

« *Bienvenue Au Québec!* »

The Integration of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Quebec *Classes d'Accueil*

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## ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study focuses on the need for teachers to foster inclusive learning environments in Quebec's "Classes d'Accueil"- literally 'welcome classes'- for new immigrants to Canada who arrive in Quebec without a functional knowledge of the French language. Transitioning into a new culture comes with many social, personal and academic hardships and it is the responsibility of teachers to foster safe, welcoming and socially just milieus. Since the official language of instruction in Quebec is French, the *classe d'accueil* provides a unique setting for exploring two principal issues: how teachers look upon the linguistic and cultural diversity of their learners, and how teachers negotiate their way between potentially opposing tensions-- to integrate newly arrived children into Quebec, and, to reinforce Quebec's distinct cultural and linguistic status. By drawing on New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1988; Street, 2003) and second language education perspectives, and through the incorporation of data from in-depth teacher interviews, classroom observation and analysis of classroom materials, this study argues that 1) teachers foster inclusive or exclusive learning environments in their classrooms contingent upon their personal and political ties to the French language and the Quebec culture and 2) that these attachments to Quebec's Franco-national identity directly influence the manner in which they structure the learning environment in their classrooms. Evidence from this study further suggests that education in Quebec is not always inclusive, particularly for students enrolled in *classes d'accueil*.

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## **Dedication**

To my parents,

Sylvie Breton et Jean-François Carbonneau

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## **Chapter One: Setting the Context**

In this chapter, I have first provided a brief introduction of the context in which this thesis is situated. Next, I have elaborated on my multiple identities as a French-Canadian and American and as well as my positions as graduate student, researcher and elementary school teacher. This section will also provide a justification of my motivations to undertake this particular investigation. After outlining that this particular thesis serves as a major component of a larger, multi-site comparative research project that also takes place in South African primary-level classrooms, I conclude the chapter by outlining the research questions that have guided this present study.

### ***Introduction***

In 1977, legislation rendered French the official language of Quebec in all public spaces and in business. With the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101), French thus became the language of public schooling for all, with a legal exception made to retain a small English public system for English-speaking children already enrolled in the system and henceforth, for those whose parents had been schooled in English in Canada. Following this legislation, new immigrant students were required to attend French-medium schools. To accommodate this influx of allophone learners into the French schools, most of whom spoke neither French nor English at home, a system of reception classes called *classes d'accueil*- literally welcome classes- was established. The implementation of this system was supported by a belief that if newcomers to Quebec learned French, they could then easily integrate into Quebec's society (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). Since French was then seen as a language at risk, this was one measure

adopted in order to increase the French-speaking ('francophone') population and to reinforce the position and status of the French language in Quebec and in North America generally.

The recruitment of immigrant populations to the province of Quebec since 1977 is changing the face of Quebec's public schools, particularly in the French sector. This increase in diversity has important implications for teachers who were once accustomed to teaching homogenous classes composed 'purely' of French-speaking students. It is especially important that nowadays, teachers be aware of both the challenges and resources that immigrant students bring to the classroom. As such, one of the primary aims of this thesis is to shed light on the manner in which *classe d'accueil* teachers perceive and respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes today's schools in Montreal, Quebec.

This thesis stems from an on-going investigation of the 'environment' of Montreal's elementary level *classes d'accueil*, including teachers' language use and other classroom practices. I suggest that there are at least two tensions that play out in the *classes d'accueil*. On the one hand teachers may see their roles in the classroom in traditional terms, by simply attending to the learning needs of children, albeit via French. On the other hand they may see themselves as agents of social change, whose mandate is to produce new Quebecers who speak French and who will integrate into the Quebec culture. A second but not unrelated tension is seen between Quebec's intercultural policy that strives to be democratic and welcoming of newcomers, while at the same time the

impetus is to protect Quebec's unique status as a *nation*<sup>1</sup> and revitalize the French language and culture (Allen, 2007). In light of these potentially competing discourse, I have examined through this study the manner in which teachers might foster an inclusive learning environment in the *classe d'accueil*. The particular socio-political context of Quebec makes an interesting site for exploring the manner in which the ethos, interactions and activities within the *classe d'accueil* reflect the social and political interests and other concerns of the larger society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

In order to explore this further, I conducted open-ended and in-depth interviews with four *classe d'accueil* teachers. I also conducted classroom observations in three of their classrooms, and paid close attention to the materials that each teacher used to support their lessons, as well as to the materials on the walls of their classrooms more generally. The school that serves as the setting for this study is a French-medium school located in a working-class neighborhood in southwest Montreal. As such, almost all data were collected in French and later translated into English. Pseudonyms are used throughout to conceal the participants' true identities. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to re-name the school *École Francophone Pluriethnique*. This is because although French was heard almost exclusively within its walls, the student body was extremely diverse. Lastly, although I specifically focus on linguistic and cultural diversity through this study, I am mindful that these categories are inter-related with other

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<sup>1</sup> The English word 'nation' refers to an officially recognized political entity. The word *nation* in French refers more explicitly to a society of people with common roots and shared sense of affinity and identity.

categories of race, gender, class, etc., and are mediated by power relations operating both at macro and micro levels of society.

***My personal location as an immigrant, graduate student, teacher and researcher***

When I was nine years old, my parents sat me down at the kitchen table and shared some news that would forever change the rest of my life; they informed me that my mother had received a job offer at a university in Boston and our family would be moving to the US the following year. I remember seeing my whole world flash before my eyes. Worried about the typical stuff that comes with moving, such as making new friends and leaving old ones behind, living in a new neighborhood and attending a new school, my most pressing concern was that all this would be unraveling in English, a language I did not yet speak. Growing up in Montreal as a francophone in the 90s did not require me to learn or use any English. The French school system administered ESL lessons starting in the fifth grade. I was in fourth. After coming to the conclusion that I was too young to live on my own, I barely had time to get used to this idea before we made the move. The next year of my life would be spent in a bilingual school (to ease the transition), where I would be pulled out of my regular classroom daily to learn English with a private teacher. Although at the time I had convinced myself that this situation was temporary and that we would soon be moving back to Quebec, in retrospect my transition was not so bad. To my surprise, two years later I confided in my parents that I really did not want to move back to Quebec and that I was happy in my new life in Boston. My supportive parents, school and emerging social network made my immigration experience positive.

When I moved back to Montreal after high school and began my undergraduate studies at McGill University, I discovered a new side of Montreal that I had not previously known existed; the Anglophone sector. It seems only fitting to say that my migration trajectory certainly shaped the person that I am today, not quite Québécoise, not quite Canadian, not quite American, but a mix of all three. Although I do not fully identify with any one of these groups, I have forged my own hybrid identity, which encompasses certain aspects of each. My identity formation trajectory as a Quebecer, Canadian and American graduate student and elementary school teacher has served as the motivation for this very investigation, and has contributed to my sensitivity as a qualitative researcher. Additionally, my own immigration experience has greatly informed my interest and concern for the integration of newly arrived immigrant students in the Quebec schooling context.

In 2007, towards the end of my undergraduate degree, I developed an interest in the integration process of immigrants specifically, while working as a preschool educator for a YMCA residence hosting non-status immigrants and refugees. During this time, I also became involved in community organizing and grassroots activism with groups such as Solidarity Across Borders and No One is Illegal, two coalitions involved with the struggle for immigrant and refugee rights in Montreal. These experiences not only served to inform my understanding of the immigration processes in Quebec, but also provided me with opportunities to engage with newly arrived families from all over the world.

When I began the master's degree program in Educational Studies at Concordia University in the winter of 2009, I was also hired as an ESL and *classe d'accueil* teacher by the Commission Scolaire Marguerite Bourgeoys. As a novice teacher, who at the time

was also enrolled in courses that introduced me to the works of critical pedagogues such as Paulo Freire and Peter McLaren, sociological theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, and postcolonial thinkers such as Homi bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, I became increasingly aware of the different social positions that my students and I occupy in the classroom. As such, I engaged in a critical inquiry of my own work and focused my master's research on the manner in which elementary-level *classes d'accueil* teachers might facilitate the linguistic, cultural and social integration of their students without it resulting in loss of their home languages and disruption to their personal identities. Originally, my intentions were to approach this project as a researcher—and not as a teacher-researcher—by collecting data in my colleagues' classrooms. However, unforeseen circumstances occurring halfway through the data collection period called on my duties as a teacher to take over one of the classes that served as a research site. As such, I have included in the findings section several excerpts from a journal that I kept while teaching this *classe d'accueil*. In this sense, a small action-research component has been added to support the remainder of the qualitative study's findings.

### ***The South Africa Connection – Complex Language Encounters***

This thesis serves as the comparative component of a larger project, taking place in post-apartheid multilingual urban classrooms in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> Briefly, this project looks at how teachers make sense of the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes their elementary-level classrooms in Quebec as well as in South Africa.

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description of the *Complex Language Encounter* research project, see appendix A.

I initially read the original project description as it was assigned for the *Literacy and Development* course offered by Concordia's Department of Education in the winter of 2009, and was immediately interested in collaborating with the professor. After discussing at length our shared research interests, I approached the instructor with the idea of expanding a particular angle of her project as my thesis study, which is how this thesis project was launched. No more than a year later, as the main research assistant for this study, I traveled to the University of Pretoria in South Africa for two months to assist in the data-collection phase of the project. While the present thesis is limited in its report to the observational data obtained in Montreal schools, my experience in South Africa provided me with a broader understanding of the teaching-learning process in second language multilingual classrooms, and certainly informed my understanding of the complex language and cultural encounters that characterize Montreal classrooms.

### ***Research Questions***

The primary aim of this research is to explore how teachers make sense of their mandates to integrate newly arrived immigrant students to Quebec. I am concerned with whether they might foster an inclusive learning environment in Quebec's system of *classes d'accueil* while also supporting the French-language needs of their students. The following interconnected research questions have emerged out of my own experience teaching a *classe d'accueil* in the school where this study has taken place.

1. How do teachers make sense of their profession in light of two potentially competing discourses in Quebec, one of controlling diversity through protecting Quebec's distinct language and culture, and the other embracing diversity through the democratic and pluralistic society that Quebec claims to be?

2. How do *classe d'accueil* teachers' perspectives about language and cultural ideologies in Quebec shape their pedagogic practice and influence the manner in which they structure the learning environment in their classrooms?
3. How might teachers foster an inclusive learning environment in the *classe d'accueil* that supports students' French language learning needs without resulting in loss of their home languages and 'disruption' to their personal identities?
4. To what extent does the 'environment' of Montreal *classes d'accueil* reflect current sociopolitical trends in the Quebec society at large?



## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

This next chapter is divided into four sections. First, I have provided a brief historical overview of Quebec, pre and post Quiet Revolution through highlighting major sociopolitical changes that eventually lead to the establishment of its system of *classe d'accueil*. Next, I have provided a detailed description of the realities of this model in today's classrooms. In the second section, I discuss the cultural politics of Quebec's language debate in the classroom and its implications for both teachers and students. In the last two sections, I provide an overview of second language education literature and finish by tracing the re-conceptualization of literacy from autonomous and neutral to situated and social.

### ***Historical Background and Context***

Historically, up until the mid 1960s, education for the French-speaking population<sup>3</sup> in Quebec was in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. A separate 'Protestant' school system served the English-speaking ('anglophone') population as well as 'others' - immigrant children and those of the Jewish faith. "The Catholic church had considered educational matters as belonging to the family, not the state, and with the church in control of schooling for the French-speaking population, this institution in effect replaced the State" (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000, p. 14). At that time, only 13% of

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<sup>3</sup> *Québécois de souche* refers colloquially to descendants of the original French-speakers who settled in Quebec in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

the francophone youth, still mostly rural, finished grade 11, compared to 36% of the largely urban anglophone population (Corbo, 2000).

What came to be known as the Quiet Revolution was begun by a small group of Université de Montréal intellectuals, including Canada's former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Their publication, *Cité Libre* marked the beginnings of liberating French-speaking Quebecers from control of the Church (Magnuson, 1980). Thus began rigorous efforts aimed at revitalizing the social, economic, and political status of the French language and Quebec culture in the face of the North American 'sea of English'. The establishment in 1964 of a secular *Ministère de l'éducation* officially severed education from the church; however, separate Catholic and Protestant school systems persisted until 1998 when they became divided along linguistic lines as reflected in the renaming of the school boards.

One of the major aims of the Quiet Revolution became that of modernizing the education system while reinforcing the role of the French language in all aspects of the society, with power slowly shifting from the anglophone numerical minority (but sociological majority) to the much larger francophone majority. As the role of the Roman Catholic Church declined and the importance of education increased, the birth rate in the French-speaking population also declined drastically (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2008; Corbo, 2000).

Prior to the 1960s, the majority of immigrants settling in Quebec were denied entry into the French Catholic schools, and thus sent their children to English (Protestant) schools (Corbo, 2000). That is, most newcomers to Quebec not only settled in Montreal but also integrated into the English-speaking community, thus further increasing the

presence of English in Quebec. Today, immigration to the province is increasing at a faster pace than in any other province in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2006, immigrants to Quebec accounted for 11.5% of the total population, 86.9% of who chose to reside in Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2006). However, with limited social and cultural capital, many immigrants struggle to integrate socially, academically and professionally (Steinbach, 2010).

As Sarkar (2005) writes, the influx of ‘allophones’ (neither English nor French-speaking) into the English sphere coupled with declining birth rates meant that “...it became obvious in the mid-1960s that the only possible way to prevent the decline and eventual disappearance of French in Quebec was to create French-speakers using newly arrived immigrants as raw material” (p. 313). Although Quebec is somewhat obliged to actively seek immigration because of economic factors and a declining birthrate, “public opinion has not necessarily kept pace with government strategies which welcome diversity, leaving a wide gap between public discourses and official government immigration policy” (Steinbach, 2010, p. 536). With the passage of Bill 101 in 1977, almost overnight a significant number of immigrants who did not have a functional knowledge of French began attending French-medium schools alongside *Québécois* learners. The solution to this situation was to implement a system of *classes d’accueil*.

### ***Interculturalism, not Multiculturalism- Quebec’s response to increasing diversity***

Unlike the rest of Canada, which has adopted an official bilingualism and a multicultural policy since 1971, Quebec is officially unilingual and has opted to respond to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity present in the country by devising its own intercultural policy. Multiculturalism in Canada is often referred to as a “vertical

mosaic” in which all groups are on the same level. Since its inception in the 70s, Quebec has criticized and opposed Canada’s multiculturalism policy, first because it promotes the mere co-existence of different groups, a process which may lead to social fragmentation, and second, on account that it guarantees equal support for all minority communities, therefore potentially reducing the Québécois nation to a minority status. “The situation of French-speaking people in Quebec and in Canada is very different from that of Canada’s ethnic minorities, not the least reason for which is that at the federal level, English and French have equal status as the languages of the two ‘founding groups’ (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2008, p. 68).

