a school case study at École Cosmopolite and the recruitment of core teacher participants and their students. Then, I justify my choice of methods including policy analysis, semi-structured interviews, extended school/classroom observation, collection of students’ work samples and a final teacher focus group. After outlining data collection procedures, I describe my analysis process and representation of emerging themes through a multi-vocal poem. The culminating poem forms an inter-chapter between the analysis chapters and the conclusion as a way of representing the possibilities of bridging alter(n)ative literacies in classroom and in research practice.

Research Strategy

In response to the four questions framing this research project, I seek to construct an explanatory framework for teachers’ to support the pluri-literacies development of CLD learners in French-language elementary schools in Ontario. The questions grew out of recent policies from the Ontario’s Ministry of Education pertaining to the linguistic and cultural mandate of French-language schools and tensions teachers experience enacting such policies when confronted with increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in their classrooms. Because my focus is on teachers’ perspectives and approaches to
literacy instruction, particularly with CLD learners, I chose to conduct this study in Toronto, a major urban centre in Ontario with a high immigrant population.

**The Case of École Cosmopolite**

According to Merriam’s (1998) definition of the case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system” (p. 12), I decided to focus my study within one school as a case study – a dynamic setting in which I could closely engage with teachers regarding their interpretation of current language and education policy mandates, and more practically, how teachers perceived their CLD students and responded to their diverse learning needs. To preserve the anonymity of participants, both the school and its participating members have been given pseudonyms. I have consciously named the school “École Cosmopolite” to evoke bhabha’s (1996) notion of vernacular cosmopolitanism from a minoritarian perspective. I also seek to draw attention to the inherent, and simultaneously, unintentional cosmopolitan nature of the school population in an age of global mobility (Farmer & Labrie, 2008; Labrie & Lamoureux, 2003; Masny 2009).

Staff and students’ reasons for working and attending École Cosmopolite are varied and complex. The school administrator underlined that the school’s population changes constantly: “on a des immigrants, des nouveaux arrivants - un gros pourcentage, et un gros roulement d’un an à l’autre. Puis, ils commencent ici. Puis, ils redéménagent en cours d’année. On a du mouvement ici.” Many immigrant parents enroll their children at École Cosmopolite upon their arrival to Toronto, and subsequently transfer their children to other schools because of the parents’ change of employment and more affordable housing. Many staff members also commute to École Cosmopolite from
outside the school community. Most teachers are not originally from Toronto; they have moved closer to the Greater Toronto Area from other cities, provinces and countries. Both staff and the students’ multi-directional trajectories coalesce within the francophone school space of École Cosmopolite. Mobility characterizes this school population. In addition to the daily flow of students and teachers to, from and within the school, from a broader perspective, transnational and inter-provincial movements are a defining feature of this school community. As of 2007, 58% of students attending École cosmopolite spoke a language other than French at home. École Cosmopolite has the highest percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse students than any other French-language public elementary school within this major urban centre. More than 57 different home languages are represented within their school population of approximately 225 students. According to the school’s on-line Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) profile, 14.6% of the school’s students are recent first generation newcomers to Canada within the last 3 years; this first generation figure is more than double the provincial average. This statistic reflects the significant role École Cosmopolite plays in helping newly arrived students and their families integrate into their new community. The linguistic and cultural diversity and mobility of student populations of this school provide a particularly rich setting in which to examine this growing reality of student diversity facing French-language elementary school teachers within the district.

At École Cosmopolite, teachers negotiate between the worlds of language policy and literacy instructional practices on a daily basis to support CLD learners in their classrooms. In addition, the small size of the school also allowed me to become familiar and integrate into the school community more quickly and deeply than a larger school
site would have a permitted. The data collection period was limited to six months during the academic year between October 2008 and March 2009. Thus, rather than a full ethnography, I describe this research as a case study of *ethnographic-nature*. Merriam (1998) qualifies that a case study of ethnographic-nature is characterised by its sociocultural interpretation; such a case study focuses on society and culture and seeks to uncover “beliefs, values and attitudes that structure behaviour of a group” (p. 12). For this case study of teachers’ beliefs and practices at *École Cosmopolite*, I focused on understanding the culture of the school community in which this case study is situated and its in/exclusion of the diverse home cultures of its student population. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), the goal of ethnography is to “re-create for the reader the shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, folk knowledge, and behaviours of some group of people” (p. 13). Throughout this study, I examined various cultural influences that shape literacy instruction and practice: the minority French-language culture of the school, the in/exclusion of diverse students’ home cultures, and the majority anglophone culture. My purpose was to uncover teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and values for linguistic and cultural diversity and to explain how their perspectives shape their teaching practice and create positive spaces particularly for CLD learners.

**Participants**

After gaining approval of the school board and the principal of *École Cosmopolite*, I recruited core teacher participants who would be willing to host me as a researcher for at least ten periods of classroom observation, as well as to participate in a semi-structured individual interview and combined teacher participant focus group. The principal introduced a number of studies that had been approved by the board and him for
the 2007-2008 academic year and invited teachers interested in this research project in particular to attend another meeting with me to discuss the project. I subsequently met with interested teachers and altogether five staff members of École Cosmopolite agreed to participate: three elementary teachers (kindergarten - Grade 3), one actualisation linguistique en français (Grade 1-6) and perfectionnement du français (Grades 1-6) teacher, and one school administrator. Although I had originally hoped to have at least one teacher from the junior level (Grade 4-6), the fact that this study generated most interest at the primary level allowed me to focus upon the early literacy development of CLD learners. Beyond these five core participants, other participants included other staff members and students at École Cosmopolite, who participated in the learning spaces within core teacher participants’ classrooms. [See Appendix A for Ethics Review Board approval and consent letters.]

**Core Teachers and the School Administrator: Five Brief Biographical Sketches**

In the following section, I introduce each of the five teachers and the school administrator by providing a brief biographical sketches of core participants this study. These narrative portraits provide an initial picture of the participants as a way of situating them within this inquiry. At the same time, however, I recognize that their identities are not fixed in time or space – their perspectives are ever-shifting and their personal trajectories and narratives continue to unfold.

**Anne-Marie: Junior-Senior Kindergarten teacher.**

Anne-Marie is a young, enthusiastic teacher from Quebec. She completed her teaching degree and a Master’s degree in Quebec and worked as an occasional teacher between her graduation and beginning a teaching position at École Cosmopolite.
Although she did not want to teach at the kindergarten level while she was completing her certification as a teacher, she was given a combined junior and senior kindergarten position upon her arrival in Toronto. She has continued at this level for the past 3 years. In addition to adjusting to working with early elementary students, Anne-Marie expressed that her greatest surprise upon arriving at École Cosmopolite was not necessarily the students’ cultural diversity but rather their linguistic diversity. From her prior experience as a teacher and a student in a small town in Quebec, it had been unimaginable that children in “French-language” schools in Ontario would not speak French – or at least that their parents’ would choose to put them into a French-language school. Within the context of her classroom, she describes herself as the minority – “je suis blanche et francophone”. Only one student in her class is not a visible minority and all of her students speak at least one other language in addition to the French they use at school. Anne-Marie explains that like many of her students, she too uses English at home. Her partner speaks Arabic and has learned English-as a second language; he does not understand or speak French and she would rather that he not learn French. She speaks French at school and on the phone with her family who lives in Quebec. She is also learning Arabic.

**Houda: Junior-Senior Kindergarten teacher.**

Houda is originally from Morocco. When she immigrated to Canada, she first lived in Montreal and was working in computer science. Teaching is her second career upon coming to Canada. Although Arabic is her first language, she completed her education in French. Prior to pursuing a full-time teaching career, she completed an initial teacher education program at a bilingual university in Ontario. She describes
English as being a third language in which “je suis pas très bonne”. She took her first teaching position at École Cosmopolite in 2007-2008. Although she was recruited to fill a middle school position, reduced enrollment led to the creation of a split Grade 7/8 class. At the same time, a new kindergarten class was opened and Houda, having less seniority, ended up with the kindergarten class. She continued with a split junior-senior kindergarten class in the 2008-2009 academic year.

**Yvette: Grade 2-3 teacher.**

Yvette is from Quebec and completed her initial teacher education in Quebec. Upon completion, she was recruited by the French-language school board and agreed to take a position at École Cosmopolite. She has been teaching for 2 years and has taught a split Grade 2/3 class for both years. She moved to Ontario directly after finishing her initial teacher education program, and it was her first experience living outside of Quebec. She identifies herself as Québécoise and a bilingual francophone. She did not feel prepared for the realities of teaching at École Cosmopolite because of its linguistic and cultural diversity. She expresses her experience living in the majority context, in the following way: “On est comme assis sur le français au Québec. On pense pas qu’il y a autre chose.” She describes the linguistic and cultural diversity of her students as “une belle richesse, mais aussi un gros défi”. Over the course of the study, she distinguished more precisely that the cultural diversity of her students helps students develop an inclusive tolerance for others and a greater global awareness, whereas the linguistic diversity posed challenges to students’ academic success. French is often a third or a fourth language among her students and so she believes that learning in French in a minority context is very difficult.
Ariana: ALF/PDF, kindergarten to Grade 6 teacher.

Ariana is originally from Albania. She has been living in Canada for 11 years. Before leaving her country of origin, she was a French-as-a-second language secondary teacher. From our initial conversation, she emphasized that “le français n’est pas ma langue.” Ariana is multi-lingual: in addition to her mother tongue, she speaks French, as well as English and Italian. She has worked with the school board for 10 years. Initially, she began working for the board as a secretary and then as an educational assistant. Subsequently, she recertified as a teacher through a one-year French-language teacher education programme in Toronto. She taught for 4 years in Grade 3 to Grade 5 and then applied to transfer to École Cosmopolite as an Actualisation linguistique en français/Perfectionnement du français (ALF/PDF) teacher. In addition to re-certifying as a French-language teacher in Ontario, she completed her three-part guidance specialist and an additional qualification in special education. She moved from being a classroom teacher into her current position as an ALF/PDF teacher to diversify her experience and because the school is closer to where she and her family live. Her two sons attend École cosmopolite: the youngest is only 2 years old and began attending the French-language daycare at the school over the course of this study and her eldest son is in Grade 3. She proudly describes him as bilingual in English - French. He also speaks Albanese at home because his father does not speak French. As a result, whereas other staff members underscored that they only spoke French at school, Ariana speaks Albanese regularly with her husband on her cell phone throughout the day during her breaks. Her schedule is different than a classroom teacher’s schedule because she typically works with students in small groups in her office. Given that she does not have a homeroom, she does her outdoor yard supervision every day over the lunch recess and consequently, she takes her
lunch break alone before or after recess. She seems isolated both physically and socially from other staff in the school.

In addition to working with ALF/PDF students in small groups, Ariana covers a planning period for a split Grade 1/2 teacher twice a cycle. These two forty-minute periods are designated as regular ALF/PDF classes for the full class. She explains that all students at École Cosmopolite could benefit from ALF/PDF because the student population is very culturally and linguistically diverse and students have a significant lack of vocabulary in French.

**Pierre: School administrator.**

Pierre came to École Cosmopolite as the new school administrator for the 2008-2009 academic year. He participated in a semi-structured interview through which he elaborated on his vision to promote the French cultural and linguistic mandate of the school. Whereas teachers orchestrate the pedagogical space of their classrooms, as the administrator, Pierre sets the overall tone for the school. Prior to coming to École Cosmopolite, he had an established record of involvement within the school district and in the broader field of education through various roles and most notably, his commitment to francophone cultural animation through the Arts. He has been responsible for coordinating an annual vocal music festival for the district over the last 3 years and implemented a number of new initiatives at École Cosmopolite in 2008-2009 to enable students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to experience vibrant francophone culture. Throughout the study, he was open and supportive of discussions regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school’s population. As the sole school administrator and given that it was his first year at the school, Pierre was always
busy organizing school events, coordinating with teachers, and with community partners. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, Pierre demonstrated a conscious effort to build relationship with staff, students and their families. He could be found regularly making rounds before and after school to interact with students as they arrived and as they departed, as well as throughout the day. He purposefully strived to establish a welcoming environment while at the same time promoting and maintaining a francophone space within the school.

The teachers who consented to participating in the study were the core informants with whom I engaged in discussions about their perspectives and practices with CLD students and I observed their interactions at length. Of the four core participants, two teachers were originally from Quebec and spoke French as a first language, and two teachers had immigrated to Canada and spoke French as an additional language. Whereas the participants from Quebec were reluctant to identify themselves as franco-ontarian, the other two teachers readily defined themselves as having become franco-ontarian. All of the teacher participants noted over the course of the study that they wrestled with adapting to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students. Despite their concerns, however, they each affirmed that their students’ diversity could be a resource, as well as a challenge. It is not surprising then, that these four participants were willing to engage in this study and were open to discussing their concerns with the other participants in the final focus group. All four teachers were also actively involved in other aspects of the extra-curricular activities of the school. Among the teaching staff at École Cosmopolite, all of the teacher participants expressed that they did not think any of the teachers at the school for 2008-2009 were originally from Ontario and consequently were not “Franco-
ontarien de souche” in a traditional, historical sense. In this regard, the teaching staff reflects the diversity of its student population and together they collectively questioned who counts as “franco-ontarian” and what entitles a person to belong to such a category.

**Methods**

A variety of methods were used for this case study in order to understand how the teachers and the administrator interpret and implement language and education policies within École Cosmopolite; then, to analyse teachers’ language and literacies practices with students in their classrooms; and ultimately, to develop an explanatory paradigm that reflects teachers’ complex tensions and subjectivities between the worlds of theory, policy and practice. In the following section, I explain my methodological decisions including choice of policy documents, semi-structured interviews with core participants, extended school and classroom observation and collection of student work samples, as well as a final teacher focus group.

**Policy documents.**

Policies at many levels - provincial, school board, school and classroom - both shape and reveal practice insofar as administrators and teachers implement policies from the provincial Ministry of Education and school board within the school and at the classroom level through instruction. As reviewed in Chapter two, article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom first guaranteed official minority language schooling to francophones living outside of Quebec. A number of policies pertaining to French-language schools were subsequently established to clarify and support the mandate of French-language schools in Ontario. For this case study of École Cosmopolite, I limit my analysis to recent policies pertaining to the cultural and linguistic
mandate of French-language schools and policies pertaining to access for culturally and linguistically diverse students. My focus began on the 2004 *Aménagement Linguistique* policy (PAL) for French-language schools in Ontario, but over the course of this study, new policies including the *Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (OEIES) (2009) and the *Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming and Support of Students in French-language Schools in Ontario* (2009) were launched in April 2009 and revised in June 2009. All of these new policies are particularly germane to my discussion of CLD learners, so I also incorporate them in framing my analysis of teachers’ perspectives and practices at *École Cosmopolite*. In addition, each school within the school district is required to develop and have approved a code of conduct for the school each year. I analyse *École Cosmopolite’s* “Code de Vie” as a translation of the *Aménagement Linguistique* policy at a local school level. Table 1 below outlines the five main policy documents use for this study.
Table 1

Policy Documents

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Article 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Aménagement Linguistique policy (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and Support of Students in French-language Schools in Ontario</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Code de Vie (2008)</td>
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During the classroom observation period, I also examined school media including their website, posters and other print/visual signage relating to linguistic and cultural diversity within the school community.

*Semi-structured interviews.*

One of the main data collection tools in this study were semi-structured 45-60 minute interviews with French-language teachers and with the school administrator. These initial interviews served as a launching point for further discussions throughout the study during school and classroom observation. The semi-structured format allowed participants to narrate their experiences and the diverse trajectories that had brought them to École Cosmopolite, as well as to structure the interview around issues most salient for them personally and in their practice. Interviews consisted of themes surrounding teachers’ definitions of franco-ontarian culture, and their perspectives of CLD learners, official language and educational policy, curriculum and practices related to inclusive
literacy instruction. The content of the interview with the school administrator was modified slightly to focus more specifically on official and school language and literacy policies. Participants were encouraged to expand on themes of interest and teachers often returned to emergent themes from the interviews during less formal conversations during and after periods of observation. According to school policy, the interviews were conducted in French. [Interviews guides are included in appendix B.] Whereas all of the participating teachers had been members of the school community for at least 2 years, the principal came to École Cosmopolite as the new school administrator for the 2008-2009 academic year.

**School / Classroom observation.**

At the outset of the study, I had proposed to conduct at least ten periods of observation in the classroom with each core teacher participant and her students. From my initial interviews with teachers however, they all expressed that although they had explicit literacy blocks within their daily programs, literacy was interwoven throughout their practice. To find answers to my questions regarding the multiple literacies development, particularly of CLD learners, I needed to observe teachers’ practices across the curriculum. As such, core participants agreed that I would conduct extended classroom observation over ten days rather than ten periods. The school functions on a rotating five-day cycle and so I decided first to observe a complete cycle with each classroom teacher. Then, in cooperation with the classroom teacher, we worked out a schedule of at least five more observation sessions with a particular focus. For example, Yvette’s opening routine with a daily “message du jour” to her Grade 2/3 students provided a time for dynamic interaction between Yvette and her students while reviewing
concepts of print and language conventions. After my first 5-day cycle of observation was completed, I arranged with Yvette to conduct five more observations that would include her “message du jour” lessons. Throughout the study, I kept a researcher’s journal to reflect upon my experiences through my interactions on-site.

As a researcher, I was a participant observer; students and teachers were informed of the researcher’s willingness to participate in class activities in order to build relationships of trust within the school community over the duration of data collection period at École Cosmopolite. Classroom observations were recorded digitally and notes were taken to describe discourse and language practices of both teachers and students. [An observation guide is included in Appendix C.] Overall, I conducted school and classroom observation for 45 days between October 2008 and April 2009.

Photocopies and photographs of student work samples from observation periods were also collected, where permission was granted from students, parents and teachers. I chose to photograph student work samples whenever possible because I recognized in many instances they could be read as “identity texts” (Cummins, 2006, p. 59). Photography is data collection tool that is particularly useful when researching children’s experience because it allows the researcher to capture children’s alternative modes of communication (Freeman & Mathison, 2009; Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Kendrick & Mckay, 2004). Children in a pre-alphabetic literacy stage especially, use drawings, symbols, letters and numbers to express themselves. Such creative responses to instruction are more effectively captured in full colour photographs than as standard black and white photocopies.
**Teacher focus group.**

The final stage of data collection involved a focus group made up of the four teacher participants and their collaborative discussion of similarities and differences among their perspectives on CLD learners in their classrooms and more broadly, École Cosmopolite. This focus group was carried out at the school with the four teacher participants. Focus group themes of discussion were shaped by information collected through the policy analysis, semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The researcher did not participate in the discussion except to help moderate and facilitate a productive exchange of ideas. The focus group was conducted in French according to school norms and policy.

Unlike individual semi-structured interviews that provided space for each core participant to unfold his or her teaching story, all four teachers perspectives were juxtaposed with one another within the focus group. As a result, a dynamic discussion emerged as personal definitions and paradigms were contested. The focus group provided another way for me to understand each teachers’ individual position, as well as to recognize how these diverse subjectivities interact within the school.

**Data Processing and Analysis**

I draw upon Fairclough’s conceptualization of critical discourse analysis as the methodological framework for examining formal policy documents. Johnstone (2002) suggests that critical reading is, in fact, central to the practice of discourse analysis, regardless of whether the goal is to produce methodological or social critique. I chose explicitly to adopt a critical discourse analysis framework because I seek to interrogate
the power relations inherent in discourse surrounding construction of linguistically and culturally diverse allophone learners within French-language school settings.