Whereas multiculturalism in Canada promotes unity in diversity, Québec interculturalism fosters unity through the creation of a common civic culture in which French is established as the common language of society. An emphasis is placed on dialogue and *apprendre à vivre ensemble* (learning to live together) in a francophone, democratic, and pluralistic society (Gouvernement du Québec, 1998a). According to Québec interculturalism, cultures are intertwined and not juxtaposed. Karmis (2004) explains, “on the one hand, [interculturalism] asserts that most individuals have multiple identities. On the other hand, it maintains that non of these identities is dominant enough to subordinate the others” (Karmis, p. 80). Although Quebec’s criticism of multiculturalism is well documented (Belkodja, 2008), the difference between Quebec’s interculturalism and Canada’s multiculturalism at the policy level are not easy to discern (Kymlicka, 2004). Quebec interculturalism has been discussed since the 70s. However, it took until 1998 to devise a policy statement and plan of action which defines objectives

and outlines an approach to managing the increasing diversity in Quebec schools (McAndrew, 2004).

In the name of promoting the policy of interculturalism, there are two documents that teachers must interpret and translate into practice within the realities of their classrooms. 1) The Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education, coupled with its Plan of Action, aims to guide school staff, teachers and students, and has as its purpose to facilitate the integration of newly arrived immigrants, while concurrently teaching all students about Quebec's shared values (Gouvernement du Québec, 1998a&b). 2) The QEP (Quebec Education Program) is the official curriculum and is extended to all classes, including *classes d'accueil*.

### ***The Classe d'Accueil Model***

The *classe d'accueil* model consists of preparatory full-time classes of reduced teacher/student ratio for newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak French and who have resided in Quebec for less than five years (McAndrew, 2003). Established in francophone public schools containing a high density of immigrant students, the decision to open *classes d'accueil* is not mandatory, it being one of several ways of administering linguistic support to allophone students, and remains in the hands of the school boards. Schools receive a certain amount of funds from their respective boards on a yearly basis. The amount allocated to each school is based on the number of allophone students enrolled per academic year. Each elementary school student is eligible for 20 months of financial support (compared to 30 in high school and 10 at the kindergarten level) (Armand, Beck & Murphy, 2009). Newly arrived students can join at any time during the academic year depending on when they arrive in Quebec. However, immigrant children

whose families have lived in Quebec for more than five years are not eligible to attend *classes d'accueil*, even though many do not yet speak French when they begin school. This has created a situation in which many children are placed in other types of special classes because of their difficulties learning in French.

Unique in North America, the *classe d'accueil* model has a dual purpose, as is outlined in official curriculum documents<sup>4</sup>. First, it aims to teach students functional French so that they can eventually transition to regular classes. The initial focus is on conversational French, although emphasis is later placed on reading and writing.

McAndrew (2009) claims:

The teaching of French is extremely well developed, including not only the mastery of the school language and the development of communication abilities but also a sensitization to the sociological reality and cultural codes of the host society...” however, “...no specific role is devoted to heritage languages [in these classrooms]. The communicative approach clearly discourages any translation of concepts by the teacher in the very unlikely situation, given the presence in the Quebec school system of over 50 languages, that he or she might be able to do so (p. 1537).

Students also receive mathematics instruction- albeit in French, the language of instruction, and take up the same electives as their mainstream education peers (gym, art, music, etc..). Generally, after a year students are ready to transition into regular education classes, although it has recently been estimated that the proportion of students who spend two or more years in the *classe d'accueil* could be as high as 50% (McAndrew, 2009).

Second, the *classe d'accueil* is mandated by Quebec’s official curriculum to integrate immigrant children into Quebec’s Francophone culture<sup>5</sup> (Gouvernement du

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix E for original document

<sup>5</sup> Rarely is “the Quebec culture” actually defined in the literature reviewed for this article. It refers to the French-speaking inhabitants’ collective identity as it is defined alongside of, and in the face of, a primarily Anglophone Canada.

Québec, 2001). Students must adapt to the rules of life and cultural codes of the host society (*s'adapter à la culture de son milieu*). As Allen (2007) posits, “through school policies, programs, and practices as well as laws about the use of French in the wider community of Quebec, new-immigrant youth are strongly encouraged to take up a new identity, one which adopts French as the common language, and to participate in Quebec’s distinct society through that language” (p. 167). This is explicitly stated in Quebec’s Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (Gouvernement du Québec, 1998a), which reads as follows:

In addition to ensuring that immigrants learn French, we must encourage them to take pleasure in using it in everyday life, which will enable them to better understand the French character of Quebec society, and its history, and to develop a sense of belonging and *a commitment to the survival of French (emphasis mine)*, (p. 30).

In other words, teachers must assess and evaluate their newcomer students based on how well they have acquired the ability to communicate in French *and* how well they appear to be integrating into Quebec society. This second competency raises questions about what exactly constitutes culture and, more specifically, Quebec French culture. It raises additional questions about the protocol that teachers ought to follow in order to measure each newcomer student’s individual (and deeply personal) integration process. A discussion of these issues will follow.

Because the *classe d'accueil* model was implemented abruptly, teachers were provided very little in-service professional development and thus faced new challenges in their teaching. As Sarkar (2005) explains, “the training of many welcome class teachers hired in the 1980s or 1990s consisted of a brief series of workshops delivered over a weekend or during one or two professional development days” (p. 315). Today, professional training for *classe d'accueil* teachers is embedded in Bachelor of Education

French-as-a-second-language programs found in several Quebec Universities. However, due to increasing enrollment in *classes d'accueil*, especially in inner-city schools, and to teacher shortages, many teachers currently teaching these classes do not possess the education background or formal qualifications to teach French as a second or additional language.

The effectiveness of the *classe d'accueil* model is subject to much debate in the academic community. Some argue that the sheltered model, with its reduced student-teacher ratio provides a 'cushion' that may ease students' transitions into the regular stream (Gouvernement du Québec, 1998a). As McAndrew (2009) writes, "[the *classe d'accueil*] can often act as a sas between the familiar reality of the language and the culture of origin, and the sometimes harsh reality of adapting to a new environment in larger and faster paced classrooms" (p. 1537). Others contest that the *classe d'accueil* model, informed by a 'deficit view', marginalizes students through labeling them 'language deficient' and isolating them from mainstream classes (Allen, 2006, 2007; Steinbach, 2010). The model has additionally been criticized for students' limited exposure to French-speaking peers (Sarkar, 2005), suggesting that *classes d'accueil* may not be the best model for integration into a new culture.

### ***Integration vs. Assimilation***

The process of integrating into a society may be conceptualized as potentially additive in nature, resulting in a gain of a new language and culture. This may occur especially when the home language and culture of the immigrant child is well supported by both the school and the family and is in line with Quebec's Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998a), which reads as follows:



“Integration may be defined as a long-term multi-dimensional adaptation process, which is distinct from assimilation, the overall adoption of the host society’s culture and fusion with the majority group” (p. 8). In contrast, the process of assimilation is seen as potentially subtractive because it may result in replacement of the home language and culture with that of the host society. When this occurs, the learner’s identity tends to be disrupted as well, with serious consequences for continued success in school (Cummins et al., 2005).

### ***Language, ‘Culture’, Identity et la Francophonie***

Before discussing *la Francophonie*, Quebec’s distinct francophone culture, it is important to shed light on what constitutes ‘culture’ and examine its relationship to language and identity. Pennycook (2010) posits that language is a local practice that is used in everyday life activities as a means of social organization, and is thus inherently tied to the notion of cultural practice. Language and culture are “two sides of the same coin...thinking in terms of language as a local practice starts to give us a more useful way of thinking about culture” (p. 108). Purcell-Gates’ view of culture is one of fluidity, multiple and nested.

People always act, think, create, believe within describable sociocultural contexts that are reflections of gender, race, socioeconomic status, religion, age, education, geographical location, and power relations...[language] and literacy practice reflects, mediates, and, in many ways, co-constructs these sociocultural contexts. (Purcell-Gates, 2007, p. viii).

Following this line of thought, language becomes the vehicle of culture, a means to express a culture and a particular worldview. Worldview refers to a person or group’s fundamental beliefs about the world, about one’s relationship to nature, about the nature of truth, and about what is capable of being discovered, known and understood. Adding

to this, Battiste (1999) writes, “languages are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences *and critical to the survival of the culture and political integrity of any people*” (emphasis mine, p. 18). We can thus say that to lose a language is to lose a culture, and thus by extension as means of making sense of the world. If we define culture in an anthropological sense as *all those taken-for-granted ways of thinking, believing, doing, and interacting, that characterize the members of a social group*, then we can begin to see the relationship between language, culture and identity. Since language and culture are markers of identity, to lose a language is thus to lose (at least part of) an identity.

The French language in Quebec provides a direct and powerful means of understanding the legacy of its people. It also holds, as McAndrew (2010) explains, the status of a ‘fragile linguistic majority’ perceived by those who identify with it as endangered and at-risk of dying out. Without their language, the French Canadian people of Quebec fear for their survival as a separate and distinct people. If we consider this, then Bill 101 makes sense (as it gives Quebec’s language and culture legal protection). In this line of thought it also makes sense that attempts at cultural and linguistic preservation pervade Quebec’s societal institutions. In this regard, schools are not only sites of cultural production, but also of cultural transmission. How then can teachers transmit or teach culture if culture is something that is fluid and always changing?

### ***The Cultural Politics of Quebec’s Language Debate in the Classroom- Theoretical Considerations***

In the last 30 years, efforts to revive the status of the French language were fairly successful, as evidenced by the fact that a large percentage of immigrants now use French

in their everyday lives (Pagé & Lamarre, 2010; Salvatore, 2001). Despite this, “the perception of threat has been a thread running through discussions of Quebec Francophones’ attitudes towards immigration and ethnic diversity since the 1970s” (Gidengil, Blais, Nadeau & Nevitte, p. 363, 2004). Today, attitudes in Quebec still remain divided. The long-standing prevalence of English in the province coupled with a steady influx of immigrants has meant that for some, Quebec’s distinct culture and language remain ‘fragile’ and at risk of becoming extinct (La Haye, 2010; McAndrew, 2010; Steinbach, 2010). There thus seems to be an enduring need to safeguard the French language and culture in Quebec. As the study being reported here shows, it appears that this sentiment is well internalized by some *classe d’accueil* teachers.

Several scholars have noted that one’s first language is almost always associated with personal identity, loyalty to family, and membership in a community (Cummins, 2003; Lamarre, 2003). This is true in Quebec, where the long-enduring language debate has meant that French is not only seen as a linguistic resource, but is also tied to a strong sense of nationality. Heller (1999) explains that when the legitimacy and authenticity of a minority group, such as the French in Canada, has historically been challenged by a dominant group- the English in Canada- that minority may be inclined to strengthen its ties to ideological, material and symbolic resources associated with its community. This is especially true for old stock Quebecers (*de souche*), those who most closely identify with Quebec’s distinct language and culture. Quebec’s state-supported identity also represents a common cultural heritage and way of life, and is articulated through language choice and use in everyday activities. In other words, the act of speaking French

in Quebec (as opposed to English or any other language) can be seen as an exertion of ethno-cultural power (Breton-Carbonneau & Cleghorn, 2010).

The aforementioned dynamics of language and power in Quebec have important implications in the education sector for French *Québécois* teachers -who may be personally and academically invested in the promotion and protection of the French language- and who must also embrace diversity and welcome immigrant children in their classrooms. We can thus say that there exists a fundamental relationship between a teacher's individual sense of self and the development of a professional identity. As Stephens (2007) posits, "what constitutes a professional identity and role of a teacher is thus a percolated understanding and acceptance of a series of competing and sometimes contradictory sets of values, behaviours and attitudes, grounded in the life experience of the self in formation" (p. 154). How do teachers negotiate their multiple identities amidst these different competing discourses? Of particular importance to this study, McAndrew (2004) has stated:

The degree to which [teachers] are willing to accommodate cultural and, especially, linguistic pluralism seems proportional to their sense of security regarding their identity. Although a majority of teachers adopt a professional position linked to their evaluation of the students' needs...a minority of the teachers, opposed to taking into account diversity, clearly articulate their arguments in socio-political terms (p. 319).

Since a major component of dominant discourse in Quebec revolves around ensuring that immigrant children do not assimilate into the anglophone (English-speaking) sector, in this research I am particularly interested in exploring how *classes d'accueil* teachers make sense of themselves amidst the multiplicity of discourses present within this complex sociopolitical context.

### ***Sociocultural Theories of Language Learning***

In order to cast further theoretical light on this, I turn to sociocultural theories of language learning (Norton, 2006, inspired by Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Weedon, 1987; Lave & Wenger, 1991) which focus on the relationship between language, identity and the wider social *and* cultural world. Sociocultural theorists reject at the outset that learning a language is “an individual process of internalizing a neutral set of rules, structures, and vocabulary of a standard language” (Norton, 2006), viewing identity formation as a complex, negotiated and at times contradictory process that is framed within power relations embedded in larger institutional and community practices. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) state, “in multilingual settings, language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors’ views of their own and others’ identities” (p.1). Therefore in multilingual contexts, certain identities- those that are most ideologically close to the dominant group’s- are legitimized and valued more than others. This has important implications for both teachers and their immigrant learners who, as part of their integration process, must adopt a new ‘state-supported identity’ that is commensurate with Quebec’s national ‘commitment to the survival of the French language’. This complexity will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

### ***Second Language Education-An Overview***

The field of second language learning is vast, and a great deal of research has been produced to advance our understanding of minority children learning in a language other than their home language. Jim Cummins (2000, 2003, 2007) has outlined the importance of children’s home languages in their overall educational development. The

set of skills and abilities acquired in the first language is transferable and directly influences the acquisition of a second language (Cummins, 2000; Duff, 2007; García, 2009). Research on the teaching/learning process in multilingual classrooms supports the notion that culturally and linguistically diverse students come to school with a wealth of already acquired knowledges and experiences that could be drawn upon in the new schooling context, but which a majority of teachers remain largely unaware of how to incorporate into the classroom (Bayley & Schechter, 2003; Schechter & Cummins, 2003; Cummins et al., 2005). Because language and culture are intrinsically connected, loss of the home language also has been shown to jeopardize learners' ethnic<sup>6</sup> and personal identities, and ultimately their social, cultural, and academic integration into the host society (Cummins, 2003; Duff, 2007; García, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1991).

### ***Learning the Language of Schooling: Some Implications for Personal Identity***

Wong-Fillmore's well-known 1991 study was one of the first to highlight the pedagogical consequences of assimilation. In this work, Wong-Fillmore surveyed immigrant and American Indian youth in the United States who were learning a second language and found that additional language acquisition often results in loss of the home language, depending on the timing and conditions under which the target language is learned. Such language loss has serious consequences, especially when the parents only speak the home language; communication within the family is disrupted. Wong-Fillmore also stressed the importance for children who are learning an additional language to

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<sup>6</sup> Ethnic identity is defined as a 'subjective feeling of belongingness to a particular ethnic group' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

interact with native-born peers. Since the *classes d'accueil* are composed solely of immigrant students who learn together as a sheltered closed group apart from regular education classes, access to French-speaking peers can be quite limited and restricted to recess and the lunch hour.

The previously mentioned tensions between controlling and embracing diversity in *la belle province* are evident in Steinbach's (2010) study of adolescent youths' views on integration in a semi-rural region of Quebec. The immigrant high school students in her study revealed that they did not always feel welcome by their classmates and teachers. The French-speaking students saw their own cultural identity as threatened if the new students did not conform to Quebec's societal norms. Such tensions may also be found in elementary-level classrooms in Montreal where over 75% of newcomers to Quebec settle.

Sarkar (2005) conducted a five-year longitudinal study in a kindergarten *classe d'accueil*, during which she examined how the teacher structured classroom interaction to promote French-as-a-second-language. In line with Steinbach's findings, she writes: "The French school system mandate of making sure all children become fluent users of French often translates into a rigid intolerance for languages other than French on the part of many teachers" (p.325). Thus, the use of other languages, and particularly of English, may develop into a symbol of resistance. Unlike other teachers that Sarkar had previously observed, the teacher in her study was exceptional in that she was open to languages other than French in the classroom. She also encouraged the children to draw from their bilingual repertoires, informed the parents of the benefits of home language maintenance, and occasionally communicated using other languages with her students.

Heller (2001) has reported that in second language classrooms, where the language of instruction is a minority language such as French in Canada, institutional monolingualism often takes place. Institutional monolingualism is described as the enforcement of the language of instruction as the only language to be spoken in the classroom. This often results in the teacher reprimanding students for using other languages, and “spending a fair amount of time exhorting or imploring, in shouts and in whispers, *Parlez Français!*” (p. 388). As also implied by Sarkar (2005), French as second language teachers in Quebec may interpret their mandate as one of protecting and promoting the French language and culture, and thus create monolingual classroom environments.

Allen (2006) reports on a study conducted in 2004, and problematizes the Ministère de l'Éducation, des Loisirs et des Sports du Québec (MELS) definition of integration, arguing that the demands placed on newcomer students far outweigh those placed on the host society. She states that in Quebec's recent educational policy documents, “integration is conceptualized in such a way that immigrants are the objects rather than the subjects of integration” (Allen, 2006, p. 252). In other words, she observed that the host society's language and culture are the destinations of integration, as opposed to integration being a process that occurs within each individual student. Carrying this argument further, Allen posits that integration is a process of identity construction. She explains that schools play an important socializing function in newcomer students, dictating “how they should behave and think, what they should believe and know”(p. 253). Referring to this socialization process as ‘integration’, Allen states that the current model undermines the wealth of already acquired discourses,



knowledges and lived experiences that newcomer students bring to schools, adding that some of these discourses may clash with that of the school. She concludes by outlining the need for more inclusive educational programs for newcomer youths.

In a more recent study, Allen (2007) has argued that mandatory schooling in French may be the most important way that Quebec has succeeded in ensuring French as “not just the official language but the politically, economically and socially dominant language” (p.167). She conducted a study that reported on the integration processes of four newcomer adolescent youth in Quebec. Given that two competing discourses circulate in Quebec, one of protecting Quebec’s unique cultural and linguistic heritage, and the other of embracing diversity through welcoming immigrants, Allen focused on understanding how the students made sense of themselves in the *classe d’accueil* context. Her data reveals that in some cases, the French language acted as a barrier to integration into the mainstream. She found that the same opportunities were not available for all students and depended largely on a variety of factors that were out of the students’ control (such as linguistic ability, academic ability and prior education). Allen suggests that schools ought to place more emphasis on “learning French through inclusion in school activities and the mainstream community right from the beginning of their experience in Quebec” (p. 175).

### ***Pedagogical and Practical Considerations***

Several scholars have extended knowledge on the pedagogical and practical considerations that inclusive educational programs for newcomer youth ought to foster in today’s diverse classrooms. For example, Cummins et al. (2005) collaborated with educators teaching in the greater Toronto area, in a school where over 40 different

languages were spoken; the research team worked to implement a bilingual classroom activity called ‘dual language identity texts’. The children invented stories and translated them into both English- the language of instruction- and their home languages with the help of teachers, parents and community members. Findings from this study show that since the students’ prior knowledge is “encoded in their home languages...educators should explicitly teach in a way that fosters transfer of concepts and skills from the student’s home language to [the language of instruction]” (p. 38).

In a similar endeavor, Lotherington (2007) reports on an action research project undertaken by university researchers in collaboration with elementary school teachers aimed at devising ‘multiliteracies pedagogies’ for rewriting traditional tales to include contemporary multimedia. Elementary school educators teach a story of their choice that the students then rewrite “from their own cultural and linguistic perspectives with the help of digital technologies” (p. 242). Drawing mainly from New Literacy Studies (1996) and second language education perspectives, this project is geared towards supporting the use of multiple languages in multimodal literacy education.

Dagenais, Walsh, Armand & Maraillet (2008) implemented language awareness activities aimed at developing an appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity in elementary classrooms in Montreal and Vancouver. They address the fact that in increasingly diverse school settings, “the hierarchical status of language and different values attributed to them by school and society can strain relationships between educators and students of diverse origins” (p.139), which can lead to discrimination and resistance to learn a new language on the part of marginalized students. Drawing from sociocultural perspectives on learning, which state that knowledge construction is situated in social

interactions in turn shaped by the socio-historical context, the authors argue that language activities in the classroom ought to promote the value of linguistic and cultural diversity beyond society's official languages.

***From the Teachers' Perspectives...***

*Classe d'accueil* teachers must assist children in navigating between their home culture/language and in this case the Quebec culture and French language of instruction. In order to conceptualize the teacher's position(s) with respect to her students in the diverse classroom, I turn to Jegede and Aikenhead (1996) who employ the metaphor 'teacher as culture broker' "to analyze a teacher's role in resolving cultural conflicts that arise in cross-cultural education" (p. 10). Effective culture brokers substantiate and build on the validity of students' personally and culturally constructed ways of knowing. Sometimes bridges can be built between cultures, other times ideas from one culture can be seen as fitting within the ideas from another culture. Whenever apparent conflict between cultures arises, it is dealt with openly and with respect (Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999).

In addition to brokering cultural conflicts in the classroom, teachers of diverse learners ought to reflect on how unintentional cultural messages may be transmitted in the teaching process. Theoretically, when a school system and its attendant norms has not been imposed by a colonial power, the school as an institution reflects the society that it is located in. That is, the norms and values attributed to the culture that are most prominent within that society are also present in the schools. This means that children who are born in that society are equipped with a set of codes and rules or "cultural capital" that will give them an advantage when they enter school. Those who are born

outside that society and its respective culture enter school with a different set of codes, and are at a disadvantage (Heath, 1983). This is the case for all the students in *classe d'accueil* classrooms and teachers must be aware of this. Teachers themselves, if born or integrated within the dominant culture may reward behaviors considered acceptable within that culture while punishing those that are not recognized in the dominant culture, resulting in cultural dissonance (Evans & Cleghorn, 2010). Thus, I argue that if teachers do not recognize the influence of the dominant culture both within the school and themselves, students from other cultures will receive inadequate treatment in the classroom (Delpit, 2006).

### ***From Literacy to Multiliteracies***

Literacy has traditionally been accepted as a set of decontextualized, standardized, static and universal skills. This singular model, built on human capabilities, has often been equated with learning how to read and write. That is, people who can read and write are *literate*, and those who cannot are considered *illiterate*. As such, people become literate by receiving some type of ‘intentional’ instruction, most often within the context of formal education. This means that those who do not have access to schooling are often deemed illiterate.

The emergence of New Literacy studies has challenged this somewhat narrow view of literacy by directing attention to the context in which literacy practices are learned (Purcell-Gates, 2008; Gee, 1988; Street, 2001b, 2003, 2004). Since linguistic and cultural practices are embedded in local, sociohistorical contexts, literacy “is constantly being re-defined by individuals and social groups” (Davis, Cho & Bazzi, 2005, p. 3). The

New Literacy Studies (NLS) group offers an approach to understanding literacy as situated, dynamic and multifaceted.

NLS suggests that in practice, literacy varies from one context to another and from one culture to another and so, therefore, do the effects of the different literacies in different conditions. The autonomous approach is simply imposing western conceptions of literacy onto other cultures or within a country those of one class or cultural group onto others (Street, 2003, p. 77).

As it stands now, schools still tend to employ an 'autonomous' model of literacy, assuming that literacy is something to gain that is fixed and neutral. Gee (1988) explains:

The perspectives, values, and assumptions built into school-based literacy practices are often left implicit, thus empowering those mainstream children who already have them and disempowering those children who do not and for who they are never rendered visible, save in the negative evaluations they constantly receive (Cazden, 1987; Cook-Gumerz, 1986; Heath, 1983, as cited by Gee, 1988, p. 208).

As has been previously said, students who come to western schooling systems from different cultures possess different tools and cultural capital. Students who are members of the dominant (western) society who speak the language of instruction at home find schools relatively familiar places, in part because they are seen as familiar by teachers and other school personnel. School-based literacy practices facilitate their success in the dominant system, leaving culturally, cognitively and linguistically different students at a major disadvantage. Often, such differences are interpreted by educators as 'deficiencies' (Armand, Beck & Murphy, 2009; Cummins, 2003; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Winzer & Mazureck, 1998).

The NLS group offers teachers an approach for negotiating classroom diversity. This new perspective moves from viewing literacy as now pluralized to *literacies*, recognizing literacy to be much more than just reading and writing. Street (2003) has acknowledged the notion of multiple literacies, and makes a distinction between

“autonomous” and “ideological” models of literacy. Since literacy is always embedded in social practices, it is always contested and both its meanings and practices are thus ‘ideological’. Street (2003) suggests that engaging in literacy is always a social act:

The ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new learners and their position in relations of power (p. 78).

As such, the ideological model of literacy has allowed for a more culturally sensitive framework that incorporates bilingual and multilingual contexts, and provides a basis from which to address relations of power both within and outside of formal schooling. It also makes room for the proliferation of information and communication technologies that have transformed literacy practices in recent years.

Questions remain as to how NLS theory can be put into practice in schools that are still mandated by official educational policy to teach according to the autonomous model. Kim (2003) outlines this very limitation by stating, “teachers seeking to encourage hybridity of local literacy practices and school practices still remain without guidelines and administrative support” (p. 119). How can teachers acknowledge and value students’ home language and literacy practices, all the while teaching the autonomous model; inevitably they become complicit in unequal relations of power. With greater specificity for the present study, I ask if or how official educational policy governing *classes d’accueil* allows teachers to create classroom environments that support multiple literacies *and* the expression of multiple identities?

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

In this chapter, I describe my research design, including the methods used to gather and analyze the data in response to the specific research questions as outlined in Chapter One and framed within the broader research context elaborated on in Chapter Two. I begin by providing a detailed description of the setting, *École Francophone Pluriethnique*. Next, I explain my unique position as both an outsider and an insider within the context of this particular study by means of justifying my positions as both teacher in this school and researcher. I continue by describing the recruitment process of core participants and provide a brief biographical sketch of each participant. After providing a justification for the methods that I employed to obtain data on my research questions, I finish by describing how I coded and analyzed the data sample as well as my process in selecting the emerging themes elaborated on in the next Chapter.

#### ***The Case of École Francophone Pluriethnique***

I chose to undertake this research project in Montreal, an increasingly multicultural city where over 70 percent of all immigrants to Quebec settle (Statistics Canada, 2006). Although my study was not strictly speaking a case study, Bodgen and Biklen (2007) describe a case study as a detailed examination of one setting. According to this, I decided to focus my study on one school, *École Francophone Pluriethnique*, a French-medium elementary school located in a large working class urban centre in southwest Montreal. The unit of analysis was the linguistic and cultural ‘environment’ of

the *classes d'accueil* of four teachers' classrooms, as seen through my own observations and discussions with the teachers.

The school is located within a school board comprised of 85 elementary and secondary schools that house students from over 175 countries; French is the second and often third language for over 50% of the students attending this school board (CSMB, 2010). As a result, as of September 2009, 48 home languages were represented within this school's population of approximately 267 students. According to the school's on-line profile, *École Francophone Pluriethnique*'s 'project éducatif' (educational philosophy) reads as follow: "*L'équipe-école favorise la variété des approches pédagogiques, la participation des élèves à leur propre apprentissage, le décloisonnement, le développement de l'estime de soi et l'harmonisation des relations humaines*" (CSMB, 2010).

Because of its proximity to what is considered more 'affordable' housing in Montreal, the school attracts a high proportion of immigrants each year. Almost all the immigrant students attending *classes d'accueil* are bussed in from close by neighborhoods, which is in contrast to the francophone population who lives nearby and walks to school. In addition to regular mainstream classes for kindergarten to grade 6 students, *École Francophone Pluriethnique* specializes in the teaching of severe learning difficulties and hosts three sheltered 'D.G.A (*difficultés graves d'apprentissage*) classes' for those students who have what are commonly referred to by staff and students alike as extreme learning and behavioural difficulties.

At the beginning of each school year, only two *classes d'accueil* (one to accommodate the younger population and the other to accommodate the older students)



are established. However, since immigration to Quebec occurs more or less steadily throughout the year, newcomer students may arrive at any point during the school year and as such, are integrated into either class depending on their age and level of previous schooling. When the initial two classes become too full, that is well above the recommended 16:1 teacher to student ratio, a third *classe d'accueil* normally opens up halfway through the school year. This means that the oldest students from the youngest *classe d'accueil* and the youngest students from the class for older students are pulled out and placed in a new class where they will be learning with each other and a new teacher until the end of the school year. In addition to the steady influx of newcomer learners, if students are considered 'ready' to make the transition to regular French-taught classes, they may do so at any point during the year. *École Francophone Pluriethnique* is characterized by a high level of mobility.

The *classe d'accueil* students' ethnic and linguistic backgrounds were extremely diverse. Most came from non-western homes<sup>7</sup> and spoke little to no French in September. Since the mix of different backgrounds represented in each class was very diverse, many students had no classmates who spoke the same language, although with such languages as Spanish and English, groups of two, three and even four children speaking the same language eventually formed.

### ***The Teacher Team***

The staff's reasons for working at the school were varied, although many expressed a wish to come back the following year because of the close knit teacher group community that had formed over the years. Most teachers were from French-speaking

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B- for a list of the students' home languages in one classroom.

parts of Quebec, and many commuted to work from homes located outside of the school community. The '*comité sociale*' encouraged team building amongst all teachers and staff by hosting various after school events throughout the year. At lunchtime, all ate and laughed together at the large table in the teachers' room. Teachers often relied on each other for tips and teaching advice.

### ***My Position as Teacher AND Researcher***

I held a dual role in this study, initially as a teacher and later as a researcher. I was hired as an English-as-a-Second-Language teacher and substitute teacher at *École Francophone Pluriethnique* six months prior to the beginning of the data-collection phase. This afforded the opportunity to observe the teacher group interacting informally during lunch and other breaks and to obtain a sense of their attachment to the school and general cohesion as a self-proclaimed 'team'. As such, by the time observations came around, I had already integrated into the school community, having already formed positive relationships with many of the teachers and students. In fact, the teachers involved in this study agreed to participate in my research only *after* having established a good rapport with me.