Fairclough (1995) offers a nested triadic heuristic for understanding discourse in which text, although central, constitutes only one part. Discourse extends beyond the text itself: first, to include the interactional processes of the text’s production and its interpretation; and then, more broadly to the contextualization of these processes within their broader social conditions. He aligns these three dimensions of discourse to three corresponding stages of critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation. Whereas description is concerned primarily with the formal features of the text, interpretation addresses the aforementioned interactional processes of the text and explanation endeavours to uncover the social determination and effects of the interactional processes. The latter two stages point towards the ultimate goal of critical discourse to expose the ways discourse and ideology are intertwined. Fairclough (1995) draws attention to the reciprocity among the stages of CDA; description involves interpretation and interpretation and explanation are related to description. As such, I used Fairclough’s three interwoven CDA stages of description, interpretation and explanation to guide my analysis. I began with a critical reading of the aforementioned policy documents; then, through interviews, classroom observation and a focus group, I interpret and explain how participating elementary teachers in a French-language school in Ontario are responding to such policies.

Analysis took place throughout the study following critical discourse analysis notions of description, interpretation and explanation being interrelated and Merriam’s (1998) notion of recursive analysis. I have described the data collection in layers to
explain my growing understanding as a researcher that deep analysis of data occurs through the process of overlapping of layers of data. In qualitative research, boundaries are less clearly defined - but it is precisely out of such in-between, overlapping, blurred spaces that new - or nuanced - identities emerge. By overlapping of layers of data, we can understand more richly the multiple contributing factors to the creation of inclusive, transformative learning spaces.

Analysis of Classroom Practices from Observation Notes

Over the course of this study, I conducted 45 days of classroom observation. I used the classroom observation guide to focus my notetaking on teachers’ practices and interactions with and among students in their classrooms. [See Appendix B: Observation Guide] I digitally recorded classroom observations and noted mp3 file numbers with written observations so that I could later return to recordings to analyse specific teacher-talk and teacher-student interactions. The assurance that I would be able to return to oral recordings for my analysis allowed me to focus my notes more on what I saw unfolding then necessarily what I heard. For example, during a period of observation, I could note briefly the speaker’s name, some key words that would help me locate the incident in a recording, along with the specific time that appeared on the digital mp3 recording device. Then in my notes, I would record how speakers and non-speakers were positioned, what was written on the board while the teacher was giving specific instructions, and/or other people’s reactions to a given speaker’s words and body language.

My classroom observations were written in French and English: I used whichever language best enabled me to capture what I saw and heard unfolding in the classroom,
and best enabled me to express clearly and concisely my thoughts as they occurred. When I reviewed my notes after each observation period, I classified teacher practices that clearly reflected a transmission-oriented pedagogy by marking the letter T in the margins of my notes. I put an asterisk beside practices that I sensed were alter(n)ative. I also made an effort at the end of each day to reflect on my questions, concerns and experiences. I recorded these reflections in narrative prose either following my classroom observation notes of the day, or on my computer (if available).

Once I had completed classroom observation, I created six charts for each of my interview themes:

1. participants’ backgrounds,
2. language policies,
3. approaches to literacy instruction,
4. franco-ontarian culture and identity,
5. in/ex-clusion of cultural and linguistic diversity, and
6. alter(n)ative classroom practices.

I assigned each core participant a section within each theme chart. Then, I completed each chart by compiling classroom observation notes for each participant that related to each theme. My focus in this study was ultimately to analyse teachers’ alter(n)ative practices to support CLD learners’ pluri-literacies development. Once I had completed the alter(n)ative classroom practices chart, I compared similar practices among all of the teachers and the principal. From my comparisons, I developed subcategories to group different ways in which teachers facilitate alter(n)ative learning encounters at school.
For my representation of classroom vignettes, I drew upon my classroom observations notes, my post-observation reflections and digital recordings of classroom observation periods to re-create narrative accounts of what I observed unfolding in the classroom. As a classroom teacher and a researcher who built relationships with core teacher participants over the six months of this study, my analysis of teacher practices grows out of a critical appreciation that the teachers who I observed in classrooms at École Cosmpolite ultimately desire to support their students’ learning and success. My classroom observation notes serve to illuminate the tensions teachers’ face as they negotiate the worlds of theory, policy and practice in the pedagogical spaces of their classrooms.

**Transcription as an Analytic Process**

Transcription and coding of interviews and focus group discussions provided the basis for description and analysis of teachers’ perspectives on CLD learners in French-language school classrooms and their learning needs, particularly with respect to literacy development. Analysis of classroom observation and work samples in the following chapters are juxtaposed against official language and education policy, as well as teachers’ perceptions communicated through interviews and the focus group session in order to build towards the conceptualization of an alter(n)ative pluri-literacies framework for francophone minority schooling contexts. Transcription conventions are included in Appendix D.
**Alter-natives: The transcription of the final focus group and its poetic representation.**

The poetic representation of the final focus group in this study emerged from my transcription and analysis of the focus group discussion. Transcription is necessarily “a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” of the researcher (Ochs, 1979, p.168). The cultural practice of transcription in research has traditionally privileged conventional spatial organization in page layout; for example, written language in English and French is decoded from left to right and top to bottom (Ochs, 1979).

According to these conventions of print, conversation transcripts tend to represent each speaker’s turns one below another. Ochs (1979) argues however that the standard ‘script’ format tends to impose a contingent relation between immediately adjacent utterances of different speakers which is appropriate only to the extent that it matches the conventional behaviour of the speakers themselves. During the focus group discussion among core participants in this study, speakers did not adhere to a successive conversation pattern. Participants interrupted one another at times to echo in agreement of what was being said and other times in disagreement. In order to remain faithful to participants’ voices, I sought to represent the focus group through poetry because poetry allowed me to express visually what I heard as I listened and observed participants engage with one another. Poet James Longenbach describes poetry as the sound of language organized in lines (2008, p.ix). The poem Alter-natives represents visually the sound of participants articulating for themselves and one another their interpretations of what it means to be franco-ontarian.
Literary theorist Ihab Hassan’s (1987) classification of differences between Modernism and postmodernism informed my composition of Alter-natives, the poetic focus group transcription which appears as an inter-chapter between Chapter 7 on alternative classroom practices and conclusion of this study. Whereas Modernism was concerned with the Master Code (one dominant language), postmodernism is marked by multiple idiolects (Hassan, 1987, p. 91). Postmodernism invites the blurring of boundaries and the inclusion of multiple voices (Hassan, 1987). I chose to represent in poetic form the themes that emerged during the final focus group with teacher participants to ensure that I preserved each participant’s unique voice. I sought a representational form that would foreground language and identity issues, both thematic and methodological, that had emerged as the four core teacher participants reflected collaboratively on what it means to be franco-ontarian and their roles as teachers in reproducing a franco-ontarian culture. As I had engaged with the core participants throughout the study, I became increasingly attuned not only to how participants talked about their language use and instructional approaches, but also to how they used their own idiolects to share their experiences.

Oral historian Dennis Tedlock (1983) argues that speech is closer to poetry than it is to prose:

conversational narratives THEMSELVES /

traditionally classified as PROSE /

turn out, when listened to CLOSELY /

to have poetical qualities all their own. (Tedlock, 1983, p. 109)
In retrospect, the process of listening to the interview and focus group recordings for the purpose of transcription and notetaking scaffolded the writing of the poem; the process immersed me in the idiolects of each participant and through each replaying, I developed a greater awareness of poetic function within each of their discourses (Aultman, 2009).

Laurel Richardson (1997) further supports Tedlock’s case for poetic forms of representation, when she explains that “poetry can re-create embodied speech in a way that

standard … prose does not because poetry consciously employs such devices as line length, meter, cadence, speed, alliteration, assonance, connotation, rhyme and off-rhyme, variation and repetition to elicit bodily response in readers/listeners… [Poetry] touches both the cognitive and the sensory in the speaker and listener. (p. 143)

Both Tedlock (1983) and Richardson’s (1997) draw particular attention to the fact that irrespective of age, gender, or literacy, every individual naturally speaks using a poetical device, the pause. As I reviewed interview recordings, transcripts and observations, I became convinced that representing the emergent themes from this study in poetry would best reflect both the inquiry process and its findings. The core participants in this study were all originally from outside of Ontario and each held different interpretations of the term “franco-ontarian”. As the title of the poem suggests, the participants present alternative definitions to the traditional historical definition of what it means to be “franco-ontarian”. Over the course of the study, I came to recognize that the participants themselves are Alter-natives: they offer an-Other way of seeing native speakers and their diverse perspectives, trajectories and definitions suggest the possibility of enlarging the boundaries for Other-“natives” to be included within the category of “franco-ontarian”.
Richardson defines the dual responsibility of the researcher-poet in this way: “The sociologist/poet chooses how and where and why and for how long quiet will counterpoint the sound, thus creating a text that mimics more closely the actual conversation and that builds upon both sounds and silences” (Richardson, 1997, p. 142). My aim in creating Alter-natives was that the poem would serve not only as a mimetic representation of the interactions sparked through this inquiry process but also that it would engage readers in reflexive analysis of their own reactions and interpretations of the poetic representation of participants’ perspectives on pluri-literacies and identities. Richardson highlights that knowledge is metaphored in poetry and it is experienced “as prismatic, partial and positional, rather than singular, total and univocal… Poetry reveals the process of self-construction, the reflexive basis of knowledge, the inconsistencies and contradictions of a life spoken as a meaningful whole” (Richardson, 1997, p. 143).

Postmodern poetry encourages multiple readings and is open to multiple interpretations. In Butler-Kisber’s (2002) terms, poetry offered me “a way of representing holistically what might otherwise go unnoticed” (p. 231).

Postmodern literary theory informed my writing process as I departed from more conventional prose writing purposefully to represent the four voices of the core participants in an alter(n)ative form that integrates elements of found and concrete poetic genres.

Lost and found: Preserving language and voice through poetry.

Milner and Milner (2003) explain that found poetry begins as “unintentional utterances discovered in non-poetic contexts such as newspapers, advertisements, conversation and product instruction” (Milner & Milner, 2003, pp. 153-154). The
objective in writing found poetry is to preserve the original utterances while isolating words and using spacing and line breaks to expose, highlight and create meaning. In preparation to create this poem, I transcribed the four teacher participants’ voices in four distinct columns. When one participant interrupted another, the transcript literally reflected that two, three or four voices were heard simultaneously. Creating a poem in French from the final focus group transcription allowed me to preserve each individual’s direct speech and at the same time, it invites readers to enter vicariously into the focus group conversations.

In addition to drawing upon elements of found poetry, I also integrated elements of concrete poetry to my poetic representation of the focus group. Concrete poems pay careful attention to the arrangement of words so that they show visually what they say verbally. In an effort to visually highlight the four distinct voices that interact within the poem, I represent each voice in a different font type: Yvette as Snell Roundhand; Anne-Marie as Century Gothic; Houda as Imprint MT Shadow; and, Ariana as Harrington (Williams, 2008). Throughout the poem the interweaving of four different fonts is intended to reflect the dynamism of the participants engaging in dialogue with one another during the focus group discussion. Poetic inquiry and representation provocatively invited me to consider alter(n)ative epistemological ways of seeing and knowing, as well as ontological ways of being/becoming “franco-ontarian”. I position my poetic representation, Alter-natives, as an inter-chapter in-between my analysis and the conclusion of this thesis because the poem emerged through my inquiry process as an alter(n)ative way of bridging theory and practice.
Chapter Four:
Policy

This chapter reviews how CLD students are constructed through the discourse of Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), as well as official policies regarding the integration of CLD learners into French-language schools. I examine Ontario’s 2004 Aménagement Linguistique policy (PAL) and then, I compare changes in the recent release of Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (OEIES) (2009), as well as, the Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming and Support of Students in French Language Schools in Ontario (2009). At the school level, I analyze the “Code de Vie” and signs within École Cosmopolite as institutional enactments of PAL. Finally, I draw upon teacher and administrator interviews to identify classroom policies on linguistic and cultural diversity.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Article 23

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) outlines fundamental freedoms for everyone in Canada, as well as, rights for Canadian citizens. For example, whereas everyone in Canada has “the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice” (article 7), only Canadian citizens have the “right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein” (article 3). Article 23 of the Charter guarantees official language minority education rights to Canadian citizens. [See Appendix E for full text of Article 23] Accordingly, official minority francophones in Ontario are “rights-holders” by virtue of the Canadian constitution to have their children educated in French-language
schools. Canadian citizens in Ontario are recognized as “les ayants-droit” if their first language learned and still understood is French, or if they received their primary school instruction in Canada in French. Canadian citizens who have any child in a French-language school in Ontario, also have the right to have all of their children educated in French.

Article 23 of the Canadian Charter only guaranteed French-language education to minority francophone Canadian citizens. In 1990, the Ontario Education Act allowed the possibility for non-rights holder parents to submit an application for their child(ren) to be admitted to a French-language school by way of a majority decision of a school admissions committee. This provision was significant as it created the possibility for CLD students to gain access to the French-language education system. At the same time, however, this diversity began to raise concerns regarding the role and ability of French-language schools to protect and preserve the French language and culture within franco-ontarian minority communities.

**Aménagement Linguistique Policy for French-Language Schools in Ontario**

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, the original French *Politique d’Aménagement Linguistique* (2004) and its subsequent English translation (2005) were developed to help French-language school boards and schools to “increase their capacity to create teaching and conditions that foster the development of the French language and culture to ensure the academic achievement of every student” (2005, p. 2). The term *aménagement linguistique* is defined as “the implementation by educational institutions of planned systemic interventions to ensure the protection, enhancement and the
transmission of the French language and culture in a minority setting” (2005, p. 5). This policy made the linguistic and cultural mandate of French-language schools in Ontario explicit: beyond the educational role of French-language schools, schools were identified as key sites through which “to protect, enhance and transmit the language and the culture of the community they serve” (2005, p. 7, [emphasis added]). At the outset, the discourse that frames this policy suggests that “the community” which French-language schools serve is uniformly francophone. According to PAL, the mandate of French-language schools included: (a) providing a learning environment to support students’ personal and academic success; (b) fosters identity building; (c) provides for participative leadership; and, (d) promotes individual and collective commitment through alliances with parents and partnership within the wider francophone community. Although the key intervention area of identity building is at times discussed as a process, identity as a construct remains singular, and largely in opposition to a majority “anglophone” identity.

Immigration to francophone minority communities and the inclusion of immigrant children are characterized as challenges to French-language schools and their communities. Immigration is repeatedly identified as being responsible for making franco-ontarian communities more multicultural and multiracial, but not necessarily contributing (positively) to the demographic growth of these communities. Thus, diversity is conceptualized as a “problem” rather than a “resource”: it is challenging both to recruit francophone immigrants outside of Quebec to minority francophone communities and to settle and to integrate immigrants into such communities. PAL (2005) clearly delineates between rights-holders and immigrants or refugees who do not meet the criteria of Article 23. While rights-holders are divided between two main
categories according to their varying degrees of French spoken, immigrant and refugee children are portrayed as liminal partakers in French-language schools who only gain permission to attend by way of an admissions committee. PAL describes such students as “the children of parents who have settled in Canada as immigrants or refugees and for whom French may be their first, second or even third language, yet who feel a certain attachment to French.” (2005, p. 22). Although such students may feel an attachment to French, various scholars have noted that inclusion and social acceptance of such students and families in French-language schools and minority communities is not guaranteed (Bouchamma, 2008; Gallant, 2007; Gallant & Belkhodja, 2005). PAL identifies that the linguistic homogeneity of French-language school populations is gradually giving way to a heterogenous population with an extremely diverse range of ability in the French language. For legal reasons (those of French language Charter rights-holders), because of immigration, or for other reasons, French-language educational institutions often come to accept students for whom English is the dominant language or for whom French is not their first language (Coghlan & Thériault, 2002, p. 10). This increasing linguistic heterogeneity poses a major challenge. (2005, p. 23) Of the factors cited as being responsible for the erosion of linguistic homogeneity of students in French-language schools, apart from the unquestionable legal privilege of rights-holders to French-language instruction, immigration is the only factor that is explicitly named. Again, immigration is constructed more as a potential threat, from a minoritarian perspective, to further weaken the homogeneity of “the” franco-ontarian linguistic and cultural community rather than as a potential resource to expand it. Moreover, this concern with greater linguistic heterogeneity serves as the rationale and justification for creating “French-only” environments in schools to ensure “the primacy
of French in all areas of activity. Spoken French then becomes the preferred language of communication for everyone in contact with that school” (2005, p. 23). Further on, the policy reiterates that French-language schools are increasingly enrolling new arrivals and that their integration within schools creates a number of challenges:

these young people come from many different origins and have had varied life experiences and an education that is just as varied. Many of them speak a form of French that is different from the French spoken in Ontario. The arrival of these young people certainly adds to the multicultural and multiracial character of the schools. Their entry and inclusion, as well as that of their parents, become a source of dialogue and learning for everyone in daily contact with the school. (2005, p. 26)

This excerpt suggests that while the diversity of students’ life trajectories, linguistic, academic and cultural backgrounds poses challenges, they are also sources of dialogue and learning. While this recognition of students’ and their families’ experiences may at first glance be promising, when this statement is (re)considered in the context of the broader policy discourse which constructs French-language schools as French-only-zones in which French is the language of communication, it raises the question of who has the power, voice and capital to engage in such dialogues.

Identity building is one of the key intervention areas of the 2004 Aménagement Linguistique policy. French-language schools increasingly serve as the only settings which provide a “uniquely francophone environment” through which young people in particular can take ownership of the franco-ontarian culture and identity:

‘At the ... foundation [of the franco-ontarian identity] is the French language, which is constantly threatened. Franco-ontarian identity involves belief in a common heritage and common origin. It is thus nurtured by collective memory, oral tradition, the writings of historians
and chroniclers, literary and artistic works. It is also forged through the vision of others.’ (translated from Frenette, as cited in PAL, 2005, p. 48)

According to Frenette, franco-ontarian identity is a construct. PAL’s identity building interventions seek to help schools transmit the franco-ontarian identity to its students. The 2005 policy translation suggests that

by studying their culture, students will discover how, over the centuries, the way of life and the value system that characterize the francophone community have been fashioned and will come to understand how civilisations evolve and why every individual is a full member of a civilisation (Simard, 2001). The study of culture is part of a process that encourages students to think actively and places them at the centre of the dynamic of the francophone community. (p. 51)

The assumption embedded within this policy excerpt is that students who attend French-language schools as rights-holders subscribe to, or at least identify at some level with, the traditional construct of the franco-ontarian identity, replete with its belief in one common origin, heritage and shared collective memory. Understandably then, by studying their culture, students would come to appropriate the franco-ontarian identity and in so doing preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage for future generations. Such students would be at the centre of the dynamic of the francophone culture. But, how does this approach incorporate the diverse linguistic and cultural heritages of immigrant children, and/or children of exogamous marriages?

PAL (2004) identifies globalization, information and communication technologies and again immigration as key factors leading to the “erosion of cultural boundaries and to a cultural crisis” (2005, p. 49). In the face of these (re)defining influences on franco-ontarian minority communities, PAL itself poses the question, “How can schools transmit
a cultural heritage anchored in a people’s history and at the same time acknowledge a fast-changing contemporary culture?” (p. 49). While the question demonstrates critical self-reflection for individuals and collective communities, the response of the policy serves to reinscribe the necessity of systematically integrating traditional notions and referents of franco-ontarian culture into pedagogical planning. By contrast, since the release of PAL in 2004, a number of scholars have problematised the mandate and role of French-language schools in the identity construction of increasingly linguistically and cultural diverse students who variously express hybridized, bilingual, fractured and multiple identities (Bryd-Clark, 2007; Caron-Réaume, 2007; Farmer, 2008a, 2008b; Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Labrie, 2007; Makropolous, 2004). Labrie’s (2007) critical analysis of Aménagement Linguistique policy underscores that

la construction identitaire est basée sur un définition monolithique de l’identité, au singulier. Le texte est impersonnel. C’est ici l’institution qui s’exprime par des énoncés incontestables, de valeur universelle ... Cette communauté [franco-ontarian] dispose d’une culture et d’une langue, toutes deux au singulier... Les objectifs de la politique linguistique sont de former des jeunes francophones ayant une identité linguistique et culturelle au singulier...Une personne dispose d’une seule et unique identité, avec une culture unique, exprimée par la langue. (p. 6)

Labrie’s (2007) analysis draws particular attention to the embedded conception of a singular franco-ontarian identity and highlights the need to consider other possibilities for the plurality of identities represented among members of franco-ontarian minority communities. Indeed, strategic recruitment and settlement of francophone immigrants to minority communities through federal initiatives pose critical questions that, if engaged, could powerfully open up dialogue on issues of identity, culture and inclusion. Although at their original conception, French-language schools were not created in order to meet
the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, Ontario’s Ministry of Education vision “to reach every student” (2008) and Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) may provide the political impetus to (re)examine and consider the ways in which French-language schools respond to the changing demography of their communities and the social and academic needs of diverse learners and their families.

Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (OEIES) (2009) outlines the need for public schools to be “realizing the promise of diversity” and in the words of Canadian educator and antiracism advocate, George Dei, “Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone.” (as cited in OEIES, 2009, p. 2). As such, one of the key motivations behind the release and implementation of the Ontario Ministry of Education’s 2009 Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming and Support of Students in French Language Schools in Ontario is to address the lack of transparency in the admissions process. The focus of the policy is on the inclusion and support of all students, with particular attention to newcomers and to students from families in which French is not the language spoken at home. At its outset, this admissions policy targets the recruitment of French-speaking “newcomers” as key players in the maintenance and development of French-language schools, while simultaneously honouring and reflecting the spirit of the laws regarding the mandate of French-language schools in Ontario (p. 1). As the policy unfolds, however, there is a marked shift from inclusive language describing francophone newcomers back to previously used terms such as “immigrants” (p. 5). In particular, the policy recommends that school boards establish procedures for facilitating admissions by admissions committees in the following cases:
1) French-speaking parents and adults students who are immigrants and do not qualify as holders of French-language education rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

2) A child whose grandparents were holders of French-language education rights;

3) An immigrant child whose parents’ mother tongue is neither French or English (allophone). (p. 5)

Although the reversion to categorical language may be questioned, the policy marks a significant step toward both formalizing and strategically facilitating the procedure for admitting students from the aforementioned categories. For the first time, non-rights holders are (re)constructed as being possible resources for the future growth of French-language schools and communities. The policy underlines the critical importance of the admissions committee’s decisions to grant or deny admission “since this decision will determine whether an individual and his or her siblings and descendants will have right-holder status” (p. 5). In this regard, this policy marks a potentially powerful shift in opening access to French-language education. At the same time, this openness to linguistic and cultural diversity equally necessitates pedagogical resources to support the integration of linguistically and culturally diverse children into French-language school classrooms. Therefore, at this time, I turn to examine how the 2004 *Aménagement Linguistique* policy is being enacted in practice in École Cosmopolite and to begin to explore the complexities and potentialities of creating alter(n)ative spaces to support the language and literacy development of CLD learners.
École Cosmopolite’s “Code de Vie” (2008-2009)

École Cosmopolite’s “Code de Vie” is approved for each school year and reflects the expectations, values and guidelines of the school board implemented by the local school. The 2008-2009 code of conduct articulates the school’s mandate to foster “le meilleur environnement d’apprentissage pour tous les élèves... une collaboration et un solide partenariat entre l’école, le foyer et la communauté” (p.3). As the Aménagement Linguistique policy outlines at the provincial level, the “Code de Vie” makes the rules regarding behaviour and participation within the local school explicit. Most significantly for this study, it establishes French as the only authorized language of communication through two declarative agreements:

• *je communique en français en tout temps et en tout lieu à l’école et lors des activités scolaires*;

• *j’utilise la langue française dans tous mes échanges sauf dans les cours d’anglais*. (p. 7)

In first person voice, these declarations illustrate the implementation of the identity construction intervention area of PAL (2004) to help students to be(come) francophone. These statements reflect the mission of the school to function as a “purely” francophone space -- or to establish a francophone island in the sea of an anglophone majority.

According to the principal, in reference to PAL and the demographics of the community, the adherence to a French-only zone at the school is crucial to the realization of this French-language school because “on est ici pour développer le français. Donc, tout doit être en français, sauf dans les cours d’anglais langue seconde, à partir de la quatrième
année”. The prevailing assumption underpinning PAL is that the best way for students to appropriate the singular French language and culture is through French-only instruction in a French-only space. This assumption is clearly translated into the school “Code de Vie” and becomes the circular justification for excluding any other language from use within the school. The mandate of the school to create a francophone space is reinforced through posters which echo the “Code de Vie”. For example, “Parle-moi en français, svp!”; “Ici, on parle français!” and, “Le français, c’est mon affaire!” Such signs within the school emphasize the primacy of French in alignment with PAL 2004.

**École cosmopolite: Elementary Teachers’ Policies**

Although staff members of École Cosmopolite conveyed that they had varying degrees of familiarity with the Aménagement Linguistique policy (2004), all teachers play a critical role in reinforcing the “Code de Vie” within their classroom practice. Teacher participants in this study who had not completed their initial teacher education in Ontario and had begun teaching after 2004 were generally unaware of Aménagement Linguistique policy in Ontario. By contrast, Houda first reiterates the “Code de Vie”:

*Tout le temps en classe, on parle en français. Tout le temps. Dans l’école, on parle pas en anglais devant les enfants, sauf que M.--- qui enseigne l’anglais, qui parle aux enfants en anglais, mais dans les couloirs, ils se parlent en français.*

Then, she further references PAL (2004) as she explains,

*le plan d’aménagement linguistique en gros dit que tu n’apprends pas aux élèves le français, mais tu leur montres comment on vit en français. C’est plus qu’une langue, c’est une culture. Ça veut dire on apprécie les activités*
en français que ce soit le cinéma, le théâtre, vivre avec les gens, faire le dîner, le genre de culture ... c’est pas juste que je vis en anglais mais je sais parler français. Parce qu’il y a beaucoup d’assimilation ici. Les gens francophones et leurs enfants, ils peuvent facilement virer vers l’anglophonie et oublier le français d’ailleurs.

Houda manifests a clear understanding of both PAL and the “Code de Vie” and justifies the enactment of these policies in order to counterbalance the assimilatory pressures of the francophone minority context of the school. She is concerned about the progressive assimilation towards the anglophone majority and emphasizes that while the “Code de Vie” stipulates French as the language of communication at school, she recognizes that “c’est sûr que les enfants entre eux, ils se parlent en anglais. Mais, on essaye de les motiver pour qu’ils parlent en français entre eux.”

Although Yvette is unfamiliar with PAL, she recognizes the importance of cultivating a French-only environment at school and supports the school’s “Code de Vie”:

[Nos enfants] ne parlent pas du tout le français à la maison, évidemment quand ils sortent ..., tout est en anglais. Alors, évidemment, on exige que tout soit en français à l’école. Donc les enseignants s’adressent aux élèves simplement, uniquement, exclusivement en français... En principe, il ne peut y avoir autre chose que le français dans l’école... On fait un effort pour leur expliquer l’importance de pourquoi on doit parler en français ici. On leur a tout expliqué -XXX- c’est des enfants, c’est comme du conditionnement, on doit rappeler toujours français, français, français, français, français, français. On répète ça des millions de fois par jour. Après avoir exposé toute l’importance du français, puis le bien fondé des choses, il faut répéter, comme la - drippe -. 
Yvette’s recognition and concern regarding the anglophone majority in which the school is situated reveals the challenges of creating a French-only environment in the classroom. Like other staff members, she justifies the rule that French be the only language of communication because of the surrounding force of English apart from at school: children do not speak French at home, and within the city, everything is in English. Hence, the school is seen as the only place in which a “French-only” space can be created. Even so, Yvette’s comments demonstrate a feeling of resignation that she must nag students to speak in French like a dripping faucet.

Although Anne-Marie was unaware of PAL (2004) at the beginning of this study, she understands the “Code de Vie”. She suggested, however, that among her kindergarten students, language use other than French in the classroom does not pose a serious threat. Whereas older students may feel that it is not “cool” to speak French, her younger students will generally point out when others try to use languages other than French in the classroom: “ils se surveillent”. At this introductory stage of schooling, Anne-Marie recognizes that it is difficult for her students to spend their entire day at school without being able to express themselves. She explains,

je suis plus tolérante avec les enfants qui ne parlent pas français, mais au bout d’un certain temps, par exemple au mois de novembre... je m’attends à ce que tu fasses un effort au moins d’interjeter des petits mots de français dans une phrase en anglais au moins..... je tape pas les doigts des enfants qui ne connaissent pas les mots.
While fluency in French is clearly the ultimate goal, Anne-Marie’s response reflects an awareness that code-switching between French and a child’s home language can facilitate a student’s engagement in learning.

*Actualisation Linguistique en Français et Perfectionnement du français*

The implementation of two supplementary curricula initiatives developed further upon the enactment of PAL (2004) and the recognition of the varying French proficiency levels of students who were attending French-language schools in minority communities: *Actualisation linguistique en français* and *Perfectionnement du français*. The *Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF)* program was designed to meet the needs of francophone students who for a variety of reasons, have a limited knowledge of French or little familiarity with the French language and culture. According to PAL, the objective of ALF is for these students to “acquire a sufficient knowledge of the language to communicate and learn, as well as develop the related skills required to continue their education. It also promotes the development of a positive attitude towards the use of the French language to communicate, think, learn, and build a cultural identity” (2005, p. 44). The *Perfectionnement du français* (PDF) program was created to support French-speaking newcomer students who are identified as lacking skills in areas of reading, writing, and mathematics that are necessary for their successful integration into their new French-language school in Ontario. PAL (2004) emphasizes that both of these support programs were intended to be temporary measures that facilitate students’ entry into regular grade-level classrooms. The emergence of ALF/PDF programs provided a recasting of previous “francisation” or “refrancisation” initiatives to counteract francophone assimilation towards a dominant anglophone majority. The terms
francisation and refrancisation had been rejected because of the underlying assumption behind these labels that questioned the “Frenchness” of francophone students. The idea of actualisation linguistique had been proposed as a way of positively approaching the varied French proficiency levels of students in minority settings and envisioning how the linguistic potential of all students could be realized – or actualised – through their education through French-language schools (Labrie, N., May 24, 2009, personal communication). In the term’s original sense, actualisation linguistique was not proposed as a temporary measure but rather as a comprehensive, additive approach to students’ growing linguistic heterogeneity. Instead, the term was appropriated within Ministry of Education discourse and developed into a transitional programmatic solution that has come to define students by what they lack, namely adequate French language and culture, rather than drawing on the diverse linguistic repertoires they bring to their learning. The implementation of ALF/PDF instruction as a supplementary program to core classroom instruction within École Cosmopolite magnifies the tensions of how policy is enacted within the reality of classroom space.

At École Cosmopolite, Ariana works full-time as the ALF/PDF teacher for students in kindergarten to Grade 6. She explains that actualisation linguistique is made up of “l’apprentisage de la langue, et le perfectionnement de la langue”. She works with students from different classes who have a limited knowledge of French:

Je travaille avec tous les enfants qui ont des problèmes en français, qui n’ont pas les connaissances en français, ou bien qui ont des problèmes de lecture ou de compréhension du français, parce qu’il y en a ceux qui parlent la langue française mais qui viennent d’un autre pays où la scolarisation n’est pas pareille qu’au Canada qui peuvent avoir de la
difficulté en lecture, ils ne sont pas capables de lire, ou bien ils lisent en syllabe, ils sont au niveau du décodage.

As a multi-lingual speaker of Albanese, French, English, and Italian, Ariana has drawn on her diverse linguistic repertoire throughout her life. She appreciates that students bring with them “un baggage culturel et linguistique,” but even within her ALF/PDF classroom space, she abides by and reinforces the prevailing ideological French monolingual norm. She works with French texts, picture cards and dictionaries to help students develop literacy strategies that will help them adapt into their grade-level classroom. She uses her goal to help students integrate into a French-language classroom to justify the sole use of French with her delivery of ALF/PDF support.

**Policies and parents.**

In addition to helping CLD learners adapt to learning in a French-language school, teachers must also communicate with students’ parents and families. The principal of École Cosmopolite underscored that the integration of CLD learners is a multi-dimensional process that requires the collaboration of school, family and community actors:

Quand ils arrivent, ils ne connaissaient rien. L’école, l’école doit les accueillir, accueillir les parents pas juste l’enfant, mais la famille. Leur expliquer le système ... faciliter l’intégration, leur faire connaître les services francophones qui existent… pour qu’ils puissent trouver un médecin, qu’il puissent savoir accéder aux services en français, puis mettre en communication avec le service PDF pour l’insertion les nouveaux arrivants. Ils viennent à l’école aussi, bien, on les rencontre à l’école, répond aux besoins, se déplace au bureau. Alors, c’est un travail déjà, juste au moment d’arriver, au moment des inscriptions déjà tout ça.
Après ça, il y a aussi un travail avec les enseignants aussi pour les évaluer, quelles sont les forces, les défis de ces enfants-là, est qu’ils sont passés par un autre pays avant, il y a ceux qui sont passés, qui ont été réfugiés aux États-Unis, ils ont vécu en anglais une année ou deux avant d’arriver ici. Quel cheminement ont-ils eu? Quels sont les forces? Les défis avec ces enfants? Comment les évaluer? Après ça, de travailler en collaboration avec ALF/PDF, la travailleuse sociale, parce que des fois ils ont vécu des choses difficiles. Alors, c’est tout le travail avec ces gens-là pour permettre une bonne adaptation. Puis, on les suit... Les enseignants peuvent rencontrer les parents pour les intégrer, essayer de communiquer... pour les enfants, c’est un gros défi. Alors, on essaye de mettre en place, il y a des services communautaires, l’ALF/PDF, l’enseignant-ressource, le travailleur social – c’est toute une équipe pour essayer de favoriser une bonne adaptation, d’aider l’enfant à passer à l’adaptation le mieux possible.

Pierre’s detailed account of the many factors that contribute to a successful transition emphasizes the role of the school in helping parents access francophone services in the community, as well as through school programmes such as “perfectionnement du français”. No mention is made, however, to instances in which parents may not speak French fluently. The mandate of the school is to guide parents to help their children participate fully in the francophone school and community culture.

Teachers articulate different approaches towards engaging parents who have varying proficiency levels in French. For example, Houda insists, “Nous communiquons avec les parents, les choses qui vont à la maison, toujours en français. S’ils ne peuvent pas lire en français, ils vont trouver une solution. C’est pas notre problème. C’est pas notre mission d’envoyer les choses en anglais....”. From Houda’s perspective, it is up to
parents to find ways to understand notices that are sent home, even if they do not understand French. By virtue of enrolling their children in a French-language school, parents assume the responsibility to ensure they understand what is expected of their child and themselves as parent members of the francophone school community.

By contrast, Anne-Marie explains that she translates messages that she believes to be essential into English and she speaks with parents in English when she meets with them:

Je le fais en anglais... oui c’est plate! Si les parents s’impliquent, qu’ils parlent en français, ou en anglais, je vais t’accommoder. Je suis très contente que tu participes, que tu participes à la vie de l’école, que tu fais partie de la communauté, même si tu ne parles pas français, ton enfant fait partie de la communauté... si les parents viennent me parler, forcément je le fais en anglais.

Anne-Marie continues to explain that parental involvement in the school is low, and as such, she encourages parents to participate in classroom activities and field trips as much as possible, regardless of language background. Her reflection illustrates a recurrent theme that emerged throughout the study concerning the criteria for membership or belonging to the francophone community: even if parents do not speak French, their child still becomes part of the francophone community by attending a French-language school. Whereas Houda’s explicit policy of communicating with parents only in French sets up basic French proficiency as a minimum criterion for belonging, Anne-Marie’s willingness to communicate in English suggests an openness towards the inclusion of English-speaking parents, while at the same time maintaining a distinction between
proficient French speakers and non-French speakers. Language remains a defining feature of belonging and membership.

Both of these teachers’ reflections clearly distinguish between French speakers and English speakers. Parents who speak languages other than French or English are not mentioned. Although teachers identified that CLD learners who spoke some English had an advantage over those who did not because of the introduction of English classes at Grade four, no clear policy or strategy was identified for communicating with allophone parents. This absence is significant in light of the recent revision of the MEO admissions policy to streamline procedures for admitting CLD allophone students. Yvette reiterated at various points during my observation periods in class that communication with parents is in general an increasing challenge because of expanding academic vocabulary as students progress through higher grade levels. Even among her Grade 2 and Grade 3 students, she recognizes that “avec tout le vocabulaire pédagogique en français, ... c’est difficile de suivre un enfant, d’expliquer ce qui se passe à l’école.” Anne-Marie echoes these concerns regarding CLD parents’ motivation and ability to support their children’s learning:

je ne comprends pas les motivations des parents de vouloir que l’enfant fasse ses études en français, parce que plus l’enfant va avancer, plus l’enfant va avoir besoin d’aide avec ses devoirs, et les parents ne sont pas capables de lire les questions, les parents sont obligés d’aller sur google de faire un TRANSLATE sur ça, de traduire la question en tout cas. Je ne comprends pas comment on peut vivre au quotidien avec un enfant qui va en français. Il veut nous parler de ses expériences, on ne comprendra rien, on ne comprendra pas les mots en fait, je ne comprends pas les motivations des ces parents-là...
Pierre, Yvette and Anne-Marie’s reflections on the challenges parents face in supporting their child’s academic development at school highlight that just as students must develop both basic communicative competence (BICS) and academic language (CALP), parents also need to develop these two types of linguistic proficiency (Cummins, 2001). Whereas students may have support and scaffolding through instruction within the school, parents may not have the same opportunity. In such instances, it would seem even more critical for schools to find ways to bridge the home-school divide and to minimize linguistic barriers that may impede or discourage parental involvement.

The challenge to develop academic language is exacerbated by the fact that first language speakers are simultaneously deepening their academic expertise and as such CLD learners are constantly pursing a moving target (Cummins, 2001). While recent provincial policies provide increasing support to admit CLD learners and their families into French-language schools, pedagogical resources are clearly required in order to construct inclusive learning spaces.

In this chapter, I have discussed both provincial and school policies regarding French-language schooling and the admission and integration of CLD learners and their families. Although the aim of the École Cosmopolite is to produce a francophone space for its members, the following two chapters analyse the tensions teachers encounter when orchestrating French-only zones within their classrooms for increasingly CLD students.
Chapter Five:
From Policy to Practice

The following chapter is divided into three parts: first, I outline the characteristics of three types of classroom pedagogy and relate them to the pluri-literacies framework set forth in Chapter 2; second, I compare core participants’ perspectives and approaches to literacy instruction; third, I describe two classroom vignettes which illustrate tensions teachers encounter as they seek to implement policy and curricula within their classrooms with CLD students.

Three Orientations to Classroom Pedagogy

Three main orientations to classroom pedagogy have been identified as: (1) transmission; (2) social constructivist; and (3) transformative. (Cummins, 2001; Skourtou, Kourtis-Kaoullis, & Cummins, 2006). Transmission-oriented pedagogy is characterized by direct transmission from the teacher to students of information and skills set out in the curriculum. A social constructivist approach extends this transmission orientation to further support the development of students’ higher-order thinking abilities through co-construction of knowledge and understanding between teachers and students. The third transformative orientation reflects bhabha’s (1994) theoretical notion of productive Third space in that a transformative pedagogical orientation moves beyond the transmission of curriculum and the (co-)construction of knowledge to empower students to understand how knowledge intersects power. By creating Third Spaces for transformative learning within the classroom, teachers facilitate students’ development and practice of critical literacy and deep understanding.
Although Cummins’ (2001) initially represented these three orientations on a continuum from transmission to social constructivism and then to transformative, Skourtou, Kourtis-Kaoullis and Cummins (2006) subsequently moved from a two-dimensional linear representation toward a three-dimensional model that depicts these pedagogical orientations as three-dimensional cones nested within each other rather than being distinct from one another. This reconceptualization acknowledges the essential role of transmission pedagogy within the classroom, as one component of a more comprehensive framework for learning. With regard to this study on elementary CLD students’ literacies development, the transmission of discrete skills, including phonemic awareness and concepts of print, is both a legitimate and a necessary precursor for students’ development of critical literacy. In the following section, I analyze how teachers set up their classrooms as inclusive or exclusive learning spaces, or spheres. I have adapted Skourtou, Kourtis-Kaoullis and Cummins’ (2006) nested model in Figure 1 to represent the three pedagogical orientations as three expanding nested spheres in order to reflect schematically how teachers might orchestrate the learning sphere of their classroom as they translate pluri-literacies framework into practice. Transmission is an essential component of instruction but teachers can enlarge the learning spheres within their classrooms by the choices they make to facilitate students’ engagement in higher-level thinking and critical, transformative action. Accordingly, I have used a spherical representation of classroom learning spaces rather than a conical model (Skourtou, et al., 2006).
Figure 1. Adapted nested spheres of three pedagogical classroom orientations.

As teachers interpret policy and curriculum through their practice, they privilege specific languages and modes within their classrooms. Figure 2 depicts an ideal configuration in which a comprehensive transformative pedagogical orientation supports the inclusive and equitable pluri-literacies of all of its learners, francophones, anglophones and CLD learners. In this figure, a symmetrical pattern is produced through the overlapping of a plurality of literacy practices that schematically reflects the balance, equal value and harmony of all components. The sphere of classroom learning space is indicated by a broken line to reflect the need for learning spaces to be malleable and responsive to the realities of classroom practice.
Figure 2. Ideal symmetrical representation of pluri-literacies in the classroom.

By contrast, Figure 3 represents the asymmetrical realities of the classroom in which teachers come to privilege certain pedagogical orientations and instructional practices that tend towards excluding linguistic and culturally diversity. The classroom learning space is demarcated as a much smaller solid circle which signifies the resistance toward alter(n)ative practices and responses in the classroom.
Figure 3. Asymmetrical pluri-literacies representation in the classroom.

French-language school teachers face particularly complex, even paradoxical, challenges to support pluri-literacies development of their students while at the same time implementing policy mandates regarding the transmission of culture and language of instruction and communication. Gérin-Lajoie (2008) underscores

Lorsqu’on examine de près la réalité du milieu scolaire franco-ontarien, on arrive, à la conclusion que les pratiques enseignantes sont de trois ordres. Elles consistent à a) assurer la transmission des connaissances, b) assurer la socialisation des élèves, i.e. reproduire les valeurs dominantes du système majoritaire et enfin c) assurer la reproduction de la langue et de la culture minoritaires, ce qui veut dire dans certain cas, en assurer sa production, lorsque cette responsabilité n’a pas été remplie, entre autres, par la famille. (p. 32)

While a pluri-literacies approach to students’ literacy development hinges on an inclusive and transformative orientation to classroom practice, the three categories of responsibility
that Gérin-Lajoie (2008) identifies for teachers in French-language schools are all anchored within a transmission orientation to pedagogy: teachers are responsible for transmitting knowledge, reproducing dominant social values and guaranteeing the preservation of the French language and culture. Students consequently become positioned as passive receptors of the transmission process, rather than potential active cultural agents who could contribute in transformative ways in developing pluralistic francophone communities. The role of the teacher, particularly with respect to the (re)production of the French language and culture, is heightened because of parents and families’ apparent failure and/or inability to fulfill this linguistic and cultural duty. As a result, teachers’ interpretations of policy and curriculum play a critical role in shaping how they structure the learning spaces within their classroom. In the following section, I examine how teachers and the administrator at École Cosmopolite conceptualize and subsequently structure literacy instruction with their students.

**Conceptualising “littératie(s)” at École Cosmopolite**

Over the last decade, francophone scholarship has expanded more traditional notions of literacy as the discrete skills involved in reading and writing to include *la théorie des littératies multiples* (TLM) which takes into consideration school, community and home literacies in order to integrate *école-foyer-communauté* resources to support students’ francophone identity construction (Bours & Lentz, 2009; Masny, 2001, 2002, 2009). While this recognition and incorporation of students’ multiple literacies marks an important development within this field, TLM discussions remain paradoxically rooted in a monolingual mandate within French-language schools. While diverse literacy modes across the curriculum and evolving information and communication technologies (ICT)
are supported, linguistic diversity remains at the margins of classroom instruction. This exclusion of languages other than French grows out of prevailing assumptions regarding the maintenance of French in linguistic minority settings and the complex challenges associated with developing French literacy practices within French-language schools: for example, students possess varying levels of proficiency in French before starting school (Gérin-Lajoie, 1997, 2003, 2006); literacy and language resources in French are limited within an anglo-dominant context (Moreau, Lerclerc, & Prud'homme, 2009); and, parents who do not understand French feel ill-equipped to support their child’s French literacy development (Dione-Coster & Fauchon, 2009). These factors contribute to the argument for French-only use at school and the development of multiple literacies in French (Cazabon, 2005; Bours & Lentz, 2009).

The participating classroom teachers and administrator at École Cosmopolite each individually emphasized that literacy concerned more than reading and writing as discrete skills; in the words of Anne-Marie, “la littératie...c’est tout ce qui concerne le français ou la langue en général.” A recurring pattern throughout interviews was that students’ literacy development begins with their oral proficiency in French, encompasses learning to read and write and results overall in helping students become better, more effective communicators as they come to articulate their identities in French. Although participants recognized the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students, interview discussions of literacy theory and instruction centred on the use and development of French. Teachers acknowledged that they could introduce texts in which CLD learners might see themselves represented through pictures, and themes, and students could share about their
own cultural practices at home but students’ sharing always needed to be communicated in French.

Kindergarten teachers follow a “conscience phonologique” programme adopted by the school board in 2007 and Raconte-moi l’alphabet! (Laplante, 2003) to guide their literacy instruction. Although they do not necessarily plan their instruction collaboratively, the three kindergarten classes share and rotate resources among themselves. Once a cycle, Houda and Anne-Marie separate their junior and senior kindergarten students to work on specific skills. Houda works with the senior kindergarten students and Anne-Marie takes the junior kindergarten students. Across the classrooms, both teachers scaffold students’ French language development through the use of images, songs, repetition and routine.

Houda explains that in addition to her use of the school board’s conscience phonologique programme,

je ne communique qu’en français avec eux [her students], alors ils ont intérêt à faire travailler leur cerveau pour déchiffrer qu’est-ce que je dis, à force de répéter les mêmes choses, parfois avec des gestes, parfois avec des images... alors ils finissent par apprendre.

Houda suggests that by only communicating with students in French, her students develop their French proficiency out of necessity. Houda’s attention to decoding skills, segmentation and syllables throughout instruction demonstrates her belief that kindergarten literacy lays a foundation for her students’ future reading and writing at high grade levels. She structures her classroom routines around providing opportunities for her
students to develop their phonemic awareness by making letter-sound connections. For example, she recounts her opening routine,

J’ai les tapis, avec chaque tapis une lettre, une lettre de l’alphabet. Quand les amis arrivent, chacun prennent leurs tapis avec une lettre. À un certain moment, on va les échanger, mais déjà, ils savaient que “ça, c’est ma lettre.” Ils connaissaient aussi les lettres de ses amis. Ils sont toujours exposés aux lettres.

Over the observation period for this study from October 2008 to April 2009, students had made clear connections to their individual carpet letters and the letters of their friends. Students often exclaimed during conscience phonologique lessons as new sounds and letters were introduced that a particular letter “belonged” to a particular student. At other times, children were dismissed from their circle time by reciting the alphabet together and having each child return his/her letter carpet to the class pile when his or her respective letter was called. In this way, Houda infused her classroom organizational strategies and routines with literacy skills reinforcement activities. In addition to transmission oriented mini-lessons in which she modeled for students how to print letters and produce their corresponding sounds, she adopted a social constructivist approach to orchestrate opportunities for her students to apply such skills through interactive activities.

Although Anne-Marie also uses the school board’s conscience phonologique approach to literacy instruction, she describes her literacy instruction and practice broadly:

La littératie, pour moi, c’est tout ce qui concerne le français ou la langue en général. Dans ce cas-ci, c’est forcément français, lecture, lire les livres
souvent, le plus souvent possible, ... de faire l’écriture, faire de la lecture, parler... donner plus de temps si les enfants peuvent parler, tout ce qui concerne le français, on fait forcément la plus grosse partie de la journée est consacrée à la littératie... Pour moi, l’important c’est qu’ils prennent plaisir à lire en français, qu’ils prennent plaisir à lire les livres, à tenir les livres dans leurs mains, à découvrir qu’est-ce qui se passe dans les livres. Les enfants développent un goût ...j’espère... qu’ils vont aimer ça, qu’ils vont aimer le français.

Anne-Marie prioritizes oral expression in her classroom throughout the day. Each morning begins with students having an opportunity to share their feelings and thoughts. Such conversations take time but the verbal interaction helps her scaffold children’s oral language development. Anne-Marie’s desire to whet the appetites of her students with a love for reading, and more broadly for a curiosity for learning and understanding their world in French is embodied through her practice. She is sensitive to the developmental stage of her students and values classroom opportunities in which students can interact with her and their peers and engage in learning through play. Accordingly, literacy and language development are woven throughout the day. Even during snack time, most often Anne-Marie sits with the students and talks with them as they eat. Conversations during such time span a variety of topics according to students’ interests and experiences. Because there is not a formal lesson to complete, these spaces often open up natural learning spaces in which children talk freely, express their beliefs and voice their questions. By encouraging such interactions, Anne-Marie learns more about her students and is able to help students make connections between their learning at school and their lives beyond the classroom. Snack times which are often perceived as breaks or interruptions in-between instructional periods have the potential to become Third Spaces
in which topics and languages which are systematically excluded from formal instruction can be bridged. The following classroom event illustrates how home languages and experiences are allowed into the liminal space of snack time in Anne-Marie’s classroom:

I sat down with a group of students while they ate their snack and Rhamsey, an energetic senior kindergarten student, was telling a story animatedly. Even when I sneezed, Rhamsey continued theatrically unfolding his narrative. Madame Anne-Marie promptly interrupted him and asked, “Rhamsey, tu dis pas, “À vos souhaits à Madame Gail quand elle a fait ‘Ahh-choo’?”

Without missing a beat, Rhamsey replied, “Non, on dit pas ça.”

Anne-Marie had a quizzical look come across her face and then she realized, “Ah-oui, c’est vrai Rhamsey! Tu dis pas ça à la maison. Ta mère te dit, ‘[XXX - in Arabic].’”

“Quoi?” He responds surprised by her knowing comment.

“Tu parles en Arabe à la maison. Je sais. Ta mère te dit ‘[XXX - in Arabic]’ quand tu fais ‘Ahh-choo’! Mais, en français, on dit “à vos souhaits!”

“O! Ok!” He smiles with understanding and he turns as he nods to me and says, “À vos souhaits!”

In this example, Anne-Marie is able to draw on her knowledge of Rhamsey’s home life and languages, as well as, her own experiences learning Arabic. In the informal context of snack time, the boundaries of the French-language classroom are crossed as she makes the connection for Rhamsey between French and Arabic. She recognizes that Rhamsey was not meaning to be rude by not saying anything when I sneezed. He was not
in the practice of saying anything in French when someone sneezed and so had simply carried on with his story. When Anne-Marie realizes that Rhamsey’s lack of response was related to his language awareness in Arabic and French, she makes the connection explicit and repeats the relevant French phrase. Although Rhamsey is at first surprised that Madame Anne-Marie has said something in Arabic, he understands her in both languages and then he in turn applies the French phrase appropriately before carrying on with his story. This example is one of many informal exchanges I observed in which the rules regulating French-only language use in classroom are temporarily suspended in order to support French-language development. The frequency and consistency of such encounters were unpredictable; the only commonality shared among such conversations was that they unfolded within “in-between spaces” when participants were not constrained by a pre-scripted activity or a timed schedule.

The need to expand vocabulary and create opportunities to practice oral expression in French continues to grow from the kindergarten stage throughout the elementary grades. Within her Grade 2/3 classroom, Yvette also emphasizes the centrality of literacy across the curriculum because of the francophone minority context:

Je garde en tête que les littératies s’insèrent dans toutes les matières que j’enseigne, qu’ils doivent être une priorité dans mon enseignement justement à cause du contexte minoritaire. ... Je considère au sein de toutes les autres matières, toutes les activités qu’on fait, ce que je garde dans ma tête, c’est de ... travailler de la lecture, de l’écriture, et de la communication orale... C’est au coeur des autres matières, puis si on relâche avec ça, la littératie, ben, on relâche un peu partout.
Yvette’s definition of literacy encompasses reading, writing and oral communication in French. Throughout observation periods, she highlighted that the lack of students’ vocabulary in French, as well as, across content curriculum areas such as math and science, is the most significant challenge. Students reading comprehension and their writing are limited by their French vocabulary development. The annual provincial EQAO/OQRE grade three assessments in Reading, Writing and Math pose formidable challenges for Yvette and her students. Interestingly, the example Yvette provided when describing the difficulties caused by lack of vocabulary in French came from students’ preparation for the mathematic assessment. She recounts:

Chaque jour il faut toujours simplifier. Il faut que je simplifie les consignes au maximum, répéter trois, quatre fois en changeant les mots. C’est d’expliquer les termes. Il leur manque beaucoup beaucoup de vocabulaire, ce qui leur fait perdre le sens quand ils lisent... Ils ne peuvent pas appliquer une consigne correctement dans une évaluation – c’est pas parce qu’ils ne comprennent pas le concept, mais c’est qu’ils bloquent dans le vocabulaire de la question... Puis, nous, à cause des problèmes reliés à la langue, à la lacune de vocabulaire, ... on lit les questions avec eux, on leur explique les mots, eux trouvent la réponse tous seuls, mais on s’assure qu’ils comprennent la question, qu’ils comprennent les concepts fondamentaux autour de la question. Mais, ils arrivent, après ça au test de l’OQRE, et on les laisse à eux-mêmes, on n’a pas le droit de rien expliquer, de rien spécifier... C’est un peu catastrophique parce qu’ils viennent me voir, ils disent, “Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire?” Et, c’est le mot central pour comprendre la question. Il faut leur répéter, répéter mais ça s’accrocher pas dans la tête comme si c’est dans une première langue...
Madame Yvette is acutely aware that transmission-oriented assessments discriminate against students who may understand curricular concepts but may not have yet developed academic literacy to demonstrate their knowledge in French.

As the ALF/PDF support teacher, Ariana broadly conceptualizes literacy as encompassing the domains of reading, writing and oral communication in French. She explains,

"Si je parle de la littératie, c’est encore un concept large. C’est pas seulement la lecture ou, jusque la langue, mais c’est... tout un ensemble, c’est toutes les conventions linguistiques, c’est la lecture, c’est l’écriture, c’est la compréhension de la lecture, c’est les stratégies de la compréhension de la lecture, c’est le vocabulaire qui est parti, c’est les stratégies de l’écoute, c’est parce que normalement la communication orale, c’est pas seulement le langage, c’est l’écoute, la prise de la parole, donc toutes ces stratégies-là, tout ce contexte que je viens de mentionner, ça fait tout ce qu’on a fait la littératie.

Literacy is the ability to express oneself and engage with others in meaningful communicative encounters. In addition, she highlights the proliferation of information and communication technologies magnify the need for students to develop critical literacy. Students need to be able not simply to decode, or even to comprehend a text but more critically to analyze, to interpret and to evaluate information:

"c’est pas le but juste de copier, de copier-coller, le but c’est d’utiliser des stratégies qu’on apprend en salle de classe en cadre de littératies pour qu’ils puissent produire des textes, pour qu’ils puissent expliquer des concepts qu’on a étudiés en sciences et en études sociales, et pour qu’ils puissent rédiger des textes, des projets ... à l’internet, on voit pas mal de
textes qui ne sont pas appropriés, qui ont le langage difficile. À ce moment, c’est les compétences transversales de l’élève, c’est les pensées supérieures, qui vont décider, qui vont aider l’élève à lire, à relier ... à utiliser leur langue pour pouvoir rédiger un résumé, et pouvoir refléter la compréhension de concepts qu’ils sont en train d’étudier.

Ariana discusses literacy instruction in terms of helping students develop strategies for effective engagement in reading, writing and communicating. Similarly, the principal, Pierre, views literacy as a bridging construct to support students’ overall development in French:

Maintenant, on essaye de travailler le français mais de façon intégrée... l’oral est vraiment l’aspect qui permet de travailler toutes les autres de façon intégrée, comme le pont entre l’écriture et la lecture. Alors, on essaye de travailler vraiment en intégration, ou il y a des blocs de littératures ou les enfants travaillent en même temps, tous les aspects du français de façon intégrée... On prend compte de tous les éléments possibles pour en faire les meilleurs communicateurs.

Literacy instruction integrates reading, writing and oral expression to help individuals communicate their thoughts, ideas and beliefs. Teachers are increasingly concerned with bridging literacy gaps by drawing on students’ individual interests and by using ICT effectively as tools to mediate learning. Pierre emphasizes that teachers can look for books and themes that relate to students’ cultural backgrounds and interests in order to promote their literacy engagement. In addition, teachers are required to assess students’ reading levels and then to scaffold students’ learning in order to help them develop specific strategies that will enable them to become more effective readers.
Although teachers and the school administrator each articulated their own guiding definitions of literacy, there are commonalities shared among their definitions. Oral communication in French is a key component of students’ literacy development, especially in a minority setting. Teachers, therefore, prioritize opportunities for students to engage in communicative activities that support the development of effective reading, writing and communication strategies. Overall, the core participants in this study agreed that literacy development both depends on and extends beyond the discrete skills of reading and writing. This shared conceptualization reflects Skourtis, Kourtis-Kazoullis and Cummins’ (2008) acknowledgement of the role of transmission-oriented pedagogy in helping students to develop the necessary skills to decode and encode text, while at the same time, highlighting the need for teachers to help students apply these skills in meaningful, critical practice. Teacher participants generally demonstrated a social-constructivist pedagogical orientation during interviews, observation and the final focus group. While teachers expressed a desire to engage in transformative learning experiences with their students, the tensions of classroom practice often resulted in teachers’ maintenance of a social-constructivist approach, if not altogether limiting them to transmission-oriented pedagogy. The following two classroom vignettes illustrate the constraints teachers must negotiate in order to engage in authentic, meaningful learning with their students.

**Red Pigs on Thursday**

It is a day 4 in the school cycle so this morning Madame Vivianne, a part-time art teacher, greets Anne-Marie’s kindergarten students outside along with the other kindergarten students and their respective teachers. Madame Vivianne invited me to join
in with the art activities she had planned to do during her planning time coverage period for Anne-Marie. An extra pair of hands would be especially useful for the cutting and pasting activity she had planned, as well as with helping with coat zippers and missing mittens and boots. As the children enter the classroom, they hang up their backpacks on their hooks and then find their assigned places on the carpet for the morning routine. Madame Vivianne takes attendance and then reviews the date. There is no time for extended conversations this morning because Madame Vivianne has a story to read and then a reading response activity to do within the remaining 30 minutes.

She makes sure the children are all sitting in their listening position with their legs crossed and their hands in their laps and then, she begins to read the book aloud. She has chosen a story about farm animals because Anne-Marie had informed her that the next unit was on farms. As Madame Vivianne reads the story, she has the children make the corresponding animal sounds.

“Meuh. Cocorico Cocorico. Bêêêêê.” They love making all the different noises.