My unique position as both insider *and* outsider came with its own set of advantages and limitations. For one, the fact that most of the students in this study knew me as another one of their teachers, I believe, helped them be more at ease with having an 'intruder' sit in on their lessons. They did not seem affected by the fact that I walked around their classrooms with a tape recorder, and kept going about their business as if nothing abnormal was happening. The same can be said for the teachers, who assured me that they felt comfortable with me in the room. In contrast, a potential limitation lies in

the fact as a teacher who has developed her own teaching method and philosophy, I inadvertently may have formed certain opinions and biases about what the other teachers were doing in this study. Overall, I believe that my position as both teacher and researcher has added a unique perspective to this research, if only for the very reason that I integrated into the setting to a level that would otherwise not have been possible had I solely been a researcher/outsider. In other words, my insider status enabled me to better understand the culture of the school community, a crucial aspect of what constitutes ‘good’ qualitative research (Bogden & Biklen, 2007)

As one of the school’s teachers, I also had the opportunity to put into practice the teaching approach that I felt would most benefit the students. Aside from my one day a week as an ESL teacher, I taught as a substitute repeatedly in virtually all classes, a position which eventually allowed me the opportunity to teach one of the *classe d’accueil* observed in this study for the duration of a month (when the teacher was absent for health-related reasons). Thus, to this extent I built on the earlier classroom observations as well as my training as a teacher, in effect bringing an element of ‘action research’ to the study. This experience provided valuable insights that the reader will find elaborated in Chapter Four on findings.

### ***The Teacher-Participants***

After gaining the ethical approval of Concordia University and of the principal at *École Francophone Pluriethnique*, I recruited four teacher-participants who would be willing to be interviewed and let me sit in each of their classrooms for at least five periods (or whenever I was not teaching myself) during the 2009-10 school year. The four core participants were the school’s two regular *classe d’accueil* teachers, the teacher

who was hired halfway through the year to open the third *classe d'accueil*, as well as the teacher who took over the previous year's third *classe d'accueil*; at the time of this study this teacher was teaching a split grade 3/4 *classe d'accueil*.

Although the majority of Quebec's *classe d'accueil* teachers are old stock Québécois (*de souche*) (Sarkar, 2005), two of the four teachers in this study are originally from outside of Quebec. They both immigrated to Quebec themselves, which as the findings reveal, influenced their teaching philosophy and attitudes toward their students. The four teachers ranged in age from 24 to 50 and had been teaching for one to 15 years. Each of the participants is introduced with a brief biographical sketch in the following section.

***T1: Marie-Claude<sup>8</sup>: Grade 3 and 4 Classe d'Accueil Teacher***

Marie-Claude is a young woman of 24 who grew up in a small town near Trois-Rivières. At the time of the study, she had been teaching a grade 3 and 4 *classe d'accueil* for five months only. She describes herself as an old stock Quebecer (*de souche*). Marie-Claude completed her Bachelor of Education at a local francophone university in 2008. In 2009, she taught French as a Second Language in a community education project to adults, before landing her current post in the winter of 2010. She describes herself as very well traveled, having visited many countries such as China, Thailand, Cambodia, Switzerland, France and Germany. French is her first language, though she is fluent in English, has a 'good base' in Spanish and understands some German and Mandarin. Her avid enthusiasm toward language learning has helped to put herself in her students' shoes (*pour nous aussi en tant qu'enseignants, il est important de se mettre dans la peau de nos*

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<sup>8</sup> Only pseudonyms are used.

*élèves*). She reports having taken language classes in order to better understand what her students are going through. (*J'ai pris des cours d'espagnole et des cours d'Allemand justement pour me remettre dans le bain du côté de l'élève.*)

***T2: Huguette: Grade 5 and 6 Classe d'Accueil Teacher***

Huguette, the older *classe d'accueil* teacher also considers herself an old stock Quebecer (*de souche*). She was born in Quebec and also obtained her bachelor's degree in French as a second language from a local francophone university. She has been teaching *classes d'accueil* for the last thirteen years. As the only resident of the neighbourhood that the school is located in, she prefers to go home for lunch rather than eat at school with the remainder of the teachers. Previous to her position at this school, she taught French immersion to English-speaking students in an alternative school. She also has experience teaching abroad in Venezuela and has traveled elsewhere in South America, as well as to South East Asia and Europe. Huguette is perfectly fluent in standard *Québécois* French-her first language- as well as in English and Spanish. Her fiancé is Mexican, and she communicates in Spanish at home.

***T3: Fatima : Grade 1 and 2 Classe d'Accueil Teacher***

Fatima had been teaching the grade 5 and 6 *classe d'accueil* for 11 years, before agreeing this year to switch classes with Huguette. It was thus her first year in the younger *classe d'accueil*, an exciting challenge for her. She was born in Ontario to a Spanish Catalan mother and Bangladeshi father, although she does not speak either language fluently. She grew up speaking English and learned French at the age of 18, when she spent a year abroad as an 'au pair' in France. She majored in French literature

in University and obtained her teaching French as a Second Language qualifications from the University of Ottawa Teachers' College. She married a Québécois and moved to Montreal shortly after. Fatima has been teaching in the *classe d'accueil* setting for twelve years. She is fluent in French (although still has a slight accent), English and speaks a little Spanish. She communicates in both French and English at home with her husband and two young children.

***T4: Kamilah: Split Grade 3/4 Teacher***

Kamilah was born in Egypt. Her family immigrated to Montreal when she was 15 years old. She describes her own immigration process as extremely difficult. She had trouble making friends as her family immigrated at the end of the school year in May. Kamilah felt that her teacher and peers made no effort to help her integrate into the new society. She reports having experienced acts of discrimination although preferred not to mention any specific instance. Kamilah grew up speaking both Arabic and French, and later learned to speak English and Italian. She possesses a Bachelor of Education and a Master's degree in educational psychology. Although her bachelor degree does not officially qualify her to teach French as a second language, Kamilah feels that her own immigration experience greatly informs her teaching practice, especially when it comes to the integration of newcomers. She has been teaching for fifteen years, three of which were spent teaching *classes d'accueil*. As previously mentioned, At the time of the interview, Kamilah was teaching a regular split grade 3/4 class at the time of the interview and I therefore did not observe her classroom for the purposes of this study. She was interviewed nonetheless because of her unique position as an immigrant herself and her extensive experience in the *classe d'accueil* setting.

### ***Data Gathering Procedures***

This qualitative case study explored teachers' language attitudes, language use, and teaching practices in the *classes d'accueil*. The data-gathering period began with observations in two *classes d'accueil* and eventually in the third, which opened in January 2010. The three classrooms observed were divided according to the following age groups: 6-8 in the youngest, 9-10 in the middle level and 11-12 in the eldest.

Data were collected using a three-pronged strategy, including 1) classroom observations, supported with audio-recordings and detailed field notes, 2) semi-structured, open-ended teacher interviews and 3) analysis of classroom materials used by teachers and students during the observed lessons. The data gathering took place from September-December 2009 and from April-June 2010. There is a gap of three months between the initial data-collection phase and the latter phase during which I was abroad in South Africa conducting research for the comparative part of this project. Upon my return, the principal immediately placed me in Hugette's *classe d'accueil* on a full-time basis for the month of April. During this month, I continued with my observations of the other two *classes d'accueil* in my spare periods.

### ***Classroom Observations***

I observed, as unobtrusively as possible, the activities and interaction in each of the three classrooms for one to two hours on at least five but up to 10 occasions. I typically sat at the side of the classroom where I had a clear view of both the teacher and students' faces. The use of an MP3 audio-recording device freed me to focus my notes on what I saw; non-verbal cues, body language as well as on what was written on the board

as the teacher gave explicit instructions. Most lessons observed could be characterized as transmission-oriented, whole-class lessons, where the teacher would stand at the front of the room and teach a certain topic to students sitting at their desks. At times, students would be asked to break into groups to complete certain assignments. When this occurred, I circulated looking for pairs or groups of students speaking amongst themselves. During each lesson, I took extensive field notes describing and reflecting on the teacher-student interactions as well as the classroom environment. My observations were recorded in both English and French, using whichever language best enabled me to record what I saw and heard in the classroom, as well as what I felt and inferred. After each observation, I re-read my field notes and recorded them digitally, making sure to include any other additional comments while the data was still fresh in my mind.

As a researcher, I acted as a participant-observer, engaging at times in class activities, sometimes to obtain additional insight on the class communities, and other times simply to help out the teachers with the lesson at hand. As a substitute teacher, it was of course difficult to take notes at the same time. However, I recorded critical incidents and other observations as well as the students' responses to my teaching at the end of the school day. These observations can be regarded as those of an insider-outsider, thus emic in perspective.

### ***Classroom Materials***

The teachers used various resources and materials to support their lessons. These materials could be found on the classroom walls or were handed over to the students during particular lessons. I asked the teachers to provide me with a copy of all such materials. The teachers' decisions to use these resources provided insight about their



particular teaching attitudes and philosophies. For example, within the content of these resources, I specifically looked for representations of linguistic and cultural diversity and/or uniformity and as well as for potential instances of cultural dissonance. The following questions guided my inquiry: Were the materials meaningful and relevant for the students? Did they reflect the actual diversity present in the classrooms? Did the resources send hidden messages not addressed by the teachers? Could the students find themselves represented by the materials and feel comfortable or uncomfortable accordingly?

### ***Teacher Interviews***<sup>9</sup>

Between the months of May and June 2010, four ‘welcome class’ teachers were interviewed individually. I chose to conduct the interviews at the end of the final data-gathering phase so as to not influence their perspectives and teaching practices with my questions. It must be noted here, that since I had taught as a substitute in each of the classes observed in this study, I developed a sense of the teachers’ attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity as well as their preferred methods prior to the interviews. However, I opted to limit my bias in informal conversations with the teachers and during the interviews, again as not to sway the participants into providing me with the answers that they could potentially believe I would be looking for. Each hour and a half interview touched on a wide variety of topics such as:

- how they view their roles as *classe d'accueil* teachers;
- their perceptions of diversity and difference;

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C for teacher interview questions

- any challenges they face in classes where the learners come from many different language backgrounds;
- how they structure the learning environments in their classrooms; and,
- their understandings of certain aspects of the official curriculum.

Conducted in whichever of the two official languages the participants felt most comfortable using, the interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. This allowed the participants to narrate their diverse experiences as teachers at *École Francophone Pluriethnique* and as participating members of Quebec society. Both the interviews and audio-recordings were selectively transcribed by me; and I made at least two passes through the data. Once the collection phase ended, all data were coded for emerging themes, each of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

This chapter reports on the key findings of this study. I begin by outlining current sociopolitical trends concerning integration and immigration to Quebec. Next, I argue

that these sociopolitical trends are manifested in the four classrooms observed in this study, and thus conceptualize the *classe d'accueil* as a microcosm of Quebec society. This is followed by a detailed description of six major themes that arose during the analysis of the data. I finish this chapter by including a section which describes how one teacher-participant fostered what I call 'transformative teaching practices', and by incorporating several vignettes from a journal that I kept while teaching one of the researched classrooms. I have chosen to incorporate the latter into my thesis to illustrate that a class may be taught according to and in line with a multicultural and multilingual framework.

### *Preamble*

As the province of Quebec, and especially its major urban centers like Montreal become increasingly diverse, two major discourses have come to dominate both policy and popular thought concerning the integration of newcomer students. As is evidenced in the recent Quebec Education Program (QEP) reform, the province is committed to celebrating and welcoming diversity (Gouvernement du Québec, 1998a; 1998b; 2001). Yet, as provincial language laws make clear, Quebec is also determined to protect its distinct cultural and linguistic status within a primarily anglophone Canada (McAndrew, 2010). Through an in-depth analysis of the interviews, audio-recordings and field notes, and classroom materials, it became clear that these two potentially competing discourses—one of embracing, and the other of controlling diversity; one of protecting the local, the other of welcoming the global—influence how *classe d'accueil* teachers structure the learning environment in their classrooms. In other words, what happens in the *classe d'accueil* actually reflects the tensions that continue to divide opinion in the

province of Quebec. In this sense, we can say that the *classe d'accueil* is a microcosm, representative of the prevailing linguistic and cultural issues present in the society at large.

A second but not unrelated tension exists in the manner in which teachers see their roles as *classe d'accueil* teachers. On the one hand teachers may see their roles in the classroom in traditional terms, by simply attending to the learning needs of children, albeit via French. On the other hand they may see themselves as agents of social change, whose mandate is to produce new Quebecers who speak French and who will integrate into the Quebec culture. Through carefully selected excerpts from the teacher interviews and transcribed audio-recordings, I will demonstrate in the following section how the teachers' perspectives with respect to language ideologies and immigrant integration in Quebec directly influence the manner in which they structure the learning environment in their classrooms. I will discuss the implications that this has for the students themselves in the next chapter.

### ***Findings***

Once the data were coded and scrutinized for repeated themes, six key themes emerged. Each is discussed in detail below.

- 1. Teachers' views of their roles*
- 2. Home language maintenance and language use in the classroom*
- 3. Enforcing a French-only policy in the classe d'accueil*
- 4. Conceptualizing 'French proficiency' as a marker of social status: The 'ticket' to classroom participation*
- 5. The special status of English vs. the other home languages in the classroom*
- 6. Understanding the curriculum*

#### ***Teachers' Views of Their Roles***

The participants understood their roles as *classe d'accueil* teachers very differently. The following excerpts suggest that teachers Marie-Claude and Huguette (T1 and T2) were most personally invested in promoting the French language in the classroom. They saw themselves as “ambassadors of Quebec in charge of transmitting knowledge about its language and culture” so as to ensure that it lives on through future generations. Huguette expressed her worries about the French language and culture being at risk of becoming extinct in the following comment:

*T2 : La question qui est très, très importante pour moi, c'est qu'on garde le Français. C'est une richesse. Si on décide de devenir juste des anglophones ici, on va avoir perdu quelque chose, on va avoir perdu une langue, et la langue va avec une culture aussi...*

T2: For me, the question that is very, very important is that we preserve French. It's an asset. If we all decide to become anglophones here, we will have lost something, we will have lost a language, and language goes along with culture as well...

Marie-Claude expressed a similar angst about the state of French in Quebec. In light of what some perceive to be the fragile linguistic and cultural status associated with Quebec, she believes that it is important to be ‘sure’ of what constitutes the Quebec culture so that she can then transmit this knowledge to her newcomer students. Marie-Claude reported that it is part of her mandate as a *classe d'accueil* teacher to be a good role model and stay updated with various cultural events taking place in the society.

*T1 : Il est important d'être un bon modèle de la Francophonie, parce que veut, veut pas, le professeur c'est le flambeau de la langue qu'il enseigne et de la culture. Donc d'être bien au courant de notre culture, se tenir à jour sur les nouveautés, qu'est ce qui se fait tant au niveau des films, les revues, les livres, la musiques, pour essayer de leurs montrer un plus vaste inventaire.*

T1: It is important to be a good model of ‘la Francophonie’, because whether one likes it or not, the teacher is the Olympic torch of the language and the culture that he teaches. So, to be well informed about our culture, to stay updated on what is new, what is going on in the movies, magazines, books, musique, in an attempt to expose [the students] to the largest array.

Marie-Claude feels as though she embodies the “Olympic torch of Quebec’s language and culture”. She explains that her position as *classe d’accueil* teacher means that she is often the first French contact person that these students encounter, and believes that it is extremely important to accurately represent what Quebec is about. In the following excerpt she discusses the dangers associated with failing to provide a clear picture of what she refers to as ‘*la réalité Québécoise*’.