Once she has finished reading the story, she introduces the reading response activity. She pulls out another picture book with step-by-step instructions and illustrations about how to make cows and pigs. She announces to the children that everyone is going to make pink pigs like the ones in the book they have just read together. She reviews all the materials that she has brought with her and asks a student to tell her where in the classroom they keep markers, pencil crayons, scissors and glue. Once she feels that students have understood her directions, she sends individual, quietly-seated students from the carpet to their respective tables.
After the students are settled at their tables, a couple of students point out that they do not have pink markers or pencil crayons. Madame Vivianne realizes that there are no pink markers, pencil crayons or even crayons in any of the colouring bins. I check another shelf of craft material supplies but there are no pink markers there either. As Madame Vivianne realizes that her forty-minute art period has only ten to fifteen minutes left, a decision must be made quickly. She announces to the students that they should use red instead. Red is the next best choice to pink, is it not? Students grab for the red markers and pencil crayons in the bins on their tables and begin colouring as rapidly as they can. Some students finish quickly and are able to pass on their red markers to other students who are waiting. Others begin by cutting out of the pig’s body parts. Cutting before colouring did not correspond with the step-by-step instructions that had been given at the beginning of the activity.

Ten minutes before the end of the period, Madame Vivianne discovers that one student has coloured his pig blue. Exasperated, she takes the marker from him. She shakes her finger back and forth to motion that he has not followed the instructions and she says, “Les cochons sont rouges, pas bleus!” She had told them to make red pigs not blue ones. She gives him a red marker and then continues to circulate around the other tables. This junior kindergarten student seems puzzled by Madame Vivianne’s actions. He does not speak French or English and whenever he does attempt to speak, his garbled words are barely audible. Other teachers have commented that he always avoids looking directly up at them when he speaks. Even when he does speak to his classmates, the other students generally do not understand the “sounds” that he makes.
He puts the red marker down. He picks up a purple marker instead. Then, he continues his colouring contentedly. Meanwhile, Madame Vivianne is trying to attend to the needs of multiple other students: some children are having difficulty with cutting out their pigs; and, others cannot find any glue in their bins. Five minutes remain in the class and Madame Vivianne decides that to save time and frustration on everyone’s part, she will staple pigs’ ears to bodies. She instructs students to line up when they are ready for her to staple their pigs together.

Madame Vivianne sits down at an empty chair beside the boy who is now colouring with a purple marker on his original blue pig. At the sight of this blue-purple pig, Madame Vivianne lets out a sigh of utter frustration. She tears the paper away from the boy and gives him a new blank one to start over with a red marker. She says, “Non! Les cochons sont rouges!” Then, she turns to me, “Il parle pas français.” He doesn’t speak French. Anne-Marie then returns to class and Madame Vivianne has the students hurriedly clean up and return to their places on the carpet for Madame Anne-Marie.

When Madame Vivianne leaves the classroom with the red pigs under her arm, along with her books and materials for the next kindergarten art class, Madame Anne-Marie tells her students that she is unhappy with the messy state of the classroom. There are paper scraps on the floor, glue on the tables and a couple of chairs that have not been pushed in. A couple of students scramble to the tables to clean up properly. When everyone is finally seated again, Madame Anne-Marie takes a deep breath. Another whirlwind art class is over.
This classroom vignette illustrates how tensions of time, territory, materials and miscommunication translate a social constructivist oriented activity into a transmission-oriented reading response. Madame Vivianne desires for students to engage meaningfully in her art activities and she clearly tries to link projects to kindergarten classroom themes. In this instance, however, the constraints of the classroom resulted in her overriding students’ choice and creativity in order to ensure that the task was completed within the allotted time. As such, the children’s production of red pigs became a scripted reading response rather than a creative response to the read-aloud story about farm animals.

Three questions at key stages in the progression of this activity help illustrate the shift away from a potentially transformative learning experience towards students’ unreflective reproduction of red pigs. Upon reading the farm animal story, Madame Vivianne used another book to describe how to make cows and pigs. She then told students that they would be making pigs like the ones in the story they had read together. The first question I pose is why must all students make pigs? A number of other animals were introduced throughout the story and she had reviewed instructions for making both cows and pigs. Madame Vivianne decision that students would all make pigs was not motivated out of a desire to limit students’ creativity but rather a desire to simplify the activity so it could be completed within the allotted time frame of the period. To provide students with choices necessitates that additional time be allotted for students’ decision-making. The second question arose when Madame Vivianne realized that there were no pink markers or crayons in the classroom and so she declared that students would make red pigs. Why red pigs? Madame Vivianne reasoned that red was the closest colour to pink that they had in the classroom. Again, she wanted to simplify the activity so that
students could complete it successfully within class time and with limited classroom resources. It would be easier to manage and assess students if they all reproduce the same product – even if pigs were not red in the story, nor are they red in reality! Madame Vivianne’s decision at this point also emanated from the fact that she was not teaching in her own classroom and was unfamiliar at the beginning of the year with classroom supplies. Finally, Madame Vivianne’s response to the CLD learner’s blue and purple pig at the end of class raises the question of why not blue-purple pigs? The student had not understood Madame Vivianne’s instruction to colour the pigs red. He had chosen different colours from the marker bin on his table and seemed happy with his multi-coloured pig. Did Madame Vivianne take away his blue-purple pig because she read it as an act of resistance to her French instruction? Was there some added merit to having all students create red pigs rather than individually choosing their own colours? Madame Vivianne clearly realized that the student had not understood her instructions in French. At the same time, she did not seem prepared to adapt to the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterised École Cosmopolite’s population. Teachers orchestrate learning spaces through their choices. In this instance, Madame Vivianne had to negotiate the classrooms tension including time constraints, lack of familiarity with the classroom territory and materials, as well as miscommunication due to students’ limited understanding of French. Madame Vivianne seeks to prepare meaningful art activities that will help the kindergarten students respond to literature and classroom themes while developing fine motor skills and aesthetic appreciation. This classroom encounter, however, magnifies the competing factors that influence teachers’ decisions in practice and result in limiting students’ authentic and transformative engagement in learning. The
following example also highlights these tensions, while at the same time, illustrates the challenge of engaging CLD learners in meaningful language learning and literacy development in French.

*L’anguille, la gazelle et les muguet.*

The bell rings and Madame Lise’s Grade 1 and Grade 2 students stream into their classroom. Madame Ariana stands at the door and directs students to take a seat on the carpet. The students’ energy spills out of them as they continue their conversations from the playground. Madame Ariana covers the split Grade 1/2 class for Madame Lise for two forty-minute blocks each five-day cycle; the periods always directly follow lunch recess. These two coverage periods have been designated as ALF/PDF instructional periods for the entire class. Madame Ariana has already explained to me all students at École Cosmopolite can benefit from ALF/PDF instruction because vocabulary development in a francophone minority setting is a challenge for all learners regardless of their linguistic backgrounds. She tries to make connections to Madame Lise’s instructional programme but the two teachers do not formally plan classes together.

When all the students have entered the classroom, she waits patiently for them to settle down. Then, she explains that she has three activities to review “g” words from their previous session and to introduce new “h” words: “1) les poèmes; 2) les cartes; and 3) les feuilles de travail”. She reads two poems aloud that include the new words beginning with the letter “h” and she has students identify rhyming pairs in the poems. While she is reading a group of girls are drawing on each other’s backs and one of the boys is crawling around behind her chair. At each distraction, she tries to affirm positive behaviour by saying, “Je félicite Hafsaa. Je félicite Elizabeth et David.” Eventually, she
concludes this process by remarking, “Je félicite tout le monde, sauf Derrick.” He reacts as though he does not understand why she has singled him out, and they begin an exchange regarding his disruptive behaviour. She sends him to sit on a chair apart from the other students on the classroom carpet.

Madame Ariana proceeds then to show students picture cards to review “g” words from the last class and the new “h” words that she has introduced through the poem. The picture cards are intended to help students understand the meaning of each word. After students chorally say the names of each picture, she shows them the worksheets that she has brought for them to complete. The sheets require that students trace and copy the letter “h” and then recopy two sentences that use the “h” words. In addition, she writes the following 3 sentences on the board which contain new “g” words: (1) La gazelle court vite. (2) J’aime les muguet. (3) L’anguille est un animal aquatique. She instructs students to write carefully the three sentences into their French workbooks.

Madame Ariana calls out the names of students who are sitting quietly on the carpet before her and appear ready to get to work. Students collect their ALF/PDF work folder from Madame Ariana when they are called and proceed to their desks. Some students quickly settle into the assigned work, while other students are much more reluctant to get started. Madame Ariana reminds them that they only have fifteen minutes remaining in which to start and complete the worksheets and copy sentences in their French workbooks. She circulates around the class and tries to keep students focused on their work. She points out that for the Grade 1 students, the activities take much longer. For the Grade two students though, many of them can finish the work within the allotted time. She directs students who finish more quickly to colour the pictures on the
worksheets. Some of the students, however, are not interested in colouring and begin to wander around the classroom. She keeps telling them to return to their desks and with each reminder, she grows more weary of the constant need to “discipline”. The noise level mounts as students begin talking amongst themselves so she raises her voice to be heard, ironically, as she says, “Je ne crie pas. Je ne veux pas passer la période à faire de la discipline. Fais ton travail à ta place”. Madame Lise returns to the classroom and a number of students get up from their desks to approach her. Madame Ariana calls for students to put their worksheets into their folders and to return them to her so she can bring them back for their next period together. Madame Lise repeats Madame Ariana’s instructions and then adds that students should take their places on the carpet. Once Madame Ariana has all the folders, she hurries from the classroom to her office where she will meet her next small group of ALF/PDF students.

In this classroom vignette, Madame Ariana seeks to create meaningful language experiences for the students by reading poems and scaffolding students’ understanding of new words through picture cards. The students, however, are rowdy right after lunch and are not overly enthusiastic about doing seatwork in response to the poems. In addition to the time and space constraints that Madame Ariana negotiates because she works with this class only twice a week, she also is concerned about planning instruction for a split grade-level class. She tries to create opportunities for students to share personal anecdotes at the start of class when they come in from lunch recess, but she finds that some students dominate the conversation and there is never enough time for everyone to share if they are to complete the “real” work that she has planned.
While the aim of ALF/PDF instruction is to support students’ overall development of French and school-based literacy, Madame Ariana focuses on isolated vocabulary development. All of the participants in the study identified students’ lack of vocabulary as a significant challenge for their reading, writing and speaking in French. While Madame Ariana sincerely seeks to help students expand their vocabulary, she does so through asking them to perform cognitively undemanding and scaffolding reduced activities (Cummins, 2001; Coehlo, n.d.). In this lesson, students were introduced to new words including l’anguille, la gazelle et les muguets. She then asked students to copy three sentences from the blackboard into their notebooks containing the three words. A number of questions emerge: Why were those three words chosen? How are the words meaningful for students’ use at school and their lives in general? What language skills are developed by copying the three sentences and completing worksheets? Students’ behaviour during this period indicates that they are not engaged in the activities that they are required to complete. Coehlo (n.d.) adapts Cummin’s (2001) four quadrant model to help teachers scaffold students’ engagement in relevant learning for their lives. Madame Ariana earnestly seeks to support students French proficiency but she relies heavily on paper-pencil worksheets because of the limited time she has to spend with students and the cumbersome task of setting up and cleaning up materials in a classroom that is not her own. Although Ariana’s goal is to respond to the need for vocabulary development that the teachers and administrator at École Cosmopolite have identified, her realization of the goal is constrained by classroom realities.

This chapter has outlined three pedagogical orientations from transmission, to social constructivism and ultimately to transformation. Teachers and the administrator at
École Cosmopolite clearly conceptualize literacy practices in a broad integrated sense and believe that students overall development in French is essential for their academic achievement and personal understanding. Two classroom vignettes have illustrated some of the tensions teachers face as they try to engage CLD learners in their classrooms. Time, materials and meaningful communication emerge as key factors in allowing teachers to adopt a social-constructivist approach in their classroom practice. While these last two examples demonstrate how good intentions culminated in transmission-oriented teaching practices, the following chapter analyses how teachers support transformative alter(n)ative learning experiences at École Cosmopolite.
Chapter Six:
Alter(n)ative Practices

The objective of this chapter is to examine school instances in which teachers demonstrate a transformative pedagogical orientation toward their practice with CLD learners by opening up alter(n)ative spaces for learning in their classrooms. Alter(n)ative learning spaces are characterized by students’ and teachers’ alter-ative engagement with one another such that they are positively changed, empowered and transformed through their shared experience. In some instances, changes are tangibly noted through students’ active engagement and leadership within their community of learners; in other cases, transformation occurs by challenging traditional ways of knowing through the validation of other perspectives and unanticipated but legitimate responses to learning activities. Based on classroom observation, teacher interviews and a focus group discussion at École Cosmopolite, five types of alter(n)ative encounters are analyzed: (a) alter(n)ative beginnings; (b) alter(n)ative messages; (c) alter(n)ative responses to traditional activities; (d) alter(n)ative literacies; and, (e) alter(n)ative experiences through the Arts. The chapter analyzes the conditions that help build alter(n)ative learning spaces in the classroom such that transformative experiences occur not only as serendipitous events in the life of a learning community but also as the result of intentional critical planning to create inclusive and equitable classrooms for all learners in French-language schools.

Alter(n)ative Learning Spaces in École Cosmopolite

While the linguistic mandate of the school to help students develop literacy in French is manifested through teachers’ discourse and pedagogical instruction, teachers naturally seek ways to help students engage in their learning. Cummins’ (2001) model of
academic expertise demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between students’ cognitive engagement and identity investment within the interpersonal learning space that the teacher creates within the classroom. This framework argues that “students’ cognitive engagement must be maximized if they are to progress academically. Similarly, teacher-student interactions must affirm students’ cultural, linguistic, and personal identities in order to create classroom conditions for maximum identity investment in the learning process (Cummins, 2001, p. 26). One of the arguments for the establishment of French-language schools for francophone minority children concerned the underachievement of such students in anglophone schools where the linguistic, cultural and personal identities of francophone minority students were being excluded from anglophone school settings. By winning the right to govern French-language schools in Ontario, francophone minority parents could ensure that their children would receive education in their first language through a schooling model that took into account the challenges of living in a minority context. The increasing diversification of francophone minority school populations, such as in the case of École Cosmopolite, necessitates that teachers find alter(n)ative ways to work within the linguistic and cultural mandate of French-language schools to include the diverse identities of CLD learners.

*Alter(n)ative Starts to the Day*

All of the teacher participants and the administrator at École Cosmopolite underscored the importance of supporting students’ oral communication in French as a key component of their literacy development. Accordingly, each school day begins with morning announcements led by a group of students in French. Madame Ariana coordinates junior grade level students each morning by outlining the announcements in
French for the day and dividing up the parts among students. The opportunity to hear their voices broadcast over the announcement system at school allows them to take ownership for the activities that take place within their school. Students also announce all of the individual birthdays in the school each day. The announcements provide students with an occasion to practice oral communication skills and to be praised for their efforts by their peers and staff at École Cosmopolite. At the start of the day, student-led announcements seek to create an atmosphere within the school that affirms the voices and participation of its students.

After morning announcements, all teacher participants conduct opening classroom routines through which students are encouraged to make connections between their personal home lives and their learning at school. Over the course of classroom observations, two opening activities, in particular, emerged as alter(n)ative ways to start the school day: the first “enfant vedette” activity is an example of a planned activity; whereas, the second reflective activity flowed out of Madame Yvette’s intuitive response to a recurrent theme that emerged one morning from students’ daily sharing.

“Enfant vedette” is an activity that kindergarten teachers at École Cosmopolite introduce in second term once students have settled into their classroom learning communities. Each week, one child is chosen to be the “Enfant vedette” in class and s/he is given ten to fifteen minutes each morning to share about his or her life and then other students ask questions. In addition to sending information regarding the weekly project home to parents, Madame Anne-Marie calls the chosen student’s parents to help them facilitate their child’s sharing. Each student has five opportunities over the course of the week to share about his/her family, favourite activities, toys, and memories. She
encourages children to bring in photographs of important people, places and things or to draw them by himself or by herself. These pictures are displayed at the front of the classroom throughout the week. On one day during the week, the child is also encouraged to bring in a family member or special person to share with the class. Even if parents or family members do not speak French, they are welcomed into the classroom and into this sharing activity. Madame Anne-Marie strongly encourages parental participation in the life of the classroom community because she feels it is important for children to see that their parents are involved in their learning. This “Enfant vedette” sharing opportunity also enables the child to demonstrate his or her proficiency in French to his or her family within the context of the classroom.

One morning when Henry was the enfant vedette, he chose to bring his youngest brother Samuel to share with the class. Samuel was not yet 2 years old, so Henry’s parents came along, as well. Henry’s family speaks English at home: his father is a monolingual anglophone but Henry’s mother speaks French. Henry is the eldest of three boys. He is a confident, senior kindergarten student and enthusiastic about his presentation. This morning, Henry proudly reviews for the class and his parents the pictures that he has already put on display: a LEGO structure, a photograph with Santa Claus, his own drawing of cars and a painting. When he begins to introduce his baby brother, Henry gets stuck on his words. His mother gently prompts him in French, but Henry then continues in English. She repeats softly, “En français.” Henry realizes he needs to speak in French to his classmates and proceeds to do so as he introduces Sam. Henry leads Sam around to greet everyone and some students ask questions. At the end of the presentation, his father whispers to Henry in a hushed voice, “Good job, buddy!”
Before his father leaves, Henry responds, “What was your favourite part, daddy?”

“Les voitures!” His father smiles and gives him a high five as he sends Henry back to his place on the carpet. As Henry’s mother gathers up Sam to take him home, Madame Anne-Marie thanks Henry’s parents for joining them and encourages the students to do the same. The children stand up to wave good-bye and Anne-Marie remarks, “C’est bon quand la famille s’implique.”

Through the “Enfant vedette” experience, kindergarten teachers at École Cosmopolite make space for the parents and families of their students to become active participants in the classroom. The sharing activity takes place over the course of a full school week, at the beginning of each school day to facilitate parents’ participation; they can come to school with their child on the morning that suits their schedule best. In addition, by having the sharing event at the start of each day, it becomes a starting point for other conversations throughout the day.

In this example, Henry was able to both physically and symbolically bring his home life to school and into his classroom. During this planned sharing time, Madame Anne-Marie privileges parental involvement over the French-only school norm and in so doing, Henry is able code-switch naturally between French and English as he shares about his family and receives positive affirmation from his parents, his peers and his teacher for his presentation. In contrast to traditional show-and-tell models which provide brief occasions for students to bring something from home to share at school, this enfant vedette sharing activity supports students’ extended meaningful oral expression in French and provides clear parameters for parents to be able to work with their child to present
significant parts of their lives to their peers and teacher. Through the experience, the child gains confidence to tell his or her personal story with the support of special people, and artifacts.

At the Grade 2 and Grade 3 levels, Madame Yvette also seeks to provide meaningful opportunities for students to share about their lives. Each morning, after students have settled into the classroom, Madame Yvette invites students individually to share with their class about how they are feeling. Typically, she prompts students to begin their sharing with, “Aujourd’hui, je suis content(e)/fatigué(e)/faché(e)...” On most mornings, students share a wide variety of thoughts and feelings about what happened the night before, what happened on the way to school or what they are anticipating during the day. One morning, Madame Yvette noted that student after student was starting his/her sharing by the phrase, “Je suis faché(e) aujourd’hui parce que...” In an effort to help students start the day in a positive frame of mind, Madame Yvette stopped their morning sharing and explained that because everyone seemed to be having such a difficult morning, she wanted to play a game for which they each needed to think of one thing which made them happy, for which they could say, “Merci, pour aujourd’hui!” Although the first 10 minutes of their sharing time had been dominated by students’ feelings of discontentment and frustration, over the course of the next 20 minutes each student was able to identify one thing for which s/he was thankful. The atmosphere of their learning space was transformed and out of this new positive space, Madame Yvette transitioned into the agenda for the rest of the day. Madame Yvette’s attitude intervention meant that she needed to rearrange morning activities to account for the extra time they had spent on their morning sharing. By letting go of her original day plan and responding to the felt
needs of her students, she was able not only to optimize time for students to work on their oral expression in French, but also to do so in a way that encouraged them to reflect meaningfully on their lives and the many things for which they could be thankful.

Time and flexibility at the outset of the day are shared characteristics of both the structured *enfant vedette* sharing in kindergarten classes and the spontaneous attitude game within daily sharing in the Grade 2 and 3 class. In Kindergarten, the *enfant vedette* of the week has an extended period of time to share each morning. Although there are guidelines for what can be shared, there is flexibility to adapt to the child (and the parents’) needs. In the Grade 2/3 sharing time, Madame Yvette allots 10 to 15 minutes for sharing each morning – but, as the classroom teacher, she is flexible to guide more extended discussions as she gages students’ attitudes and responses. Consequently, students in Madame Yvette’s class develop communication skills, along with a sense of security to share their thoughts and feelings. Madame Yvette does not judge students’ feelings but guides them in positive ways to support the functioning of their community of learners. These examples from classroom practice suggest that teachers can, indeed, facilitate students’ alter(n)ative pluri-literacies development by being responsive with time and flexibility in their pedagogical practice.

*Alter(n)ative Messages*

In addition to Madame Yvette’s morning sharing time through which she facilitates students’ oral expression in French, Madame Yvette also writes her students a daily “*Message du jour*”. Whereas whole class discussions each morning are open-ended, this daily message allows Madame Yvette to target particular aspects of written
expression in French, including grammar, punctuation and style. In each message, she leaves a number of related errors and the students are asked to identify and correct them as they read through the message. The content of the messages usually relates to an aspect of their lives together as a community of learners such as weekend activities, school events, and local activities in French. Figure 4 illustrates Madame Yvette’s unedited message du jour the morning following March Break.

![Unedited Message du Jour](image)

**Figure 4. Unedited Message du Jour.**

By reading the message du jour with the whole class each day, Madame Yvette also reviews relevant reading and writing strategies with her students. Madame Yvette used the message du jour in Figure 4 to invite students as they entered the classroom to begin
thinking about what they might share about their March Break activities. Together as a class, they corrected the message and it became a launching point for their morning discussion and journal writing.

Students in Madame Yvette’s class anticipate her message each day because even when she is away, she sends a message for the, supply teacher to share. Figure 5 illustrates a *message du jour* that Madame Yvette left for her Grade 2/3 class when she was away with the school choir. Another staff member taught Madame Yvette’s class in her absence and the figure below shows how he used the message to review singular and plural agreements, verb conjugation and capitalization. In this instance, Madame Yvette’s choir member students were also away from the class with her. This message to those students who remained at school also served to remind them that Madame Yvette was thinking of them even while she was away. Through her *message du jour*, she models written communication strategies in personal and meaningful ways for her students.
Figure 5. Edited Message du Jour.

Madame Yvette also uses the message du jour in creative ways to highlight for her students different genres of writing and to develop a French culture of reading and writing within her classroom. Within a francophone minority setting, researchers and policy makers have underscored the critical need for French-language schools to foster a “culture de l’écrit” (Early Reading Expert Panel, 2003; Masny, 2001). During my observation periods, Madame Yvette wrote morning messages in both prose and poetic genres, as well as using both cursive and block print. Figure 6 illustrates an acrostic message du jour in which Madame Yvette modeled a poetic form that students were working with in their classroom writing. In addition to the poetic genre, the message incorporates both block and cursive handwriting.
Figure 6. Acrostic Message du Jour.

Madame Yvette communicates her care and concern for her students through endearing expressions such as “mes coeurs”, “mes gentils amis” and “mes lapins”. In so doing, she draws her students into her personal messages while helping them to develop out-of-school or affective vocabulary in French. She uses the daily routine of discussing and editing the message du jour to build an atmosphere of collaboration in which students can come to see reading, writing and communicating with one another as important activities for their classroom community.

‘I can write.’

At the Kindergarten level, teachers use different strategies to help students engage in a culture of print in French. Madame Houda has a morning routine in which students
help her write the date on the board each day. Beyond this morning routine, Madame Houda leaves blank space the main blackboard in her classroom where children are allowed to write and draw when they finish an activity early, or during free-play periods. Whereas the Message du jour activity provides a forum for Madame Yvette to model alter(n)ative messages for her Grade 2 and Grade 3 students, Madame Houda conceptualizes her open blackboard space as a writing space on which her kindergarten children can experiment and express themselves in print. Over the course of my classroom observations, many students availed of the opportunity to write and draw on the blackboard. Madame Houda demonstrates a keen understanding of students’ backgrounds, interests and abilities. She often shared her observations and insights into her students’ emergent writing skills. One morning after recess, I returned to the classroom to find Amit printing the year, the month and his name on the board. I watched him copy the year and the month from where it appeared higher on the blackboard and he wrote his name from memory. With his hand still on the board, he turned his head to see the calendar on the sidewall of the classroom. Then, he turned back to the board and proceeded to write the number 25 before his name. He put the chalk down once he was finished and moved to find his chair at his group table. I did not understand why he had written the number 25 because that was not the actual date. When Madame Houda walked into the classroom a few moments later, she noticed Amit’s message on the board. Although I had not recognized the significance of what he had written, she immediately praised his writing by specifically commenting what a good job he had done writing his birthday on the blackboard. Because my surprise at her knowing interpretation was evident, Madame Houda redirected my attention to the sidewall of the classroom.
where there was a picture of a birthday cake on the class calendar. At the beginning of the month, the class had noted with the symbol of a cake that they would celebrate Amit’s birthday on the 25th. In his message on the blackboard, Amit carefully printed the year, month and his name. Then, he checked the calendar in order to correctly copy the number of his birthday. His special day was less than 2 weeks away and he expressed his excitement and anticipation by reading the calendar and writing the date with his name on the blackboard. By leaving open space on the blackboard for students to write, Madame Houda encourages students to express themselves in writing. The blackboard space becomes an alter(n)ative writing space for children because it is no longer restricted for the teacher’s use only. Children are free to write just as they see Madame Houda write during formal instruction. Madame Houda is attentive to the messages that her students write because she believes they provide insight into what her students understand from their classroom activities.
**Figure 7. Alter(n)ative blackboard messages.**

The photo above was taken at the end of a free play activity time in Madame Houda’s class. It captures Lamia’s final message for the afternoon. Over the course of the free play time, I observed Lamia drawing symbols, writing her name and a series of different letters. She had at various points erased her drawing and writing to start a new series of letters. At the end of the period, “Lecoind” were the letters that remained on the board for display. I was puzzled as I continued to try and make sense of Lamia’s afternoon writing. How did she choose what letters to write or what symbols to draw? What was she trying to say? She seemed to enjoy writing, particularly on the blackboard where others could see her work. This last message would remain on the board until the next morning.

After school, Madame Houda pointed out in her reflections on the day how interesting it had been to read Lamia’s writing on the board. She directed me back to the blackboard again and this time, she pointed to the sign to the right of Lamia’s writing: “Le coin des jeux tranquilles”. Lamia had copied the letters she read from the sign onto the blackboard. She did not yet understand the conventions of leaving spaces to separate words. She had copied as many letters as she could fit across the blackboard space. Madame Houda’s awareness of the environmental print in her classroom and the developmental stages of a student’s writing help her to read her kindergarten students’ pre-emergent writing. She purposefully creates and preserves blackboard space for her students so that students can see themselves as writers and express in symbols and letters how they read their classroom world. In alignment with Heydon and Iannacci’s (2008) notion of depathologizing CLD learners, Houda’s conceptualization of her kindergarten
students as bright, creative and capable compels her to create and provide students with opportunities to develop and express alter(n)ative pluri-literacies.

**Alter(n)ative Responses to Traditional Activities**

In addition to finding alter(n)ative ways to start the day and create an inclusive learning space in the classrooms, or to alter(n)ative messages that are written by both teachers and students, participating classroom teachers demonstrated a transformative pedagogical orientation by affirming students alter(n)ative responses to ‘traditional’ activities. The following two examples come from Madame Yvette’s Grade 2/3 class in which students adapted paper-pencil exercises to allow themselves to reflect and represent their identities in their work.

In this first example, students were working individually at their desks on questions in their math notebooks. Madame Yvette had conducted a mini-lesson on skip counting in multiples of twos, threes, fives and tens. When she assigned the Grade 3 students practice exercises in their math notebooks, she reminded them that on the EQAO/OQRE Grade 3 math test, they would need not only to provide the answer for the problem, but also the process by which they arrived at their answer. She emphasized that they could not get full marks on the test if they only provided the answer and so they should practice representing their problem solving process when answering the assigned exercises in their math notebooks. The instructions for one of the questions explicitly required students to “explique comment tu as compté [their manipulatives]. Utilise des dessins, des nombres ou des mots.” Student responses to this instruction varied: some students drew their manipulatives grouped in multiples of two, fives and tens; other
students explained using words; or, others still used numbers. These varied representations were predictable given the question’s instruction. Some students, however, created unanticipated responses by drawing themselves in comic strip style within the classroom in the act of counting their manipulatives. These comic-strip style representations incorporated words, numbers and pictures through the use of speech bubbles, and in this way, students represented themselves within the classroom. Their pictures reflected their key role in the problem solving process. The motivation behind allowing children to represent their problem-solving process through words, pictures and numbers is to allow them to use multiple modes of expression to demonstrate their thinking. The comic-strip style responses demonstrate children’s intuitive desires to see themselves reflected in their work. In this way, a traditional paper-pencil mathematics exercise provided an opportunity for students to represent their thinking in an alternative way that it put the child learner at the centre of the learning process.

The second example of alternative responses to a traditional activity was recounted by Madame Yvette during her initial interview. In order to ensure that students in her split Grade 2/3 class have activities they can do independently if they finish their work ahead of other students, Madame Yvette gives her students weekly *cahier d’enrichissement* activities. At the start of each week, she distributes a selection of photocopied activities that usually reinforce in fun ways concepts and skills that they are working on as a class. Activity sheets may include crosswords, mixed up stories to sequence and math mysteries to solve. On occasion, Madame Yvette also includes a colouring page because she knows that her students enjoy colouring.
During her interview, Madame Yvette described a colouring page of two soccer players that she had given to students for their *cahier d’enrichissement* at the height of soccer finals. To her surprise, she noted that many of her students coloured one soccer player white and the second player brown or black. She read students’ colouring choices as a powerful reflection of their sense of cultural diversity as standard reality:

> je trouve qu’il y une unité particulière,... un respect mutuel les uns les autres, l’acceptation de la différence... que tout le monde est différent. Puis, les enfants ont vraiment quelque chose ici, une chance ... qu’ils n’ont pas au Québec, d’être exposés rapidement... à cette diversité culturelle, qui se sent dans leur personnalité, dans leurs façons d’interagir avec les uns les autres. Je trouve ça un phénomène différent... Je trouve que c’est extraordinaire, comme constatation, cette spontanéité. Si on fait [this colouring activity] au Québec, il fallait faire les deux visages blancs ou ils auraient fait les visages noirs. Mais non, ici tous les enfants, les noirs, comme les blancs, toutes les races, tous font ça, j’ai trouvé ça fantastique…

Madame Yvette regards the cultural diversity of her students as a resource for building social understanding. She had included the soccer colouring page in students’ *cahier d’enrichissement* as a fun activity to build on community excitement regarding soccer finals. While students clearly enjoyed the colouring activity, the process and the product both reflected the inclusive nature with regard to culture within their classroom.

Cummins (2006) defines identity texts as creative works which students produce within the interpersonal learning space of the classroom. These works then hold a mirror up to students through which their identities are reflected back in a positive light. Although these two activities were not intended necessarily to build on students’ creativity,
students responded to the activities in creative ways which allowed students’ to represent and reflect their identities and experiences. Madame Yvette’s students felt free and safe to respond creatively to traditional “paper-pencil” tasks and as such the activities offered alter(n)ative learning opportunities and expressions for her students.

**Shared Alter(N)Ative Literacies: Opportunities to Write, to Read and to Collaborate**

In the previous two examples, students responded creatively to traditional activities and in so doing were able to invest themselves more meaningfully in their learning. Their individual alter(n)ative responses were spontaneous and unfolded as epiphanies of identity engagement in the classroom. Across participating teachers’ classes, alter(n)ative literacy practices developed consistently through collaborative literacies planning and sharing activities. Over the course of observation period, primary teachers organized opportunities for their students to work together throughout the writing process and then to share their work with their peers and with students in other classes. For example, Madame Yvette arranged for her Grade 2 and Grade 3 students to read stories they had written together in pairs with students in Madame Lise’s split Grade 1/2 class. In turn, Madame Lise coordinated with Madame Anne-Marie so that Madame Lise’s Grade 1 students and Grade 2 students could share a collaborative story they wrote as a whole class with Madame Anne-Marie’s kindergarten students. Two common features arose from both of these examples. First, both Madame Yvette and Madame Lise scaffolded their students’ writing processes by allowing them to work in groups. Madame Yvette often encouraged her students to work in pairs or as a whole class at the start of the writing process. By first sharing ideas aloud, students received feedback to help clarify their thoughts and they also developed a shared sense of enthusiasm for their work
so that they had motivation to carry it to completion in writing. When students were working in pairs, they shared the work of writing their narratives down as text on the page in different ways: some students took turns writing sentence by sentence; whereas, other students appointed one person as scribe and another as editor. Transformation occurred through these writing experiences because students could extend their ideas and use their strengths to contribute to a collaborative final product. Subsequently, the process of sharing their written texts with younger students in other classes provided the impetus for student authors to invest in developing their reading fluency and reflections on strategies to support active listening and reading comprehension. Most significantly, as student authors shared their works with other students, the student authors received positive feedback and affirmation that contributed to them seeing themselves as capable and creative writers and readers in French. Such scaffolding and meaningful writing and reading opportunities create the conditions for CLD learners to engage and to develop successfully their pluri-literacies competence.

*Alter(n)ative Experiences with the Arts: La Chorale*

Thus far, the alter(n)ative learning experiences that have been described all unfolded within teachers’ classrooms both serendipitously and as a result of purposeful planning. Teachers play significant roles in orchestrating learning spaces that support students’ engagement in their learning and with each other in transformative ways. In addition to classroom learning, *École Cosmopolite* offers a number of extra-curricular activities in which all students are invited to participate. As the principal of *École cosmopolite*, Monsieur Pierre underlined the importance of the Arts in supporting the engagement of students meaningfully with the French language and culture of the school.
He described the school as “une mini-planète” where linguistic and cultural diversity defines the school population. At the same time, he emphasized the mandate of French-language schools, and in particular, his vision for École Cosmopolite to help students identify personally with French language and culture. Over the course of the year, he implemented a number of initiatives to create francophone space within the school: (a) a monthly assembly during which two classes present a song, dance or drama and then one student from each class is recognized and celebrated as the “francophone du mois”; (b) the introduction of a school improvisation team to allow students to develop confidence and oral proficiency in French through spontaneous practice in drama; (c) primary and junior choirs through which students learn and perform French songs under the direction of Madame Yvette and Madame Lise.

Monsieur Pierre identified the choir as the most significant and effective means of passing on the French-language and culture to students and also to providing opportunities to make connections with the wider community. Throughout the year, Monsieur Pierre made it a priority to arrange for the junior choir in particular, to perform for a variety of audiences, including EQAO / OQRE provincial conferences. He poignantly describes the role of the choir in providing opportunities for students to participate and share in francophone culture:

la chorale c’est surtout, c’est un lien – dans le sens, de leur donner la culture, de découvrir les chansons, les compositeurs ... de langue française... De leur faire aimer la musique, la culture, lorsque la musique, c’est surtout les chants... [et] c’est ta voix... C’est ton instrument, mais ta voix fait partie de toi, alors c’est l’instrument le plus personnel. Alors, si on leur fait vivre des émotions... positives en français, ils ont du plaisir en
chantant en français, être valorisés à chanter, à connaître les auteurs... On leur donne cette culture-là. On crée un lien affectif avec la culture. Alors c’est très très important, pour qu’un jour ils aient les référents culturels qu’ils puissent retourner, puis dire que dans mon enfance, j’ai appris à connaître des compositeurs, ou des chanteurs de langue française... je connaissais la... culture française, de quoi que avoir, d’avoir envie de chanter, ces chansons-là, et de les transmettre à leurs enfants.

The choir provides an opportunity for students to learn French songs and in so doing to develop meaningful associations with cultural referents. Monsieur Pierre emphasizes that he hopes that as students come to enjoy and appreciate French songs, they will in turn pass them on to their children. His reflection illustrates his conceptualization of the critical role of French-language schools in reproducing the French-language and culture in order to preserve and extend the francophone community in the present and for future generations. Moreover from a logistical point of view, he also underlines the value of the choir because it requires minimal resources:

Je pense que la chorale est le moyen probablement idéal parce que ça ne coûte rien. Tout le monde a une voix. Tous les enfants aiment chanter pratiquement. S’ils n’ont pas, il faut leur donner le goût, mais la plupart des enfants aiment chanter... c’est une belle façon de transmettre la culture en s’amusant... c’est l’instrument le plus facile, puis ils vont toujours être capables de chanter quand la vie continue. Alors ça donne le véhicule idéal pour s’assurer que les enfants ont du plaisir en français, puis c’est vraiment le lien affectif en ce sens-là.

Madame Yvette directed the junior choir rehearsals once a week over the lunch recess. Her commitment to the choir emanated from her belief that students gain confidence from working together to learn songs and then by the affirmation and praise they received
through their performance. She seeks to cultivate an inclusive environment in which all students, irrespective of their musical, cultural or linguistic backgrounds could participate. Whereas Monsieur Pierre supported the choir explicitly due to its efficacy in preserving French culture in a minority franco-ontarian context, Madame Yvette objected to the idea that she was responsible for reproducing a “franco-ontarian” culture. She identified herself personally as being “Québécoise” and expressed that she conceived of her role as helping students develop a sense of belonging to a wider global francophone community:

Madame Yvette is driven by her vision that her role is to help diverse minority students appreciate that even though they are surrounded by an English majority context,
“t’es pas tout seul, toi, assis dans ta salle de classe qui parle français. C’est toute une communauté qui est en minorité, qui est là quand-même en Ontario, qui a sa place, qui a sa langue pour ses chansons, et j’imagine comme école, on est agent de promotion de cette culture, pour ce groupe-là, pour cette réalité.”

The choir provides another context, in addition to the classroom, in which students develop their sense of belonging to a francophone community – “une appartenance à la francophonie.” Madame Yvette recognizes

Il y a beaucoup, beaucoup de langues ici, c’est un grand défi, mais c’est une belle richesse aussi. On a beaucoup d’enfants qui parlent trois langues, quatre langues. Parfois, le français, la langue d’enseignement dans l’école, c’est la dernière langue qu’ils vont parler, parce que à la maison ça va être l’arabe, le créole, un peu d’anglais, mais le français est seulement réservé à l’école.

Madame Yvette appreciates the linguistic and cultural diversity that pervades Toronto and as such her goal is not to replace CLD students’ identities with a “franco-ontarian” identity but rather to foster students’ pluri-linguistic repertoires and inclusive identity formation.