*T1 : C’est important qu’on s’assume comme nous on est et... Qu’on leur montre d’une façon sure quelle est la réalité Québécoise. Parce que lorsqu’ils arrivent ici...Ils ne comprennent pas comment le Québec fonctionne. Parce que eux, lorsqu’ils quittent leurs pays, ils se disent, ok nous dans notre pays, on a une langue officielle, on fonctionne comme ça, nos règles sont strictes et claires, et quand ils arrivent ici ils sont déjà déstabilisés, et là on offre une société qui est déstabilisée aussi...*

T2: It’s important that we assume ourselves as we are...That we show them clearly what is ‘*la réalité Québécoise*’. Because when they arrive here...They don’t understand how Quebec works. They tell themselves that in their country, they have one official language, it works a certain way, they have strict and clear rule, but when they come her they’re already destabilized, and we offer a destabilized society as well...

Marie-Claude deplores that one major problem in the Quebec society at large is that there are constant disagreements about which group to accommodate, the old-stock French majority, the anglophone minority, or the newcomer population. She explains that when immigrants first come to Quebec, they already feel destabilized because of all the new changes in their lives. She continues by offering her interpretation of what life must have been like in ‘their’ country, stating that over there ‘they’ have *one* official language coupled with clear rules about how to live together. In contrast to this, Marie-Claude reports that Quebec is an unstable society because of the constant tension between the old and the new. I asked her to elaborate on what she means by ‘*une société déstabilisé*’ and she responded with the following.

*T1 : Bien par exemple, [quand] ils arrivent ici et à l'immigration ils leur ont dit, au Canada on parle Anglais, moi j'en ai vu plusieurs qui sont arrivés au Québec et ont dit, « Quoi? Il faut que j'apprenne une autre langue ? Je n'avais pas prévu ça ». Et la après ça on leur dit, ok tu peux y aller en Français, mais là ... ils se rendent compte que s'ils apprennent seulement le Français, là ils ne sont pas correct, parce qu'il faut qu'ils prennent des cours d'Anglais à coté pour pouvoir travailler. Donc, là les règles ont changé... ils ne le savent plus, et ça ce sont mes élèves aux adultes qu'ils m'en ont parlés. Parce qu'ils savaient plus sur quel pied danser. Et vue qu'ils sont déjà déstabilisés parce qu'ils viennent d'arriver dans un nouveau pays... Et la d'avoir comme deux informations contradictoires... Ça ne les facilite pas non plus pour l'intégration.*

T1: For example, when they first come here, they are told at immigration that in Canada, we speak English. But I've seen many who came to Quebec and said "what? I have to learn another language? I didn't plan for this". Afterwards we tell them, ok you can live in French, but then...they realize that it's not ok to only know French. They have to take English classes in order to find work. So the rules changed...they don't know what to expect anymore, my adult students talked to me about this, because they didn't know on which foot to dance. And since they're already destabilized because they just moved to a new country...And now they get contradictory information...That doesn't help them integrate.

In this passage, Marie-Claude is essentially alluding to the fact that it is easier to integrate into a society that is monocultural and unilingual. She explains that receiving contradictory information with respect to what language is spoken in Quebec and when, is confusing for newcomers who are torn between French and English. Marie-Claude expands on this notion by stating that this reality is confusing for newcomers *and* Quebecers alike. She explains that it is not only immigrants who are unsure of Quebec's language, culture and values. The same can be said for those who have been living here for their entire lives.

*T1 : Ce sont des messages contradictoires pour les nouveaux, et aussi au niveau de ceux qui habitent depuis longtemps au Québec...Nous-même on a plus de repères. Ont ce dit, ok, mais qui je suis, moi? Sur quoi je me base si on change mes valeurs en fonction de ceux qui viennent*

T1: These are contradictory messages for newcomers, and also for those who have been living in Quebec for a long time...As for them, **we** also no longer have landmarks. We tell ourselves, ok, but who am I? What should I base myself on if we change my values to accommodate the

*d'arriver? Est-ce que c'est bon? Des deux cotés moi je pense qu'on perd.*

values of those who have just arrived? Is this a good thing? Personally, I think it is a lose-lose situation.

Her use of the personal pronouns 'nous' and 'on' is evidence that she situates herself within this discourse, suggesting that she is confused about the current sociopolitical situation in Quebec. Marie-Claude believes that to change a society's values in order to accommodate the influx of immigrants results in a loss of traditional and authentic values for both newcomers and old-timers.

In stark contrast to Marie-Claude and Huguette's perspectives about Quebec's current sociopolitical situation and its relationship to immigrant integration, Fatima and Kamilah (T3 and T4) had a different outlook. Upon being asked how they saw their roles with respect to their newcomer students, they both reported acting as facilitator, social worker and guide in charge of helping their students navigate a new world. Kamilah expressed that having immigrated here at a young age greatly informs her teaching practice. Similarly, Fatima repeatedly mentioned that she feels considerable empathy towards her students because she too grew up with immigrant parents.

T3: Having two parents that were immigrants, who did not blend in quite as well as the others, because of their different cultures but also different religions as well... They weren't able to help me at home with my homework, because it was nothing that they ever learned, and also the language. I remember going to school and pronouncing words that were just totally off, because I only heard my mom and dad say them, so I can really empathize with these kids.

Fatima also explained that she learned French "very late in life", while she was in university. She reports being well aware of the many difficulties that her students are faced with in learning a new language (such as the masculine/feminine pronouns in French that do not exist in English). Her explanation of the realities of what it is like to



grow up with immigrant parents coupled with the fact that French is also her second language suggest that she has reflected on her own experience in relation to her teaching practice. It seems that for both Famitah and Kamilah, the theme of empathy is central to their pedagogies and classroom philosophies. In other words, they constantly ‘put themselves in their students’ shoes’, suggesting that in their classrooms, the students’ best interests came first.

Although both Kamilah and Fatima agree that it is important to promote French in Quebec, they are less invested in this mission than the two Québécoise teachers (Marie-Claude and Huguette), perhaps because they grew up as immigrants with more than one culture to manage. Kamilah and Fatima even reported that in some cases, newly arrived immigrant children ought to be able to go to school in English.

*T4 :Je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord [avec le fait que tous les immigrants doivent aller à l'école en Français au Québec]. Par principe, oui... Pour respecter la langue d'ici, et pour la préserver, ça c'est bien important. Sauf que quand on arrive à des cas d'exception où l'élève est vraiment en difficulté, ...Et qu'on insiste, qu'on insiste pour qu'il apprenne tout en Français, et qu'en bout de ligne après deux ans d'accueil, il n'y arrive toujours pas, je pense que c'est important qu'on lâche prise et qu'il aille en Anglais.*

T4: I don't completely agree with [the fact that all immigrants to Quebec have to go to school in French]. In principle, yes, to respect the language, to preserve it, it's quite important. Except that in special cases, where the student is experiencing academic difficulties...and we insist and insist for him to learn everything in French, and that after two years in *accueil*, he still can't pass, then I think it's important that we let go and that he goes to school in English.

Unlike Marie-Claude and Huguette who prioritized the role of the *classe d'accueil* as a means to ensure a future for Quebec's national identity, Kamilah considers the interests of the children, in this case of those experiencing academic difficulty in French classes,

as a priority. Fatima also considers what is best for her students and shares Kamilah's perspective on the role of English in the education of newcomer students.

T3: To a certain extent French should be preserved. I think that English though, should also have its place. I think these kids should start off in French and have the opportunity to go into the English stream if they want to. I think it's sad though sometimes because [enforcing French] is to the detriment of some of the wellbeing of these families, because they don't come here necessarily because they want to... personally as a teacher, I find it really, really sad that we keep forcing a kid through a system because we want them to learn French where they're even having a hard time learning their first language.

Although it is clear from their narratives that Kamilah and Fatimah do not feel a strong sense of Quebec nationalism and are consequently less invested in protecting Quebec's heritage, what these two teachers have is a different type of investment, one that I would argue is very connected to their teaching practices. Kamilah and Fatimah are both personally invested in the immigrant integration experience, which is an important part of their identities, and also something that they share with their students.

The four teachers' comments mentioned so far are telling of their investment in the promotion of the French language and Quebec culture, which, as I will further demonstrate, directly influenced their teaching. Such different interpretations of what constitutes the role of the *classe d'accueil* teacher reveal the extent to which teaching is subjective and tied to personal, ethnic, and political identity. As Cummins (2000) explains, "what educators bring into the classroom reflects their awareness of and orientation to issues of equity and power in the wider society..." (p. 6).

### ***Home Language Maintenance and Language Use in the Classroom***

All four teachers viewed multilingualism as an asset (*la langue est une richesse*, T1) and spoke about the importance of maintaining the home language.

T3: I think it's very important for kids and their families to keep their cultures and to keep their languages alive.

*T4: La langue maternelle fait partie de nos racines. Tu prends un arbre, tu le déraces, tu le plantes ailleurs. Les racines vont tenir peut être un peu, mais jamais comme à l'endroit où il est né. C'est très important la langue maternelle. Elle est riche de l'expérience de vie, de souvenir d'enfance, c'est toute une culture.*

T4: Our mother tongue is a part of our roots. If you take a tree, uproot it and plant it elsewhere, the roots will maybe hold, but never like where it was born. [One's] mother tongue is very important. It is rich with life experience, childhood memories...it's an entire culture.

Perhaps surprisingly, considering the consensus amongst the teachers that children should not lose their home languages, the *classe d'accueil* was not a space where other languages could be spoken. In fact, these teachers generally did not allow students to communicate in languages other than French (although at times, exceptions were made in some of the classes). Speaking other languages in class ranged from being lightly discouraged to being a serious infraction of the classroom rules.

Each teacher dealt with the arrival of students who had not yet acquired French differently. Huguette speaks of a '*semaine de grâce*' when she temporarily allows students to speak their home languages with one friend.

*T2 : Moi j'appelle ça une semaine de grâce. Quand ils arrivent, peu importe le moment, ils ont droit à une semaine où ils peuvent parler avec un ami, la personne avec qui ils sont jumelés, pour pas se sentir trop perdus. Mais après si je ne mets pas cette règle-là, ils n'apprendront pas le Français assez vite*

T2: I call this a grace period. When they first come here, regardless of when, they are allowed one week when they can speak with the friend whom they have been paired with so as to not feel too lost. But after this, if I do not enforce the [French-only] rule, they will not learn French fast enough.

Another expressed:

*T1 : C'est important de leur laisser une période d'ajustement...De permettre un*

T1: It's important to give them an adjustment period... To allow for an

*certain échange entre les élèves qui parlent la même langue que le nouvel élève, juste le temps de lui expliquer un petit peu les règles de la classe... Moi je le fais pour a peu prêt, deux, trois jours...*

exchange between the student who speaks the same language as the newcomer student, [to allow] enough time for that student to explain the class rules to the other student... I let this happen for approximately two, three days...

The rationale offered for insisting on French-only in the classroom was the belief that a second language would never be learned unless the students were submerged in it. Two teachers reported that their university training emphasized that it is important to “never speak anything other than the target language” (*ne jamais parler d’autres langues que le Français, T2*) in second language classrooms. With this line of thought, when other languages are permitted in the classroom, children “become lazy” (*ils ne se forceront pas, T2*), rely on translation in their home languages and will not learn French fast enough (*ils n’apprendront pas le Français assez vite*). These attitudes are in contradiction to what researchers in the field have posited. For example, Cummins (2007) explains that learning a second language independently from other languages and without reference to home language is “largely unsupported by empirical evidence and inconsistent with current understandings both of how people learn and the functioning of the bilingual and multilingual mind” (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000 as cited by Cummins, 2007, (p. 222).

The teachers also implied that allowing other languages in their classrooms would force them to deviate from their ‘mandates as *classe d’accueil*’ teachers, which is to promote the French language.

*T4: ...Ils peuvent s’exprimer dans leur propre langue chez eux. Ils sont ici pour apprendre le Français. Donc, s’ils sont ici pour apprendre le Français, et qu’ils*

T4 : They can speak their own languages at home. They are here to learn French. So, if they are here to learn French and they start speaking their home languages, **we’re**

*commencent à s'exprimer dans leurs langues, on va à l'encontre de l'objectif 'se familiariser avec son milieu', de s'intégrer, d'apprendre à connaître la culture du Québec. On va à l'encontre de tous ces objectifs-là.*

*T1: En tant que professeur, nous on voudrait qu'il parle Français dans la classe, c'est important, ça fait partie du mandat des classes d'accueil.*

**going against the stated objective 'de se familiariser avec son milieu'**, to integrate, to learn to know the culture of Quebec. We are going against all these stated objectives. (*emphasis mine*).

T1: As teachers, we would like for them to speak French in class, it's important, it's part of the 'welcome class' mandate.

The above quotes corroborate Sarkar's (2005) view that interpretation of the mandate set forth by the French school board's official curriculum translates into 'a rigid intolerance for other languages'. Teachers are torn between translating theoretical educational policies into practice on the one hand, and the realities of classroom life on the other. As is evidenced by both of the previously mentioned quotes, the teachers' interpretation of their mandates results in both an 'intolerance for other languages' *and* a resistance to incorporate their students' cultures in the classroom. This resistance I would argue is based on the fact that to openly acknowledge and incorporate other cultures in the classroom may deviate from the fact that teachers must promote Quebec's culture, and not just Quebec's language in the *classe d'accueil*.

During the six months of observation, I did not once witness the teachers explicitly acknowledging, and much less drawing from the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As a matter of fact, Marie-Claude admitted that she purposely did not incorporate the students' backgrounds into her teaching, explaining that it is dangerous to do so since she might then lose control of the classroom. This would translate into students sensing that they are allowed to speak whatever they want when in reality, they are really only in the *classe d'accueil* to learn French.

*T1 : Moi je me dis que le danger de trop intégrer justement leurs langues c'est de leur ouvrir la porte à : 'on peut parler votre langue en classe d'accueil', et ils ne sont pas là pour parler leur langue, ils sont là pour apprendre le Français.*

T2: I tell myself that the danger of integrating their languages [in the classroom] will open up the possibility to 'we can speak our own languages in the *classe d'accueil*', and they are not here to speak their languages, they are here to learn French.

The prevailing assumption underpinning this line of thought is that the second language classroom should have very little to do with the students' first languages and cultures.

French as a second language must be learned as an autonomous, singular system and with no reference to the students' home languages.

### ***Enforcing a French-only Policy in the Classe d'Accueil***

Two of the teachers had classroom management systems controlling the use of other languages in class. Marie-Claude recorded on the top right corner of the chalkboard the number of times she heard the students speaking other languages in the classroom. If after a week, the number rose higher than ten, all the students in the class would collectively lose their Friday afternoon play period (*période de récompense*). Similarly, Huguette jotted down daily the names of the individual students who spoke other languages. At the end of each day, those who broke the rule were assigned extra homework. The students would have to copy '*je dois parler en Français à l'école*' multiple times, depending on how often they slipped up<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix D- *Les Copies*



All four teachers had the same rule chart regarding behaviour and participation posted on a wall in their classrooms (see left). Along with declarations written in the first person to ensure respect and responsibility such as ‘I raise my hand to speak’ (*Je lève la main pour parler*) and ‘I listen when someone else is speaking’ (*J’écoute quand quelqu’un parle*), was written ‘I speak in French’ (*Je parle en Français*). This last

statement reflects the fact that the classrooms were to function as French-only spaces; this ‘justified’ the exclusion of other languages in class. These language-use rules also point to the type of identity these classes aim to construct: a state-supported French identity.