For their performance at the provincial EQAO/OQRE conference, the choir sang Jean-Pierre Perreault and Brian St-Pierre’s (2001) “Mon Beau Drapeau” - a hymn about the franco-ontarian flag. Monsieur Pierre describes the powerful nature of the performance: “ils sont allés chanter à l’OQRE dernièrement devant les gens de milieu d’éducation, il y a mille personne, à l’hôtel… un gros hôtel sur, au centre-ville.” Indeed, on the bus ride to the performance, the excitement of the students was palpable. When
they arrived at the hotel downtown, one of the students commented to me, “Oh, c’est très fancy!” The students were ushered around the hotel into a warm-up room and they were told that after their performance, there would be treats for them to enjoy. When their turn arrived, they walked through the ballroom and onto the stage. Madame Lise and I helped students to find their spots in rows so that they could see Madame Yvette as she conducted. A hushed awe fell over the students as they saw themselves projected onto three large screens around the auditorium and as they gazed out at an audience of administrators and education professionals. In addition to the thousand conference participants in the room, the conference itself was being webcast. This opportunity to perform was beyond anything they could have imagined.

As the music began to play, they watched Madame Yvette for their cue. Then, they began to sing the following lyrics:

Ils ont fait souche dans ce pays blanc,
Ils ont su donner tellement d’enfants,
Qui, une fois devenus grands,
Ont résisté aux conquérants.

...  
Je te chante, mon beau drapeau
Des Français de l’Ontario.
Je te lève, brandi bien haut,
Pour que vous voyiez bien

*Je suis Franco-Ontarien(ne)!*

...

Fidèles à leur passé lointain,

Parlant la langue des Anciens,

Fiers d’être venus et d’être restés,

D’être encore là après tant d’années.

...

Je te chante, mon beau drapeau

Des Français de l’Ontario.

Je te lève, brandi bien haut,

Pour que vous voyiez bien

*Je suis Franco-Ontarien(ne)!* (St. Pierre & Perreault, 2001)

When the choir reached the end of the song, the room erupted with applause. The choir and Madame Yvette beamed with pride as the conference chair thanked them for their moving performance. This collective experience had been a transformative one: students were affirmed through the words of praise and the applause and they appreciated that their diligence in rehearsing had been well worth the effort. The students grew through the experience as they developed even greater confidence and motivation to continue to invest in practicing.
While the actual experience of performing for such an impressive audience was clearly powerful - or alter-ative - for the students, their performance can also be read as an alternative appropriation and re-interpretation of the words of the song “Mon Beau Drapeau”. bhabha’s theoretical notions of Third space enunciation and vernacular cosmopolitanism provide useful lenses through which to analyze the choir’s performance of St. Pierre and Perreault’s (2001) song. The verses evoke the traditional conceptualization of a “franco-ontarien de souche”, in a “pays blanc”. The École Cosmopolite choir, however, was composed of CLD students from around the world. In the act of singing the chorus, these CLD children proclaimed repeatedly for themselves, “Je suis Franco-Ontarien(ne)” Through the second verse, they express that in alter(n)ative ways, they will be faithful to their histories and mother tongues, and at the same time, they are proud to have come to Canada and to participate in their franco-ontarian communities. Monsieur Pierre emphasized the role of the Arts in preserving francophone culture. In particular, he noted that whereas visual arts creations such as paintings and sculptures are crafted with one’s hands outside of one’s body, songs originate within the very core of the individual. Singing internalizes the French language and allows the singer to become intimately involved in expressing francophone culture, in bhabha’s (1994) terms, through the act of enunciation. In this example of the choir’s performance of “Mon Beau Drapeau” (2001), the symphony of CLD children singing about a traditional conceptualization of a franco-ontarian child invites an alter(n)ative redefinition of what it means to be franco-ontarian in an increasingly pluralistic setting.

Through this chapter, I have analyzed teachers’ practices with CLD learners in order to identify alter(n)ative learning experiences that support CLD learners pluri-
literacies development. I have synthesized classroom and school encounters into five categories: 1) alter(n)ative school day beginnings; (2) alter(n)ative messages; (3) alter(n)ative responses to traditional activities; (4) alter(n)ative literacies; and, (5) alter(n)ative experiences through the Arts. In all of these instances, teachers adopted transformative pedagogical orientations by being open and responsive to their students’ strengths, needs and interests. They conceptualized their students from an asset-oriented perspective and as such were able to engage with them in collaborative learning and growth as a community of learners. During alter(n)ative learning experiences, teachers draw upon students’ social, cultural and linguistic resources in order to help students express their pluralistic identities rather than transmitting a singular political identity. In the words of Madame Yvette, while there may be various intervening policies regarding the cultural and linguistic mandate of French-languages schools in Ontario, “le curriculum est aussi un document politique... c’est à l’enseignante d’utiliser les ouvertures du curriculum intelligemment.” As teachers at École Cosmopolite conceptualize their CLD students from an asset-oriented perspective, Monsieur Pierre advocates that with his dynamic, dedicated and diverse staff, “on fait des miracles”. Together, these teachers, administrator, students, and their families, consciously endeavour to work in collaboration to support students’ learning and their sense of identification within and belonging to a more inclusive francophone community. Alter(n)ative practices have at their focal point an asset-oriented perspective of the child learner.
At the outset of this study, my primary objective was to understand and to analyze elementary teachers’ perspectives on and strategies to support CLD learners’ literacy development within French-language schools. Stake (1995) advises that the best research questions grow out of the research terrain and indeed, as I engaged with individual teachers through interviews and classroom observation, I began to ask more nuanced questions regarding the role of not only of students’ identities in their pluri-literacies development, but also of teachers’ identities and how they inform their open policies and practices. Through classroom observation and the collection of students’ work samples, I could see in practice what many researchers have documented in increasingly diverse anglophone settings over the past two decades: literacy development is a function of a learner’s engagement and identity investment (Cummins, 2001; Cummins, 2009a, 2009b; Purcell-Gates, 2007; Schecter & Cummins, 2003).

Within francophone settings, Masny (2009) has argued similarly that in the act or process of reading a text, the individual is simultaneously reading the world and being read by it. S/he is a text. Certainly, narrative inquiry is built upon the understanding that individuals lead storied lives. But, how does a CLD learner’s literacy development and engagement intersect with his or her teachers’ identity, particularly within a minority French-language school? In brief, the core teacher participants in this study each reflected different understandings of what it means to be franco-ontarian. Cultural and linguistic identification and belonging are complex, ever-evolving processes. The tendency as seen through historic policies and the risk as seen through transmissive pedagogical practice,
however, has been to reduce such processes to one singular, institutionalized definition of what it means to belong to a certain category.

The following poem has been composed from the transcript of the final focus group conducted with core teacher participants’ around the themes of franco-ontarian identity and teachers’ roles as cultural agents within French-language schools. The four distinct, at times contradictory, voices are interwoven throughout the poem and at the same time marked by the use of different fonts: Yvette, Anne-Marie, Houda, and Ariana. Typographic and design features are used to represent visually the contrast between participants’ views about their cultural and linguistic identities and their practices as teachers. The variation in fonts and font size is intended to invite the reader both to listen to participants’ views and to SEE them – to become cognizant of how poetry plays with the conventions of print and to experience through the personal process of interpreting the poem, how literacy practices vary according to the individual reader and the genre. Through the poem, four different voices emerge: each voice contributes an alternative definition of what it means to be franco-ontarian; each person presents another way of seeing the traditional “native” speaker – together, they present themselves as four Alter-natives.
C'est quoi un Franco-Ontarien ?

Selon moi,
quelqu'un qui vit en français en Ontario,
c'est-à-dire qui a des origines franco-ontariennes ou la famille,
dans le sens original du terme,
ça serait autre chose -

Franco-Ontarien
vaut dire quelque chose de différent aujourd'hui.

Tu peux venir de n'importe quelle région dans le monde,
tant que tu vis en français en Ontario,
T'es Franco-Ontarien.
Mais, dans quelle mesure tu vois?
Est-ce que c'est aller chercher des services en français,
d'alier chez le docteur,
d'alier chez le dentiste?

– La communauté.

C'est pas mesurable.
Moi,
je travaille en français,

sauf que,
à la maison,
je parle en anglais.

Peut-être mes enfants ne le parleront pas --

est-ce que je suis toujours Franco-Ontarienne?

Ou

juste quelqu'un en Ontario-qui parle une langue -le français

Il y a des Franco-Ontariens,
qui vivent 100% en français.
Il y en a d'autres
qui vivent partiellement.

Un mari francophone qui parle français,
ils mettent leurs enfants dans les écoles de langue française.

Là, c'est un Franco-Ontarien idéal.
Mais,
on peut pas mesurer.
c'est pas facile,
pas évident non plus.
des conditions influencent
les mariages entre cultures,
les gens parlent une troisième langue,
une quatrième,
ou l'anglais.
Les enfants parlent quand même
une autre langue
à la maison.
Les profs parlent toujours en français,
et
On vit en français forcément,
on veut bien leur transmettre une culture franco-ontarienne,
on sait pas trop ce que c’est
en partant,
les enseignants essayent de transmettre
ce qu’ils ont vécu,
des bouts de leur culture,
de notre culture.

Justement,
on a grandi dans un milieu
purement francophone

Tu vivais quand même en français ?
Oui,
je suis peut-être pas Franco-Ontarienne,
mais Franco-Marocaine,
francophile,
francophone.

Je suis même pas Ontarienne.
J’habite ici.
Si la définition de Franco-Ontarien, c'est quelqu'un de souche, depuis des siècles, ils parlent français, ils vivent en français, ça fait aucun sens.
Ça ne ressemble pas à notre réalité. Ça marche pas vraiment.
Il faut que la définition évolue —
Moi,
je dirais, c’est ça -

Les gens qui ont la capacité
de vivre en français

Ils appartiennent.

S’ils font le choix, c’est ça.
En plus des choix,
c’est les possibilités que ça prend.

Donc, il y a une appartenance à cette francophonie.

Une chance,
qu’on vit dans un monde entier,
d’élargir notre identité,
à la francophonie mondiale

Une chance
que ça existe partout dans le monde,
que chacun essaye de faire son rôle, sa part,
En espérant que la communauté survive.
C'est difficile de transmettre
une identité franco-ontarienne
quand c'est pas ton identité
On trouve pas des Franco-Ontariens ici.
C'est difficile de transmettre quelque chose
que tu ne connais pas
Il y en a pas !
C'est vrai.

Moi, je suis Franco-Ontarienne,
Je suis francophone en Ontario,
Je me considère comme Franco-Ontarienne.
Si les gens te disent,
c'est quoi ton identité ?
Tant que je suis en Ontario,
Je suis Franco-Ontarienne.
T'es pas Marocaine ?
Je suis Marocaine,
ça me dérange pas,
d'être franco-ontarienne -
en même temps.
Moi, je suis Québécoise !
Mais, **TOI** -

*ton identité?*

Moi, quand j’étais au Québec,
ça me dérangeait pas de dire que
J’étais québécoise.

**Moi, Je prends la peau du pays où je suis.**

Je suis Marocaine?
Oui, je le suis!

Moi, *ton identité est dans ton coeur,*
*comment tu vis?*
*comment tu te sens?*

**TOI**, tu vis à la marocaine,
Tu bois du thé à la menthe -
Tu es Marocaine.

**Mais, toi aussi!**
Oui, mais
*une identité empruntée,*
*c’est pas la mienne.*
Ça me dérange pas d’être Franco-Ontarienne,
pas le sens traditionel,
il y en a pas ici.
Je suis francophone en Ontario,
je cherche pas d’autre définition.

Mais, c’est pas défini,
nulle part.
C’est une impression qu’on a
que ça doit être un peu blanc,
que ses parents sont blancs.

Franco-Ontarien,
Personne ne va dire que
ça doit être seulement ça.

Moi, je pense que la définition maintenant,
c’est n’importe qui,
qui a la capacité de vivre en français.
On est un pays ouvert, multi-religieux,
Ce n’est pas de développer une identité tout de suite,
Mais, de développer un intérêt, une connaissance,
Pour finir, à associer une curiosité,
une ouverture -
C’est la curiosité au stade de l’identité canadienne.
Entre nous, on voit que l’identité canadienne,
(il y aurait plusieurs définitions,)
soit qui doit être liée aux religions,
soit à la culture,
soit à la musique
il y a plusieurs aspects.
Moi,
je mets l’emphase différemment
qu’une autre personne
C’est la joie des enfants,
de voir les différentes facettes
d’interprêter
vraiment, dans un milieu multicultural.
c’est à eux de choisir.
On peut pas forcer une identité.

Toi,
Je t’accepte.
Tu viens de tel pays,
Tu viens de raconter telle histoire de ta religion,
C’est pas d’apprendre une identité,
C’est d’apprendre la tolérance,
la différence,
la diversité.
Tu es Canadien!
Chapter Seven:
Envisioning Alter(n)atives

Through this study, I have examined policies pertaining to minority French-language schooling in Ontario and the in/ex-clusion of CLD learners, particularly within one elementary school in Toronto. This elementary French-language school was chosen as a case study because of its high proportion of CLD learners. The four core teacher participants who agreed to participate in this study also reflected aspects of the cultural and linguistic diversity that is represented among the student population at École Cosmopolite. Through interviews with teachers and the school administrator, classroom observation, student work samples and a focus group with the four core teacher participants, I have analyzed four teachers’ perspectives on and strategies to support CLD learners at École Cosmopolite.

This thesis highlights tensions that elementary teachers’ encounter as they interpret and enact official and personal policies concerning linguistic and cultural diversity and the mandate of French-language schools to promote French language use and to reproduce franco-ontarian culture. Core participants tended to echo official policy to the extent that they viewed CLD learners’ lack of proficiency in French upon arrival to École Cosmopolite as a significant challenge and limitation to students’ ability to engage with and teachers’ ability to cover provincially mandated curriculum. At the same time, teachers unequivocally demonstrated an appreciation for the cultural diversity of their students. I argue, however, that while teachers express a desire to adopt a transformative approach to their pedagogical practice, official policies, classroom constraints, and prevailing French-only language ideology often combine to limit teachers’ practice of
social-constructivist and transmission-oriented pedagogy. I further analyze instances in which teachers – whether serendipitously or through strategic planning – engage effectively with their students in practices that I describe as alter(n)ative. I draw on bhabha’s (1994) notion of Third Space to define alter(n)ative practices as powerful learning experiences in which teachers accept, affirm and even encourage students’ non-traditional or alternative responses. Such practices result in alter-ative learning encounters which in turn produce positive, meaningful change for students, teachers and their wider classroom communities. The school and classroom examples examined in this thesis demonstrate that it is indeed possible for French-language teachers to re-interpret official language, admissions and curriculum policies in alter(n)ative ways that can help build inclusive learning environments in which all learners – francophones, anglophones and CLD learners – can draw on and develop pluri-lingual literacy practices and that in turn, will help students engage meaningfully in their increasingly diverse worlds at school, at home and in their wider communities.

**Limitations**

While this study has been alter-ative for me, I recognize that it is not without its limitations. The first limitation emerged early on as I began data collection in French at École Cosmopolite and moved forward through the transcription and analysis stages of this study. I was continually conscious of not only what I was trying to communicate with participants but also how I was expressing myself in French. The process of transcribing in French also required more time and revision. The benefits of working in a second language ultimately outweighed the costs: for example, I could not take for granted that I understood what participants said in interviews or as I transcribed, so I asked questions
often for clarification. I also positioned myself as an enthusiastic learner of French and about French-language schooling (rather than as a researcher) and as such I became more approachable for teachers and students. The process of conducting data collection in French with CLD students and teachers also raised my awareness of my own plurilingual linguistic repertoire. During classroom observations and interviews, I often found myself taking notes in French but when I reflected back at the conclusion of an observation period, I wrote notes in English. Throughout this thesis, I alternate between English and French. Through prose and poetry in both English and French, I put my theoretical conceptualization of plurilingual alter(n)ative literacies into practice. I recognize, however, that this writing strategy limits the accessibility of this study to an English-French plurilingual readership if readers are to follow my argument from beginning to end.

A second limitation of this study was that data collection was interrupted due to a combination of École Cosmopolite’s school holidays and the researcher’s extended illness over a period of three months. As a result, data collection extended over more than six months rather than one intense elementary school term. What I may have lost through intensive school and classroom observation in the original proposed 3-month data collection period, I was able to compensate for by maintaining contact with teachers and the school administrator during my period of illness and my subsequent return to the school to complete data collection. The approximate 3-month delay during the data collection period also allowed me to compare the progress, particularly of CLD learners in the two kindergarten classes, from the beginning of my data collection in October 2008 to its conclusion at the beginning of the third term in April 2009.
A third limitation of this study was the limited integration of the ALF/PDF program in my analysis. I have focused in greater detail on classroom teachers’ alter(n)ative practices in the early elementary grades from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Apart from whole-class ALF/PDF instruction as coverage for one split Grade 1/2 class, much of Ariana’s ALF/PDF schedule involves working with students in small groups in Grade 3 to Grade 6. Although inclusive ALF/PDF grade-level instruction and scaffolding is encouraged, Ariana prefers to withdraw students from their grade-level classes rather than working with them within their classrooms. Due to scheduling and classroom constraints, ALF/PDF instruction at the early elementary levels reflects a traditional transmission-oriented pedagogical approach to literacy development in French. This case study of four teachers’ perspectives on and strategies to support CLD students is limited to one school. Further research regarding how different schools and different ALF/PDF teachers would allow for more comprehensive analysis of the implementation of ALF/PDF programmes across Ontario.

Implications

Alter(n)ative Possibilities for French-Language Schools

Research within anglophone school contexts over the last decade has advocated for the recognition of students’ cultural and linguistic diversity as resources for learning (Cummins, 2001; Cummins, June, 2009; Feuerverger, 1994; Herrera & Murry, 2005; Heydon & Iannacci, 2008; Purcell-Gates, 2007; Schecter & Cummins, 2003; Smythe & Toohey, 2009; Toohey, June, 2009). How we, as educators, policy makers and researchers, conceptualize CLD learners directly informs our language and education policies and pedagogy. To envision alter(n)ative possibilities for CLD learners and
French-language schools begins with re-conceptualizing CLD learners as intelligent, linguistically-rich and creative contributors to increasingly cosmopolitan francophone culture and communities in Ontario. When we adopt an asset-oriented view of students and invite them to draw on the diversity of resources they possess through their cultural backgrounds and linguistic repertoires, we create opportunities for students not only to see themselves reflected in their learning, but also to understand themselves as valued agents within their learning communities. Students become actively engaged not only in their individual learning, but also responsible for the growth of their peers, teachers and school community. In francophone minority communities and schools, in particular, francophone, anglophone and CLD learners have the potential to learn together and consequently to build more inclusive and equitable communities for the 21st century. Classroom observation, teachers’ narratives and students’ work samples collected throughout this study suggest that while children are aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity that increasingly pervades classrooms and school communities in Ontario, children are not necessarily concerned with divisions of difference. Moreover, at the early elementary level, their relationships and friendships often extend across linguistic and cultural borders because children find themselves together daily as members of a shared classroom learning community. Policy makers, researchers and educators can respond to children’s need to develop strategies to learn and live together in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse French-language elementary classrooms by studying, planning and implementing policy and practices that value and affirm the diverse voices of all classroom members.
The particular focus of this study on teachers’ perspectives has also highlighted the plurality of identities that French-language school teachers bring with them into their classrooms. How can teachers draw reflectively on their personal experiences and CLD students’ experiences in order to engage CLD students in their classrooms? How can teachers create and use identity texts with their students to affirm the resources that all classroom community members bring with them to school? How might teachers’ and students’ Third Space identities be brought together within a shared classroom to open up inclusive spaces to discuss issues of language, equity and power relations from multiple minoritarian perspectives? Such questions have emerged over the course of this study as launching points for further discussion and research, particularly within evolving francophone minority communities.

*Alter(n)ative Approaches for Research*

bhabha’s (1994) theoretical framework of Third Space identities and my particular focus on teachers’ alter(n)ative practices to support CLD learners over the course of this study has also led me to examine alter(n)ative approaches to educational research involving increasingly CLD participants. As I gathered data through interviews, observation, photographs and a final focus group with teachers, I became more acutely aware that my understanding of CLD children was being shaped by the adult perspectives of core participant teachers and the school administrator. While I found my core participants to be insightful and genuinely concerned with supporting the high CLD population at *École Cosmopolite*, I began to consider how else I might gain access to CLD children’s perspectives on the development of their diverse plurilingual literacies at school, at home and in their communities. How children are represented in research
hinges on how they are studied and so I began to question how CLD learners’ perspectives and voices could be brought into research conversations concerning growing cultural and linguistic diversity particularly within franco-ontarian communities. How might research move from a traditional approach to studying children from the perspective of adults (teachers, administrators, policy makers, parents, etc.) toward alter(n)ative, more collaborative approaches to researching with children to understand their own perspectives and life experiences?

Over the past 10 years, childhood studies researchers have advocated for a paradigm shift from conducting research about children to researching with children as agents, as informants and as researchers in their own right (Albanese, 2009; Christensen & James, 2008; Clark, 2004; Freeman & Mathison, 2009; Heydon & Iannacci, 2008; Soto & Swadener, 2005) To open up research spaces to include the voices and perspectives of CLD children necessitates a similar openness to and inclusion of alter(n)ative literacy practices that this thesis argues would also be beneficial for French-language schools in Ontario. As policies such as Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education strategy (2009) and Admissions to French-language schools (2009) endeavour to open up Ontario’s schools to the integration of increasingly CLD learners, French-language schools must respond to the diverse learning needs of their students by supporting teachers’ inclusive, and alter(n)ative practices. Likewise, research communities need to consider what may be learned from engaging with CLD children as subjects and researchers themselves. Both inclusive pedagogy for and research with CLD children need to begin with an asset-oriented conceptualization of the child and develop
responsive strategies and tools to access and represent children’s perspectives in theory and practice.

In this thesis, I have provided an alter(n)ative representation of four teachers’ perspectives on their Third Space identities as alter-native franco-ontarians. Through poetry rather than narrative prose, I have represented the voices of the four core teacher participants in an alternative way. As an anglophone researcher, poetry provided a creative genre through which I could, with less concern about “getting my words right,” engage with individual teachers’ discourses and represent them authentically in French. By using poetry as alter(n)ative genre and immersing myself in the idiolect of each speaker through the poem’s creation, I also engaged in an alter-ative process in which I came to see myself as a legitimate French-(as-an-additional-language) speaker. Thus, this thesis has developed into an identity text for me as a CLD graduate student that has enabled me to consider both practically and theoretically how taking the risk to use alter(n)ative literacy practices to respond to highly conventional tasks such as thesis-writing can provide unexpected insight and new possibilities for further research.
References


Appendix A

Ethical Review Approval of Research Protocol

University of Toronto
Office of the Vice-President, Research
Office of Research Ethics

PROTOCOL REFERENCE #23184

August 6, 2008

Dr. Normand Labrie
Dean of Research and Graduate Studies
OISE/UT
252 Bloor St. W.
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6

Gail Prasad
4 Devonshire Pl.
Toronto, ON M5S 2E1

Dear Dr. Labrie and Gail Prasad:

Re: Your research protocol entitled "*

ETHICS APPROVAL

| Original Approval Date: August 6, 2008 |
| Expiry Date: August 5, 2009 |
| Continuing Review Level: 1 |

We are writing to advise you that a member of the Social Sciences, Humanities & Education Research Ethics Board has granted approval to the above-named research study, for a period of one year, under the REB’s expedited review process. Ongoing projects must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

The following consent documents (revised August 1, 2008) have been approved for use in this study: Appendix D: Letters of Consent.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely,

Raquel David
Research Ethics Coordinator

McMurrich Building, 12 Queen’s Park Cres. W. 3rd Floor Toronto, ON M5S 1S8
TELL: 416-946-3273 FAX: 416-946-5763 EMAIL: ethics.review@utoronto.ca

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Dear Dr. Labrie and Gail Prasad:

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Towards an Alter(n)ative Literacies Framework: A Qualitative Case Study of Ethnographic-Nature on Teachers' Perspectives on Literacy Instruction for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Allophone Learners in One French-language Elementary School" by Dr. N. Labrie (supervisor), Ms. G. Prasad (Master's student)

Original Approval Date: August 6, 2008
Next Expiry Date: August 5, 2010
Continuing Review Level: 1*
Renewal: 1 of 4

We are writing to advise you that you have been granted annual renewal of ethics approval to the above-referenced research study through the REB's delegated process. Please note that all protocols involving ongoing data collection or interaction with human participants are subject to re-evaluation after 5 years. Ongoing projects must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible. If your research has funding attached, please contact the relevant Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Yours sincerely,

Marianna Richardson
Research Ethics Coordinator

Lettres d’information et consentement

Cher, chère directeur, directrice,

Cette lettre a pour but de solliciter votre consentement à la participation au projet de recherche qui s’inscrit dans le cadre de ma thèse à l’Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto. L’objectif principal de ma thèse est d’examiner les perspectives des enseignant(e)s élémentaires face à la réalité croissante de la diversité linguistique et culturelle des élèves fréquentant les écoles de langue française en Ontario. Je verrai également la manière dont ces perspectives influencent le soutien des élèves linguistiquement et culturellement diversifiés dans les écoles de langue française. Je m’intéresse particulièrement aux stratégies d’adaptation et d’in/exclusion de la diversité utilisée par des enseignantes élémentaires dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques des littératies multiples en cours de français et d’anglais.

Pour réaliser ce projet, je souhaite observer, pendant une quarantaine de jours, ce qui se passe dans les salles de classe des cours de français (maternelle à 8ᵉ), d’anglais (4ᵉ à 8ᵉ) et également dans les cours d’actualisation linguistique en français / perfectionnement du français (ALF/PDF) à votre école. Si vous et votre équipe d’enseignant(e)s sont d’accords, j’aimerais prendre des photos des affiches sur les murs de votre école et dans les salles de classe. En plus de solliciter votre consentement en ce qui concerne ma visite dans votre école pour des fins d’observation, je vous et votre équipe d’enseignant(e)s invite à participer à un court entretien d’une durée de quarante-cinq minutes environ. Ces entretiens auront lieu à l’école pendant les moments de pause, ou après l’école, à vos convenances. Pendant l’entretien, vous pourrez me faire part, notamment, de vos commentaires au sujet de la diversité culturelle et linguistique et des littératies multiples à l’école. Vous pourrez, en outre, refuser de répondre à certaine questions.

Après les entretiens, je souhaite observer chaque participant(e) enseignant(e) en salle de classe avec ses élèves pendant au moins 10 périodes de 45-60 minutes. Je cible les élèves allophones n’ayant ni le français ni l’anglais comme langue maternelle. Des notes d’observation seront prises afin de mieux comprendre et analyser les pratiques pédagogiques. Je souhaite enregistrer sur des bandes audio des cours et garder des photocopies des travaux des élèves. Des travaux des élèves seront utilisés de montrer et analyser des pratiques de littératie en classe par les élèves. Les élèves et les enseignant(e)s qui n’ont pas consenti à participer à cette recherche ne feront pas partie de mes notes d’observation. Les personnes approchées pour la recherche seront libres de refuser d’y participer. Après que tous les entretiens auront été complétés, j’ai l’intention de réunir un groupe de discussion avec quelques participant(e)s afin de discuter des différentes perspectives des enseignants avec la diversité et ses implications pédagogiques. Le <<focus group >> aura une durée d’environ une heure après l’école.

J’espère que vous accepterez de donner votre consentement à cette recherche et à ma visite dans l’une des écoles dans votre conseil scolaire. Ce projet permettra une conceptualisation d’un cadre des littératies multiples fait pour tous les élèves dans les écoles de langue française – des francophones, des anglophones et des allophones. Si vous avez des questions, n’hésitez pas à communiquer avec moi.

En vous remerciant d’avance de votre collaboration, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame, Monsieur, l’expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Candidate au programme de maîtrise
Programme collaboratif du curriculum, d’apprentissage et d’enseignement, et
L’éducation comparative, internationale et développement
Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto

Gail Prasad
Massey College
4 Devonshire Place
Toronto, ON
M5S 2E1

Numéro de téléphone cellulaire: (647) 893-0878
Courriel: gail.prasad@utoronto.ca
Cher, chère enseignant(e) ou professionnel(le) de l’éducation,

Cette lettre a pour but de solliciter votre consentement et votre participation au projet de recherche qui s’inscrit dans le cadre de ma thèse de maîtrise de l’Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto. L’objectif principal de ma thèse est d’examiner les perspectives des enseignant(e)s élémentaires face à la réalité croissante de la diversité linguistique et culturelle des élèves fréquentant les écoles de langue française en Ontario. Je verrai également la manière dont ces perspectives influencent le soutien des élèves linguistiquement et culturellement diversifiés dans les écoles de langue française. Je m’intéresse particulièrement aux stratégies d’adaptation et d’in/exclusion de la diversité utilisée par des enseignantes élémentaires dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques des littératures multiples en cours de français et d’anglais.

Pour réaliser ce projet, je souhaite observer, pendant une quarantaine de jours, ce qui se passe dans les cours de français (maternelle à 8e), d’anglais (4e à 8e) et également dans les cours d’actualisation de langue française / perfectionnement de français (ALF/PDF) à votre école. Si vous acceptez, je souhaite observer dans votre salle de classe pendant au moins 10 périodes de 45-60 minutes. Je cible les élèves allophones n’ayant ni le français ni l’anglais comme langue maternelle. Des notes d’observation seront prises afin de mieux comprendre et analyser les pratiques pédagogiques. Si vous êtes d’accord, je souhaite enregistrer sur des bandes audio des cours et de garder des photocopies des travaux des élèves. Les élèves et les enseignant(e)s qui n’ont pas consenti à participer à cette recherche ne feront pas partie de mes résumés d’observation. Les personnes approchées pour la recherche seront libres de refuser d’y participer.

En plus de solliciter votre consentement en ce qui concerne ma visite dans votre classe pour des fins d’observation, je vous invite, comme je l’ai mentionné au début de cette lettre, à participer à un court entretien d’une durée de quarante-cinq minutes environ. Cet entretien aura lieu à l’école pendant les moments de pause, ou après l’école, à votre convenance. Si vous choisissez d’être interviewé pendant les heures de classe, je me procurerai l’accord de la direction. Pendant cet entretien, vous pourrez me faire part, notamment, de vos commentaires au sujet de la diversité culturelle et linguistique et des littératiés multiples à l’école. Vous pourrez, en outre, refuser de répondre à certaines questions.

En plus, après que tous les entretiens auront été complétés, j’ai l’intention de réunir un groupe de discussion avec quelques participant(e)s afin de discuter des différentes perspectives des enseignants avec la diversité et ses implications pédagogiques. Le « focus group » aura une durée d’environ une heure après l’école.

Je vous assure de la confidentialité la plus complète, ainsi que de l’anonymat notamment en changeant dans les documents publiés, votre nom et le nom de l’institution concernée,
et en conservant les bandes d’enregistrements audio sous clef. Les enregistrements seront retranscrits. Ces retranscriptions seront identifiées par des codes au lieu d’être identifiées par les noms des personnes. Les enregistrements audio seront détruits à la fin du projet. Je vous assure également que cette recherche n’aura aucun impact ou répercussion sur votre travail. Les données brutes ne seront accessibles qu’à moi et aux deux membres de mon comité de thèse. Vous êtes libre de participer ou non à cette recherche sans qu’aucune conséquence néfaste n’en résulte. Par ailleurs, une fois votre accord donné, sachez que vous êtes libre en tout temps de vous retirer de ce projet de recherche sans qu’aucune conséquence néfaste en résulte, dans ce cas, je détruirai toutes les données recueillies. À la fin de mon étude, je ferai parvenir un rapport final de recherche à votre institution scolaire. Bien que la confidentialité soit assurée, il se peut, étant donné le nombre restreint d’écoles et de participants au projet, que vos propos (citations d’entretiens) soient reconnus par d’autres participants.

J’espère que vous accepterez de donner votre consentement à cette recherche et à ma visite dans votre classe. Ce projet permettra une conceptualisation d’un cadre inclusif des littératies multiples fait pour tous les élèves dans les écoles de langues françaises – des francophones, des anglophones et des allophones. Si vous avez des questions, n’hésitez pas à communiquer avec moi.

En vous remerciant d’avance de votre collaboration, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame, Monsieur, l’expression de mes sentiments les plus sincères.

Candidate au programme de maîtrise
Programme collaboratif du curriculum, d’apprentissage et d’enseignement, et L’éducation comparative, internationale et développement
Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto

Gail Prasad
Massey College
4 Devonshire Place
Toronto, ON
M5S 2E1

Numéro de téléphone cellulaire: (647) 893-0878
Courriel: gail.prasad@utoronto.ca
Formulaire de consentement

J’accepte la visite de la chercheure mentionnée dans cette lettre pour des fins d’observations portant sur la question des élèves allophones à l’école élémentaire de langue française en Ontario, sachant que la confidentialité complète sera respectée, notamment en changeant mon nom dans le rapport de recherche final: oui ___ ou non:____

Je sais que des observations seront enregistrées sur bande audio: oui: ___ ou non: ___

J’aimerais participer à cette recherche en acceptant d’être interviewé: oui ___ ou non: ___

Je sais que l’entretien sera enregistré sur bande audio: oui ___ ou non: ___

J’aimerais participer à une groupe de discussion après que les observations et les entretiens aient fini: oui ___ ou non: ___

J’aimerais recevoir une copie du résumé de la recherche: oui ___ ou non ___

Nom d’enseignant(e): ______________________________________________________

Adresse (si vous désirez le résumé): ________________________________________

Numéro de téléphone à domicile et/ou courriel: _______________________________

(si vous désirez que je communique avec vous pour de plus amples renseignement et pour l’interview)

Signature: ___________________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________
Cher parents,

Cette lettre a pour but de solliciter votre consentement à l’observation de votre enfant à l’école pour un projet de recherche qui s’inscrit dans le cadre de ma thèse de maîtrise de l’Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto. L’objectif principal de ma thèse est d’examiner les perspectives des enseignant(e)s élémentaires face à la réalité croissante de la diversité linguistique et culturelle des élèves fréquentant les écoles de langue française en Ontario. En particulier, je m’intéresse aux stratégies d’adaptation et d’in/ex-clusion de la diversité utilisée par des enseignant(e)s élémentaires dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques des littératies multiples en cours de français et d’anglais.

Pour réaliser ce projet, je souhaite faire des observations à l’école pendant une quarantaine de jours, et plus précisément observer pendant au moins 10 heures par cours ce qui se passe dans la salle de classe dans les cours de français (maternelle à 8e), d’anglais (4e à 8e) et également dans les cours d’actualisation de langue française / perfectionnement de française (ALF/PDF). Je m’intéresse particulièrement aux élèves allophones n’ayant ni le français ni l’anglais comme langue maternelle. Si vous êtes d’accord, je souhaite enregistrer des cours sur des bandes audio et garder des photocopies des travaux des élèves. Des notes d’observation seront prises afin de mieux comprendre et analyser les pratiques pédagogiques. Les élèves et les enseignant(e)s qui n’ont pas consenti à participer à cette recherche ne feront pas partie de mes résumés d’observation. Les personnes approchées pour la recherche seront libres de refuser d’y participer.

Je vous assure de la confidentialité la plus complète, ainsi que de l’anonymat notamment en changeant dans des documents publiés, les noms des élèves, des enseignant(e)s interviewées et de l’institution concerné, et en conservant les bandes d’enregistrements audio sous clef. Les enregistrements seront retranscrits. Ces transcriptions seront identifiées par des codes au lieu d’être identifiées par les noms des personnes. Les enregistrements audio seront détruits à la fin du projet. Les données brutes ne seront accessibles qu’à moi et aux deux membres de mon comité de thèse.

J’espère que vous accepterez de donner votre consentement à cette recherche et à ma visite dans les classes de votre enfant. Ce projet permettra une conceptualisation d’un cadre inclusif des littératies multiples fait pour les francophones, les anglophones, et des allophones dans les écoles de langue française. Si vous avez des questions, n’hésitez pas à communiquer avec moi.

En vous remerciant d’avance de votre collaboration, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame, Monsieur, l’expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.
Candidate au programme de maîtrise
Programme collaboratif du curriculum, d’apprentissage et d’enseignement, et
L’éducation comparative, internationale et développement
Institut des études pédagogiques de l’Ontario/Université de Toronto

Gail Prasad
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M5S 2E1

Numéro de téléphone cellulaire: (647) 893-0878
Courriel: gail.prasad@utoronto.ca

Formulaire de consentement

Par la présente, j’accepte que Gail Prasad observe mon enfant lors de sa visite à l’école sachant que la confidentialité complète sera respectée, notamment en changeant le nom des participant(e)s dans le rapport final de la recherche : oui ___ ou non ___

Je sais que les observations seront enregistrées sur bande audio : oui ___ ou non ___

J’autorise que des photocopies des travaux de mon enfant peuvent être garde par Gail Prasad, sachant que la confidentialité complète sera respectée, notamment en changeant le nom des étudiant(e)s dans le rapport final de la recherche : oui ___ ou non ___

J’aimerais recevoir une copie du résumé de la recherche :

oui ___ ou non ___

Nom d’enfant: __________________________________________________________

Nom de parent(s) : ______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Interview Guide: Administrators, Teachers

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a school administrator and with French classroom and English language teachers. The interviews will follow the same format.

General Procedure:

1. Test recording equipment to ensure that voices are clearly audible.
2. Thank participant for agreeing to be interviewed.
3. Review objectives of research and assure participant of confidentiality. (letters of information and consent)
   - objective of this study is to understand how elementary French-language school teachers perceive and respond to linguistically and culturally diverse allophone students in French and English literacy instruction
   - confidentiality: participants’ names will be changed in the reporting of findings
   - recordings of interviews will be destroyed upon transcription and termination of research
   - preference in French: Vousvoyer? Tutoyer?
   - Present list of themes for interview
4. Semi-structured interview around listed themes. (Approximately 30 minutes)
5. Finish interview by thanking participant and asking if s/he has any questions or additional information to add.

Administrator and Teachers Interview Themes:

1. Participant background: personal/professional
2. Language policy within French-language school, classroom
3. Definition of literacy
4. Definition of franco-ontarian culture
5. Linguistically and culturally diverse allophone students: challenges/benefits; learning needs; adapting instruction
6. In/exclusion of linguistic and cultural diversity in classroom through teaching practice, observed interactions among students

Additional Administrator themes:

1. Describe your school, its staff, its students and their families
2. Admissions process for allophone students
3. In/Ex-clusion of linguistic and cultural diversity in the school
Appendix C

Classroom Observation Guide

School Observation

1. Description of school and classroom organization and layout
2. Description of students (age, gender, ethnicity and other identity markers suggested by students themselves, or by teachers and school personnel)
3. Description of posters relating to language
4. Description of print (use, language, message)

Classroom observation

1. Interactions between teacher and students
2. Interactions among students
3. Description of activities involving literacy (What happens? Who is participating? What languages are being used? How are the students positioned in the classroom? How are they grouped? What kinds of discourses are in circulation?)

Student work samples:

1. Description of genre and literacy/ies required to complete work sample
2. Language(s) in use during the writing process (i.e. from brainstorming through to final production)
3. Location of student within the work sample produced (see Cummins, Masny, Hornberger literacy frameworks on identity investment)
Appendix D
Transcription Conventions

The following codes were used when transcribing interviews and the focus group.

... pause

[ ] observational notes

--- omitted identifier

XXX - undiscernable

CAPS - switching to a language other than French

! - emphasis
Appendix E

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Article 23

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Article 23 (Department of Justice, 1982)

23. (1) Citizens of Canada

(a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority of the province in which they reside, or

(b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province,

have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary language instruction in the same language.

(3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province

(a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and

(b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.