### ***Conceptualizing’ French Proficiency’ as a Marker of Social Status: The ‘Ticket’ to Classroom Participation***

Participation in classroom activities was dependent on French proficiency in all classrooms observed. Students who had not yet acquired the ability to communicate in French were silenced, excluded and given solitary ‘busy work’ (such as work in a *calligraphy* (penmanship) notebook or copying words from the French dictionary). I observed whole-class and even smaller group lessons that excluded newer students on more than one occasion. This type of exclusion occurred in terms of physical space as

well, meaning students who could not yet speak French were asked to sit apart from their peers. The teachers did not seem to believe that children could contribute to the classroom without the use of French. As such, the students were treated like second-class citizens.

The two teachers who most closely identified with Quebec nationalism (T1 and T2) organized classroom language activities in ways that gave French the highest linguistic status. For instance, Huguette (T2) warned her students that if they continued to speak other languages in the classroom, “they would never finish the year and would not be able to move to regular classes” (*on n’arrivera pas à finir l’année et vous ne pourrez pas aller en classe régulière*). Since the understood aims of the *classe d’accueil* are to prepare for mainstream classes, the process of learning French became a means to that end. Because the French language was ascribed the highest status, the *classe d’accueil* became a temporary subordinate space that all immigrant children must pass through in order to reach the end goal of transitioning into the regular stream. Immigrant students were thus disempowered and stigmatized within the culture of the school as a whole.

Instead of valuing their lived experiences and helping students feel proud of what they already knew, teachers seemed only to praise students for using the language of instruction in the classroom. In line with Allen (2007) and Steinbach’s (2010) findings, acquiring the ability to speak French was treated as a resource that ought to be mastered *before* the integration process could begin.

### ***The Special Status of English vs. the Other Home Languages in the Classe d’Accueil***



Interviews with the teachers revealed that English has a different status than the other home languages in two of the classrooms. Whereas Fatima and Kamilah believed English had its place in the Quebec landscape, it was not tolerated by the other two teachers. In fact, speaking English was perceived as a more serious infraction of the rules than speaking any other language. Marie-Claude and Huguette repeatedly referred to the fact that if we did not preserve the French language in Quebec, then we would all eventually speak only English. All of the other languages spoken by the *classe d'accueil* students were considered minority languages, and therefore did not pose as menacing a threat to the survival of the French language. This parallels the language issues present in the society at large. Unfortunately, it was also observed that this resulted in students who came from English-speaking countries (such as many parts of the Caribbean and Anglophone parts of Africa, for instance) were then reprimanded more severely than their non-English speaking peers. As such, the French-only policy in the *classe d'accueil* became a way of keeping the English language out of the classroom, and can perhaps better be understood in terms of a 'no English' policy.

What is interesting to note about the type of negative connotations associated in these four classes with English, is that the students in both Marie-Claude and Huguette's classrooms picked up on their teachers' intolerance of the language. To this end, they were observed re-appropriating the language and using it to test their teachers' patience when they very well knew that they were to speak only French. Using English thus became a symbol of resistance in these two classrooms. In contrast, because Fatima would at times use English to speak with her students, this type of resistance was not observed in her classroom. Moreover, her use of English did not seem to deter from the

students ‘not learning French fast enough’, which was one of Huguette and Alexandra’s primary concerns.

### ***Understandings of the Curriculum***

The Quebec Education Program (QEP) outlines two competencies for students placed in *classes d’accueil* at the elementary school level. Students must learn ‘to communicate in French’ (*Interagir en Français*) and learn ‘to adapt to Quebec’s culture’ (*Se familiariser à la culture de son milieu*) (Gouvernement du Québec, p. 111, 2001). In other words, teachers must assess and evaluate their newcomer students based on how well they have acquired the ability to communicate in French *and* how well they appear to be integrating into Quebec society, familiarity with the culture being the key indicator.

The four teacher-participants made sense of this second competency in different ways, with interpretations ranging from “learning the rules of the school” (*Apprendre les règles de l’école*, T4), “learning about Quebec’s history” (*Apprendre l’histoire du Québec*, T2), to “participating in major holidays celebrated by the school and greater society” (T3). They admitted to receiving little professional guidance and support, and expressed much confusion about how to ‘teach’ competency number two. The teachers had trouble understanding what was intended by ‘adapting to the Quebec culture’ and what characteristic in the learner would be indicative of such an adaptation.

*T2: Peut-être que je me trompe. Je me suis toujours pausé la question et ça n’a jamais été clair, peut-être que je suis dans le champ. C’est vraiment pas facile à évaluer, et ont n’a pas de balise. Personne ne nous dit comment évaluer ça...*

T2: Maybe I’m wrong. I’ve always asked myself that question, and it’s never been clear, maybe I’m completely off. It’s really not easy to assess, and we have no markers. Nobody’s told us how to evaluate that.

Marie-Claude admits that to evaluate students based on their adaptation to the new setting is extremely difficult because culture is not something that one can *see*. She follows by explaining that the official curriculum mandates *classe d'accueil* teachers to evaluate this second competency according to whether their students have properly adapted '*au climat de la classe*'. She finds this guideline 'simplistic' because it fails to encompass the rich and distinct heritage that Quebec has to offer. She sees the culture of the school (*la culture du milieu scolaire*) and the Quebec culture (*la culture globale Québécoise*) as two separate entities. As such, she expresses disagreement with what the Quebec educational policy requires of her.

*T1 : Quand on regarde le programme, l'objectif est 'de s'habituer au climat de classe donc savoir comment les routines fonctionnent, est ce qu'on est capable de faire une file, de prendre son rang... De s'impliquer, quand le professeur te demande de nettoyer ton bureau, bien tu vas le faire... Si un élève est capable de suivre en classe, de faire ses devoirs, de travailler quand on lui demande de travailler. Est-ce que c'est un élève qui comprend la culture Québécoise? C'est pour moi, simpliste... Est-ce que ça fait que c'est un élève qui est capable de comprendre le Québec? Qu'est-ce qui se passe au niveau de la citoyenneté, de la souveraineté? Qui sont les noms de rues qu'on voit? Ça correspond à quoi? ...Mais ça ce sont des éléments que l'on n'évalue pas, parce qu'on n'est pas présent. Comme moi, je peux savoir qu'un élève est allé à un festival s'il m'en parle, mais s'il décide de pas m'en parler mais qui est allé, je ne le sais pas. Donc nous on évalue ce qu'on est capable de voir mais la culture du milieu scolaire et la culture globale québécoise c'est deux.*

T1 : When we look at the [Quebec Education] Program, the objective states 'to become acclimated with the classroom environment'. So, to know the routines, can [students] line up properly, participate in class. When the teacher asks you to clean your desk, do you do it... If a student can follow in class, do his/her homework, work upon being asked. Does s/he understand the Quebec culture? For me, it's simplistic... Does it produce a student who can [truly] understand Quebec? What's going on in terms of citizenship? Sovereignty? Who are the street names that we see? What do they correspond to? ...But these are elements that we do not assess [as teachers] because we're not there. I can only know if a student went to a festival if s/he talks to me about it, but if s/he doesn't, I don't. We assess what we can see but the culture of the school and the Quebec culture are two different things.

Kamilah's (T3) comments reflect her uncertainty with what exactly constitutes the Quebec culture, and which aspects of it are 'teachable' and most important for both the host society and its newcomers.

*T3: Qu'est-ce qui est important? Qu'est-ce qu'il faut leur donner? ...Qu'est-ce qu'on leur montre qui touche vraiment la culture? Est-ce que c'est la cabane à sucre? Est-ce que c'est les fêtes...La Saint-Jean, est-ce que c'est important? La fête de la reine? C'est quoi exactement 'la culture'? Quels sont les éléments de base pour atteindre l'objectif, de 'se familiariser'. Ce n'est pas clair. C'est vraiment laissé à l'enseignante. Et là on commence à se perdre là-dedans...*

T3: What's important? What do we have to give them? What should we show them that actually relates to culture? Is it the sugar shack? Is it the major holidays? *Lac Saint-Jean*? Is it important? What about the Queen's birthday? What exactly constitutes 'culture'? What elements need to be taught in order to meet the stated objective 'de se familiariser'? It isn't clear. It is left up to the teacher. And we get lost in it.

Fatima (T4) spoke about the fact that integration is a personal process that is undertaken differently by each individual. She expressed confusion and discomfort with being cast in a position of authority, as a teacher who must provide a grade for something that she does not believe she can accurately assess.

T4: It's hard to evaluate. It's very personal. And you know, it's a personality thing too, like I have some kids that are just shy. Am I not going to give them a good mark because of that? Or maybe they don't have good memories about where they came from.

Like Katia, she has an awful background, and at the beginning, she just wasn't ready to talk about anything, and she'd get angry about it. So am I to give her a bad mark because she's been traumatized and she's not ready to talk about it? Who am I to judge?

Later Fatima continued:

...Personally, I don't think kids should be graded based on this competency. It's probably in place because I think it looks good to say that in school when the immigrants come **we try to put them in a situation where they have no choice but to be a certain way**. It's probably very political. But I'm not going to keep a kid back because that competency is not passed.

The bolded line in the previous passage suggests that to an extent, Fatima believes that this second competency has the potential to be interpreted by teachers in an assimilatory manner. In other words, if children have ‘no choice’ but to conform to what is being asked of them, then the type of integration that the Quebec curriculum fosters is not a two-way street. It is, in actuality, a disguised form of assimilation. Fatima later admits to teaching this competency in a “very silly kind of way” stating that she is no ‘miracle worker’ and cannot possibly *teach* culture because culture is something that takes a long time to get used to.

These kids are in *classe d'accueil* for two years. I can't expect to be a miracle worker and have them understand the culture, unless they're living in the culture and in this environment for a much longer period of time, and that's when they're going to learn. I can tell them what's being done but they have to see it for themselves in order to get a grasp on what the culture is really about.

### ***From Transmission Oriented Practices to Transformative Learning Practices***

Although some might think the findings of this study paint a fairly grim picture of the realities of Quebec's *classe d'accueil* thus far, it should be noted that I observed glimpses here and there, instance of what I will refer to as possibilities for a hybrid community, one in which one teacher- consciously or not- left the constraints of her teaching mandate and the complexities of Quebec's politics at the door, and was able to acknowledge, affirm or even encourage her students' backgrounds and lived experiences while also supporting their French language learning .

Most of the teaching practices that I observed in this study can be characterized according to a transmission-oriented framework, with the teacher simply transmitting and passing on information to students. In the following section, I will illustrate how Fatima fostered a transformative learning approach by essentially giving up control as the ‘all-

knower', therefore allowing for the co-construction of knowledge with her students. She was able to successfully broker between the culture of the school, the culture of the society at large and the students' home cultures, therefore creating a communal space for the students to assert their multiple, emerging identities. The first example provided is derived from a formal homework correction lesson while the latter offers an instance in which the students themselves orchestrated an informal activity during their snack break.

### ***Homework Correction Lesson***

At the end of each school day, Fatima sends students home with a list of words emerging from a theme that they address each week in class. The students are to invent several sentences using these words. While the themed words serve to assist students in expanding their emerging French vocabulary, the fact that this activity is open-ended and undertaken at home often means that the context in which these sentence are written influence their content. In other words, the students are presented with the opportunity to write about their lived experiences. The next day, all the students correct a few of the sentences altogether on the board. Fatima asks volunteers who are willing to come up to the front and write one of their sentences on the chalkboard, and the whole class takes part in correcting the sentence. While the actual correction of the sentences is a practice that supports French language development, the content of the sentences often reveal hints about the students' lives outside of the classroom. Fatima sees this exercise as an opportunity to learn about the children's cultural backgrounds and makes a point of asking them many questions about what they have chosen to write about. Students thus receive ample opportunities to practice communicating in both written and verbal French,

all the while affirming their lived experiences and rendering their learning meaningful and relevant.

### ***The Students Take Charge***

During the months that I observed their classroom, Fatima's students, on their own and with little interference from the teacher, orchestrated an activity during their 45 min. snack break and 'reading period' (*'période de lecture'*). The activity went as follows. Each day, a child's name is picked out of a hat. If s/he wishes, the student may then come up to the front of the class and either read or tell the class a story. On one of these occasions, a little boy from Cameroon chose to tell his classmates a traditional story from his country. During his performance, he struggled to translate the story into French, which was originally in the Ewondo language, and often 'code-switched' into English (his second language) to finish some of his sentences. Since this was not a formal learning period, Fatima did not stop him from code-switching. His story about a bear and a wolf fighting over a mango included a song, which was repeated whenever the two animals came across each other. The song seemed impossible for the little boy to translate, and so he politely asked his teacher whether he could recite it in Ewondo. She agreed and he continued on with his story told in three languages.

These possibilities for the creation of a hybrid classroom community were only observed in Fatima's classroom, which could be attributed to the fact that Fatima's perspective on the politics of Quebec was more relaxed, rendering hers the only observed classroom where this type of learning was made possible.

### ***Reflections on Teaching Classe d'Accueil***

Approximately halfway through the data collection phase of this study, the principal at *École Francophone Pluriethnique* asked me to substitute teach in Huguette's classroom for an indefinite amount of time. Huguette was to stay home from her teaching duties because of medical reasons. I spent a month with her class and as both a teacher and researcher, decided to incorporate in the classroom some of the strategies highlighted in the literature review in Chapter Two. As previously mentioned, Huguette had been enforcing a French-only policy in her classroom by means of giving her students '*des copies*' if they spoke other languages in class. I chose not to continue with this system but did not inform the students of my decision, which was fine as they eventually figured this out on their own since I never reprimanded them when they used other languages to communicate.

Informed by recent research in multilingual education (Schechter & Cummins, 2003; Cummins, 2007) and a pedagogy of multiliteracies (Gee, 1996; Street, 2003), I explicitly drew from the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in class, and attempted to foster an open, ongoing dialogue by means of asking the students to share their lived experiences with the class. This called for a change in the structure of the day's tasks and activities in this classroom. For instance, the morning routine of 'announcements and news to report', which had previously only lasted ten minutes, often went on for the entire first period (50 minutes). This gave the students ample opportunity to practice speaking French. However, it should be noted that I purposely did not stop them if they code-switched or continued with their stories in another language. At first, the students were quite surprised by this, as they had previously been silenced by their teacher on such occasions. I kept a journal of my experience in this classroom and



recorded classroom situations where I noticed a change between the old and new regime, and which I attributed to the type of learning environment that was now being fostered. Each excerpt from my journal is categorized by headings, devised to give the reader hints about the type of strategies that I employed. In some of the vignettes, I have included both my observations as well as my reflections and interpretations of the events.

### ***The L1 as a Cognitive Tool***

1) The task was to compose our own stories as the theme of the last two weeks had been on books, different types of books, and more specifically, on what constitutes a story. One little girl from Cuba, asked me “How do you say....” And motioned her hand in a circle all around her....she remembered the word ended with ‘age’. So I said “*paysage?*” and she said no. I tried a few more times to guess what she was trying to tell me but without success. Finally, she said never mind, and I assumed that she would look into her ‘*imagier*’ (picture dictionary), but instead she turned to Bryan, a little boy from Mexico who had arrived in the class three weeks earlier and, although a beginner French student, was perfectly fluent and literate in Spanish and English. She told him in Spanish what she wanted to write, and must have asked him to tell me the word in English because shortly after she exclaimed, “*Madame, madame! Ecoutez, Bryan, il va vous dire le mot en Anglais!*”. I looked at Bryan who said “Town” to me, to which I exclaimed, “*Oh! Village! C’est ça que tu voulais dire!*”. Happily, Melissa returned to writing her story.\*

This type of triple translation was incredibly useful to both Melissa, who was able to continue writing her story with the word she could not previously remember, and to Bryan, who most likely will be adding the word ‘paysage’ to his growing French

linguistic repertoire. However, had their regular teacher been there, both students would have been penalized for speaking in a language(s) that is not the LOI. If a student in this class is caught speaking anything but French, regardless of the reason, s/he would have to copy 100 times that night, '*Je dois parler en Français à l'école*'.

2) On another occasion during a math lesson, Marianne, one of the more advanced students in the class, asked me for help with compound fractions. I explained how to do the task at hand in French but she remained confused. Having known that Bryan, another sixth grader had just completed the task effortlessly, I called him over so he would explain it to her...in English. Immediately after that, Marianne understood. I helped Marianne once again later on in the week, but this time I explained it to her in English. To my surprise, she never responded in anything but French, and only used English to translate terminology (equivalent/compound fractions, etc...)\*

Content subjects (ie: Math, social studies, science), when taught in an additional language can be confusing and an inability to understand the language of instruction (LOI) may easily be confused by the teacher with inability to understand the given math problem, as evidenced in this case.

\*It should be noted that both above vignettes include Bryan, a newly arrived little boy with very limited French proficiency, who was only beginning to socialize with his peers due to the fact that he had been in the class for less than a month. In the first example, Melissa had internalized the fact that I did not discourage their shared L1 and thus called on Bryan for help using that L1. Had she been forbidden to speak anything but French, Bryan would have been excluded from this conversation. In the second example, I

purposely called on Bryan to help Marianne, understanding my role as a teacher as one who assists in the social integration the students in my class, which I would not have been able to do had I enforced a French-only policy. Once again, this would have resulted in exclusion of ‘limited French proficient students’.

### ***Challenging Common Assumptions About Monolingual Instruction***

3) During the month that I spent teaching this *classe d'accueil*, the children were, at first, bewildered that I did not discourage their use of other languages both inside and outside of the classroom. However, they knew that I would almost always address them in French and they in turn, also almost always addressed me in French. Because of the previous French-only rule, it became obvious that some of the more French proficient students increasingly switched to English when speaking with one another (despite their ability to do so in French as well), perhaps as a means of resistance and backlash against the previous regime. I admit to saying to Jackie, a sixth grader who had been in *accueil* for two years, “*J’aimerais que tu fasse un peu plus d’effort pour parler en Français, Jackie, je sais que tu es capable*” (I’d like you to make a bit more effort to speak French, Jackie, I know that you can do it), to which she responded, “ok”, and continued to speak to her friends in French.

The students eventually understood that not only were they allowed to speak their own languages in the class, but that I also spoke three languages and used them interchangeably at times in the classroom. Despite this drastic switch in classroom practices, they constantly reminded each other, both during class time and outside in the schoolyard, “*Parlez Français! On est à l’école pour apprendre le Français!*”.

### ***When Failure to Discourage the L1 Results in Motivation to Learn the LOI***

4) On Friday mornings, the children would have their weekly ‘*dictée*’. Because of the different levels of French ability in the class, I was to administer four different *dictées* to four different groups. Bryan was in the group who had words to study but no verbs to memorize yet, as he had recently arrived. During his *dictée*, I recited the words, and he asked me, to my surprise, if he was allowed to write the verbs at the end as was expected of his peers. I told him that he was more than welcome, and he did well. Despite the fact that I allowed him to speak with the others (and myself) in English and Spanish, his motivation for learning French did not seem to dwindle. As a matter of fact, I would argue that it increased as he gained confidence and became friends with the other students in the class.

### ***The L1 as a Social and Intellectual Resource***

5) Sushmita was the newest member of our class. She had just arrived from India, and was thus fluent in Hindi, spoke very little English and virtually no French. When I first started teaching the class, Sushmita was very quiet, appeared scared and unsettled, and had yet to make friends. During a grammar activity, I took the opportunity to pair her with two of the more advanced girls who also spoke English, and asked them to please help her with French grammar. They gladly agreed but I soon realized that their way of helping was to give Sushmita their previously corrected notebook so she could copy the answers. I came back around and explained to them that copying is not going to help her learn French. The girls seemed to understand and I left them to their own devices. A while later, I overheard them say to Sushmita, “ok, now read this” in English. Sushmita

began to read the French text very quietly. They corrected her pronunciation and asked her to read again. When she finished, the two other girls, exclaimed, “*Oui! Bravo! Continue!*”, and clapped. Sushmita smiled. By week three, Sushmita had a growing social network and played with the other students during recess. She even agreed to read in front of the whole class when I called on her.

### ***Multimodal/Multiliteracies Classroom Practices***

6) The students and I had been working on essay writing and as part of this module they were to write a story using the words we had just learned. Julz, a little boy from the Philippines, chose to write his story about martial arts and wanted to translate an obscure form that he had only heard about in Tagalog. “It does not exist here in Canada”, he told me. Julz asked if he could take his story home. When I asked him why, he explained to me that he wanted to go on the computer to look up the translation. I let him use the classroom computer. Julz was delighted and found what he was looking for.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

Through this study, I have examined how *classe d'accueil* teachers make sense of their professions in light of competing discourses and educational policies about language and culture in the province of Quebec. I have chosen *École Francophone Pluriethnique* as a research site because of its diverse student profile, but also because it serves as the dispatch school for all newly arrived immigrants to the southwest of Montreal. Through in-depth interviews with teachers, classroom observation and an up-close look at teachers' choice and placement of classroom materials, I have analyzed four teachers' perspectives on the linguistically and culturally diverse students that characterize their classrooms.

This thesis highlight the tensions that elementary level *classe d'acceuil* teachers face in negotiating between 1) their teaching mandates of tending to the needs of their students, 2) their own perspectives and attitudes about immigration and diversity in Quebec, and 3) popular discourses present in the society at large, which aim at once to promote the French language and to protect and reinforce Quebec culture, while the impetus is also to embrace diversity and welcome immigrant populations.

Evidence from this study reveals that *classes d'accueil* teachers vary greatly in their interpretations of Quebec French language ideologies - from conceptualizing language primarily as a marker of a national identity, to language as a resource needed for participation in everyday life in Quebec. The teacher participants who were most invested in the province's language and culture reported understanding their roles as

‘ambassadors of Quebec’, in terms of such expressions as ‘the Olympic torch of a collective national identity’ (*On est le flambeau de la langue et de la culture*); they hoped to instill in their newcomer students a commitment to the survival of the French language. In contrast, the teachers less invested in this collective identity conceptualized language as a form of capital that would eventually provide students with opportunities equal to those of their Quebec-born peers.

*Classes d’accueil* teachers’ uncertainty of how to facilitate integration all the whilst respecting and promoting the French language and Quebec culture results in the structuring of classroom practices that may at times exclude and alienate newcomer students. Since its inception in the late 60s, the system of *classes d’accueil* has been used in part to advance the interests of the greater society, that of increasing the status of French in the Quebec province and ensuring that future Quebecers do not gravitate to the English-speaking sector of the society. In Quebec, the interests of the society may be considered more important than what is best for the social, cultural and pedagogical needs of some students, particularly those enrolled in the *classe d’accueil* system. This conflict of interests renders the role of *classe d’accueil* teachers confusing. Teachers may see their roles in the classroom in traditional terms, by responding to the diverse needs of their students, but may also see themselves as agents of social change whose mandate is to produce new Quebecers who speak French and who will integrate into the Quebec culture. In due course some of the students may not see themselves in those terms.

It was observed that when teachers acted as agents of social change, whether it be via enforcing a French-only policy in the classroom or ignoring students’ rich linguistic and cultural backgrounds, their classroom practices were exclusive and assimilatory in

nature. As we have seen in the previous chapter, students new to the *classe d'accueil* were both mentally and physically excluded from participation in classroom lessons and activities, until they learned the language of instruction. I wish to argue that it is during the very first days of attending school in a foreign country that students require the most inclusive practices, and certainly not once they have learned enough French to be able to participate in the daily activities of the class. In a French-only classroom, all students (many of whom arrive at any point during the year and not necessarily in September) are initially *excluded*, resulting in less than adequate integration. This could easily send a lasting message to such students: "You do not really belong here".

Evidence from this study reveals that whenever students spoke languages other than French in the classroom, their language choice was perceived negatively by the teachers, possibly as a form of resistance towards the 'commitment' to the French language that students were to take up during their time in the *classe d'accueil*. Additionally, although all teachers in this study could speak other languages, they almost exclusively spoke French in the classroom. Choosing to communicate in other languages would have deviated from their mandates, which they understood as that of promoting French, the language closely associated with Quebec nationalist interests. The question remains: whose interests are served by Quebec's model of *classe d'accueil*, those of the students that it welcomes or those of the society?

As it stands now, I wish to argue that the latter appears to be most accurate. Although the Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998) defines integration as a 'two way street', data from the interviews and classroom observations reveal that integration practices in the *classe d'accueil* at times resembled a



barely disguised form of assimilation. For one, the choice to include declarative statements such as ‘I speak French’ to the written class rules (*‘les consignes’*) and the administering of copies (*‘des copies’*) in the face of infractions of this rule exemplifies how little place was left in the classroom for intercultural values. Furthermore, enforcing communication in the target language as a form of discipline is not likely to have the same impact on students’ motivation as would the encouragement of its use in everyday life.

***The Classe d’Accueil as an ‘in between’ Space for the Assertion of Multiple and Emerging Identities***

As the reader will recall in Chapter Four, one teacher successfully moved beyond fostering a transmission-oriented pedagogy to one that facilitated transformative learning. It became clear from my classroom observations that such instance- albeit rare- of transformative learning occurred within ‘in-between’ learning spaces, often outside of the formal learning environment. Nonetheless, these occurrences provided students with positive experiences within the space of their classrooms. The *classe d’accueil* model, being a transitory experience for the students, has as its purpose to provide a transitional and possibly interstitial space for immigrant students making the shift from their previous lives to their new ones- a space for students to forge their former cultural identity (albeit not fixed) with their new emergent and multiple identities as hybrid Quebecer citizens. In this sense, identities are not understood as fixed but fluid, multiple and at times contradictory, mediated by relations of power operating at macro and micro levels in the social *and* cultural world.

Sarkar (2005) observed a similar happening in one Montreal kindergarten *classe d'accueil*. In this most unusual classroom, she reports that the teacher's French-Quebecer heritage did not take precedence over her students' backgrounds.

Speaking French [in this classroom] is not equated with adopting the historically traditional culture of the Quebec speakers of French. Rather, the culture of the classroom is seen as emergent over time... Each member of the classroom community brings cultural elements to the class that are all used to forge a new collective identity, one that includes the backgrounds of all participants (p. 338).

This example stands in stark contrast to some of the teachers in this study, particularly those invested in Quebec's language and culture. Why these teachers have such differing pedagogic practices remains to be determined and is beyond the scope of this study.

Instead, I aim to show how differences in teacher perspectives and pedagogic practices influence the environment in teachers' classrooms, which in turn may have a lasting impact on the integration experiences of newcomer students.

### ***Limitations and Implications***

The first and perhaps most obvious limitation of this study is the size of the teacher-participant sample. Four teachers in one school certainly are not representative of all *classe d'accueil* teachers in Quebec, or even in Montreal. This being said, there is no evidence that this school is particularly idiosyncratic. However, if the discrepancy in teaching styles and perspectives amongst *classe d'accueil* teachers varied to such an extent in this particular school, more research needs to be done in order to understand whether this is also occurring in other schools in Montreal and other parts of Quebec. Additionally, since the teacher-participants' different interpretations and levels of attachment to language ideologies in Quebec directly influenced the manner in which teachers structured the learning environment in their classrooms, evidence from this study

therefore reveals that education in Quebec is not always inclusive. It is imperative that we further explore the implications that such exclusion may have, not only on students enrolled in Quebec's *classes d'accueil* but in other school settings where the stated aim is the integration of linguistic and cultural minorities.

Second, the study's observation period was interrupted by my choice to accept to teach Huguette's class. Although the month I spent teaching in this classroom provided valuable unforeseen data for this study as is featured in Chapter Four, it also interfered with my intentions to carry on with the bi-weekly schedule of classroom observations that I had been undertaking in the other three *classe d'accueil*. As was mentioned in Chapter Three, I was still able to carry on with some classroom observations while teaching, albeit less consistently. When I returned to my regular observation schedule after a month, I had to become reacquainted with the classroom's daily routines and activities. Additionally, two new learners arrived in Marie-Claude's classroom during this month, altering the classroom dynamics. I am mindful that I missed an important opportunity to observe how Marie-Claude integrates new learners from the start in her classroom. Lastly, when I returned to my role as researcher-observer in Huguette's class, the students continued to see me as their teacher. They often asked me questions about whatever tasks they had to complete, and still came to me to mediate emerging conflicts with their peers. This level of involvement with the individual students in Huguette's class rendered more difficult my ability to capture objectively the dynamics and processes occurring in the classroom as a whole.

My role as both researcher and teacher came with its advantages, but also proved to be a limitation for several reasons. First, my relationship with the teachers allowed for

a deeper level of interpersonal exchange that would otherwise not have been possible had I solely acted in my capacity as a researcher. However, this type of relationship may have swayed the manner in which I interpreted the teachers' responses to my interview questions. Lastly, my role as an insider may have meant that I was positioned 'too close' to the setting in order to fully understand it. I may have missed important opportunities for data collection.

Another limitation worth mentioning lies in the fact that the data were almost all collected in French, yet I opted to write the thesis in English. One of the primary aims of qualitative research is to produce complete, detailed descriptions (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). In this particular study, some of the nuances and ambiguities expressed in the French teacher interviews may either have 'gotten lost' or may simply not be translatable into English. Although I carefully translated all excerpts and asked colleagues and friends to verify my work, I would urge bilingual readers to prioritize reading the French excerpts as they capture most accurately the participants' narratives.

### ***Conclusion***

The paradoxical nature of Quebec as a province that aims to be democratic, pluralistic and welcoming to immigrants, while concurrently working to protect its seemingly fragile linguistic and political identity has important implications for the teaching of newcomer children. For one, it renders the role of *classe d'accueil* teachers as potentially conflicted and confusing. Secondly, it may contribute to the structuring of classroom language environments that reproduce unequal power relations in Quebec's society. Popular Quebec nationalist discourses of promoting the French language and increasing Quebec's socio-political status were transmitted-consciously or not- by the

teachers in this study. Moreover, ascribing high social status to French and enforcing it as the only language to be spoken in the classroom may serve to marginalize the immigrant students that Quebec supposedly welcomes. Since most teachers enforced the French-only rule, students with limited French proficiency- that is virtually *all* students enrolled in *classes d'accueil*- were excluded from classroom participation at one time or another. Under this type of linguistic regime, the integration process does not begin when the children first enter the classroom, but only once they have mastered French well enough to express themselves. As Delpit (2006) posits, the endorsement of one language or dialect in the classroom is a disservice to all children. Lastly, teachers varied widely in their interpretations of their mandate and expressed confusion deciphering the official curriculum. Implications are for policy makers to redefine the stated competencies so the Quebec Education Program for *classes d'accueil* is clearer for teachers to follow. It also ought to take into account recent well-founded research on second language learning.

In the opening remarks of the Policy Statement For Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998a), it is clearly stated that public education in Quebec is to have zero exclusion (p.3). The evidence from this small study suggests that at least in some classrooms a number of the learners are being actively excluded from the learning process. If this is occurring more widely, then it is imperative that we further explore how teachers structure the learning environment in Quebec's *classes d'accueil* so that the learners' needs are fully supported. The findings of this study may suggest that inclusive education in Quebec, especially with respect to the schooling of newly arrived immigrants, is not always the case.

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## Appendix A

### The Complex Language Encounters Project

Led by Dr. Ailie Cleghorn and Dr. Diane Pesco in the department of education at Concordia University, and in collaboration with Dr. Rinelle Evans at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, the *Complex Language Encounters* project examines the language and literacy practices of teachers and students in linguistically and culturally diverse settings. More specifically, the study aims to identify the oral, visual, and text-based interaction patterns that foster learners' participation in the teaching-learning process.

This research project turns to South Africa as but one example of diversity in the classroom. That is, teachers and students in Quebec are not alone in negotiating complex early encounters in the classroom. Teachers in post-apartheid South African classrooms are also faced with culturally and linguistically-diverse classrooms, indeed one class was recently reported to have children who spoke 17 different languages, including French and Portuguese. Despite South Africa's official language policy, which encourages the use of the learners' home languages in the early years, there is public as well as political pressure to adopt English as the LoI (Language of Instruction) in order for students to eventually become strong global competitors (Baker, 2005). As Cleghorn, Evans and Pesco (2010) explain, "...many schools including preschools and indeed parent communities insist on English as the medium of instruction for reasons that include perceptions of increased economic opportunity" (Benson, 2004; Bunyi, 1999; Cleghorn, 2005; Cummins 2000; Evans; 2006; 2007; Prochner & Cleghorn, 2005; Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005; Soudien, 2007). As such, one can learn a great deal from these two seemingly different settings. Eventually, the project aims to develop generalizable strategies for managing classroom linguistic and cultural diversity.

## Appendix B

### Students' First Languages and Countries of Origin 2010 data from 1 Classroom

<i>First Languages</i>	<i>Countries of Origin</i>
Spanish	Mexico
Ewondo	Cameroon
Swahili	Uganda
Arabic	Morocco
Tagalog	Philippines
Urdu	India
English	St-Vincent
Spanish	Columbia
Mandarin	China
Spanish	Guatemala
Spanish	Peru
Spanish	Cuba

## Appendix C

### Teacher Interview Questions

#### Personal and Professional Background

What is your mother tongue? *Quelle est votre langue maternelle?*

What other language(s), if any, do you speak? *Quelle(s) langue(s) parlez-vous autre(s) que le Français?*

What type of professional qualifications do you possess which led to you becoming a “Classe D’accueil” teacher? (ie: FSL degree, ed. Degree, etc.) *Quel type de qualifications professionnelles possédez-vous pour vous permettre d’enseigner en classe d’accueil?*

How long have you been teaching for? *Depuis combien d’années enseignez-vous en classe d’accueil?*

#### Diversity in the Classroom

1) What do you see as the main challenges that your *students* face in your classroom with respect to language and/or culture?

*Quels sont les principaux défis auxquels les enseignants sont confrontés à l’égard de la diversité linguistique et/ou culturelle dans la classe d’accueil?*

2) What do you see as the main challenges that you as a *teacher* face in your classroom with respect to language and/or culture?

*Quels sont les principaux défis auxquels vos élèves font face à l’égard de la langue et/ou de la culture?*

3) What opportunities, if any, do you foresee in teaching a class of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (CLD students)?

*Quelles opportunités, s’il en est, existent en termes d’enseignement à une classe d’élèves de diverses origines linguistiques et culturelles?*

4) How do you understand your role as a “classe d’accueil” teacher with respect to the integration of your students into *La Culture Québécoise*?

*Comment percevez-vous votre rôle en tant qu’enseignant(e) en classe d’accueil à l’égard de l’intégration de vos élèves?*

5) What constitutes successful integration?

*Qu’est ce qui constitue une intégration réussie?*

6) How do you understand ‘Competency #2’ of the QEP- *Se familiariser a la culture de son milieu?*

*A votre avis, que signifie la deuxième compétence du programme d’éducation du Québec- Se familiariser a la culture de son milieu?*

7) It is my understanding that a grade must be provided for the students with respect to Competency #2, how do you grade your students on this basis?

*Je crois comprendre qu’une note doit être prévue pour les étudiants a l’égard de cette deuxième compétence, comment évaluez-vous vos élèves a cet égard?*

8) How do you go about crossing linguistic and cultural barriers that may exist between you and your students?

*Comment franchissez-vous les barrières linguistiques et culturelles qui peuvent exister entre vous et vos élèves?*

9) Do you think it’s your responsibility as a teacher to talk about ‘difference’ (diversity) in your classroom?

*Considérez-vous que ce soit une de vos responsabilités en tant que professeur de discuter de diversité linguistique et culturelle dans votre classe? Si oui, comment en parlez-vous avec vos élèves?*

10) Do you incorporate your students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds into your teaching and classroom environment? If yes, how so?

*Intégrez-vous l’héritage culturel et linguistique de vos étudiants dans votre enseignement et dans l’environnement de la classe en général?*

11) Do you think that your own (ethnic/cultural/linguistic) background affects the way you teach your students?

*Croyez-vous que votre propre origine ethnique, culturelle et linguistique affecte la façon dont vous enseignez à vos élèves?*

12) Do you think that the culture of the school that you teach in should reflect the community of students that it serves? Why/why not?

*Croyez-vous que la culture de l’école ou vous enseignez doit refléter la communauté des étudiants qu’elle dessert?*

13) How do you feel about the fact that all newly arrived immigrants must attend school in French in Quebec?

*Que pensez-vous du fait que tous les nouveaux immigrants doivent fréquenter l’école en Français au Québec?*

14) On May 8, 2010, Bernard Landry, ex-premier ministre and leader of the PQ said the following words “Le Canada bloque l’intégration profonde des hommes et des femmes que nous accueillons de la terre entière. Pourquoi? Parce qu’il est bilingue et multicultural” (*Canada is blocking the profound integration of the men and women that it*

welcomes from all corners of the earth. Why? Because it is bilingual and multicultural).  
What do you think of his statement?  
*Le 8 Mai, 2010, Bernard Landry, ex-premier ministre and chef du Parti Québécois a dit:  
"Le Canada bloque l'intégration profonde des hommes et des femmes que nous  
accueillons de la terre entière. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il est bilingue et multiculturel. »*

*Que pensez-vous de son assertion?*

### **Language**

15) What language(s) do you recommend that parents use to communicate with their children at home?

*Quelle langue(s) recommandez-vous que les parents utilisent pour communiquer avec leurs enfants à la maison?*

16) Do you allow your students to speak with each other in a language other than the LOI (French) in class? Why/why not?

*Permettez-vous à vos élèves de s'exprimer dans leurs propres langues en classe?  
Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas?*

17) Do you speak with your students in a language other than French? If so, when and under what circumstances?

*Parlez-vous avec vos élèves dans une autre langue que le Français?*



**Appendix D**  
**Rule Infraction Handout-‘Les Copies’**

**COPIE : NON RESPECT DE LA CONSIGNE : PARLER SEULEMENT EN FRANÇAIS À L'ÉCOLE**

Mon nom : \_\_\_\_\_

Copier 5X : Je dois parler uniquement français en classe.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**COPIE : NON RESPECT DE LA CONSIGNE : PARLER SEULEMENT EN FRANÇAIS À L'ÉCOLE**

Mon nom : \_\_\_\_\_

Copier 5X : Je dois parler uniquement français en classe.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
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- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**COPIE : NON RESPECT DE LA CONSIGNE : PARLER SEULEMENT EN FRANÇAIS À L'ÉCOLE**

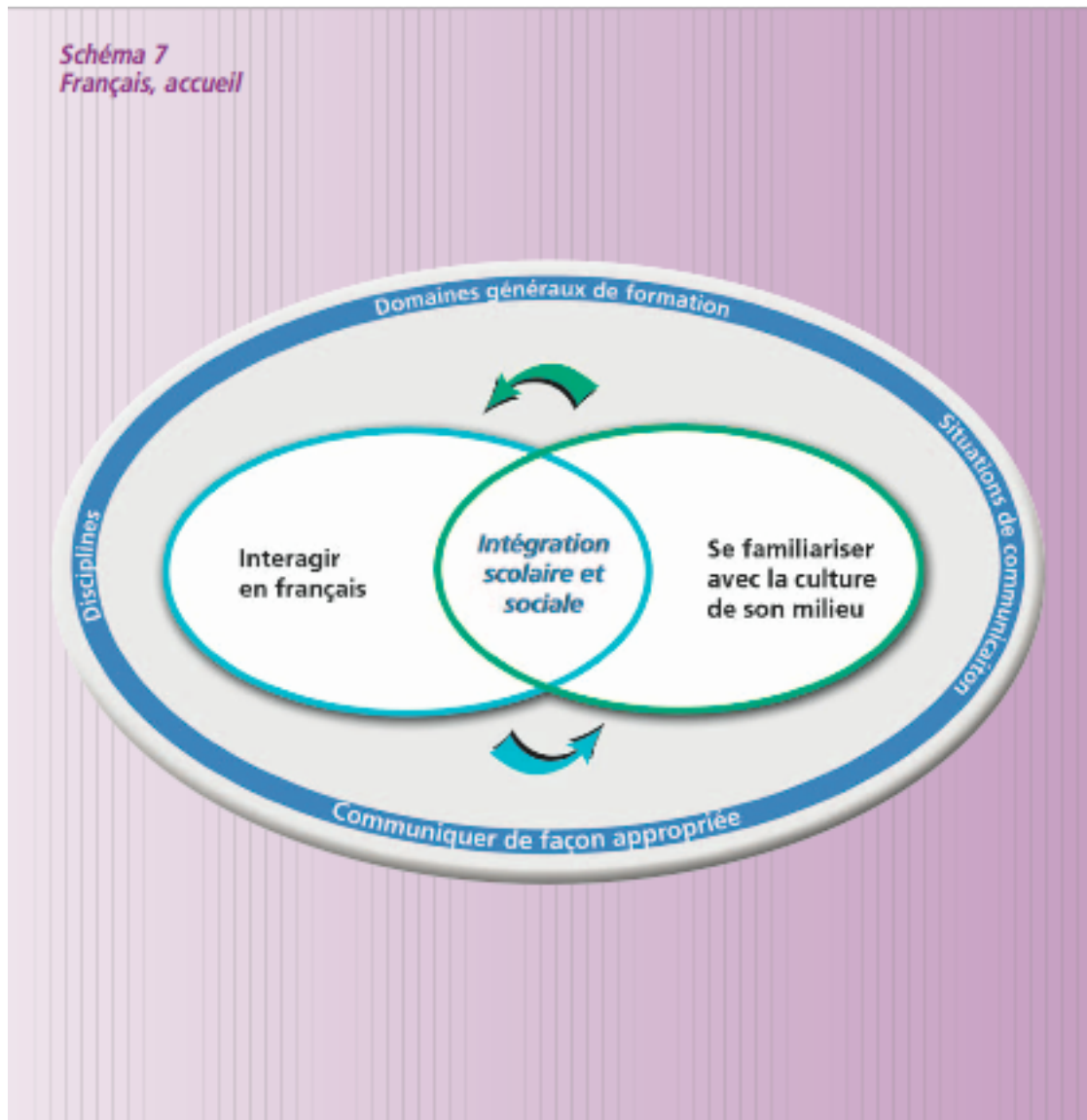
Mon nom : \_\_\_\_\_

Copier 5X : Je dois parler uniquement français en classe.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### Quebec Education Program Competencies for Elementary-level *Classe d'Accueil*



## Appendix F

### ENSEIGNANTS

#### *FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT A PARTICIPER A UN PROJET DE RECHERCHE :*

#### *RENCONTRE DES LANGUES COMPLEXES - LA RÉALITÉ DES CLASSES URBAINES MULTILINGUES*

Nous souhaitons inviter par la présente \_\_\_\_\_, enseignant(e), à participer à un projet de recherche dirigé par Dr. Ailie Cleghorn and Dr. Diane Pesco, du département d'Éducation de l'Université Concordia à Montréal. Gabrielle Breton-Carbonneau, étudiante à la maîtrise en Éducation, également de l'Université Concordia, sera assistante au projet. Le projet de recherche est expliqué en détail ci-dessous :

#### **A. OBJECTIF**

Le principal objectif de cette étude consiste à identifier des moyens pour les enseignants d'accroître leur efficacité comme praticiens dans les salles de classe préscolaire et primaire où les enfants arrivent souvent issus de nombreuses langues différentes. L'étude examinera donc la manière dont les enseignants et les élèves de niveaux préscolaire et primaire s'adaptent aux différences linguistiques aussi bien à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur des salles de classe. Cette recherche vise également à comprendre comment les enseignants et les élèves utilisent un langage commun pour se comprendre les uns des autres. Finalement, un autre sous-objectif vise à mieux comprendre les stratégies que les enseignants utilisent pour favoriser le développement de groupes multilinguistiques dans le cadre des activités de lecture, mathématiques et aptitudes sociales. De plus amples explications au sujet de la recherche seront données au début de l'étude et en tout temps, à la demande de l'enseignant.

#### **B. PROCEDURES**

Cette étude vise à comprendre et décrire la réalité de la vie quotidienne dans diverses classes préscolaires et primaires (de la maternelle à la 6<sup>e</sup> année) pour les enseignants, les élèves, les parents et autres membres de la Communauté scolaire. Pour ce faire, l'assistant(e) de recherche visitera l'école régulièrement sur une période de plusieurs semaines, accompagné(e) à l'occasion par l'un ou l'autre des professeurs de l'Université Concordia. L'équipe entamera des discussions informelles avec les enseignants sur les événements quotidiens, aux moments qui conviendront le mieux à l'enseignant. Ils observeront également la classe à plusieurs reprises, toujours avec l'accord de l'enseignant. Des enregistrements audio seront utilisés à l'occasion, toujours avec l'accord de l'enseignant. Les chercheurs souhaitent ne pas interférer ou intervenir en aucune façon avec le fonctionnement régulier de la classe, et ils demeureront aussi discret que possible. Il n'y aura aucun test individuel et aucune emphase sur un ou des élèves en particulier.

Bien que cette étude ne prévoie pas la collection de données de nature personnelle ou confidentielle, la confidentialité des personnes concernées sera néanmoins protégée en tout temps. L'équipe applique des procédures éthiques approuvées dans la plupart des études portant sur les personnes. Les noms réels des enseignants, des parents et des enfants ne seront jamais

utilisés ou dévoilés, que ce soit oralement ou par écrit. L'emplacement et le nom des écoles participantes seront également modifiés pour protéger l'identité de tous les intéressés.

Les entretiens informels prendront la forme de discussions continues dont le sujet sera suggéré par l'enseignant si il/elle le désire. Le cas échéant, les chercheurs pourront orienter les conversations de façon à aider les participants à comprendre les objectifs de l'étude (questions relatives à l'utilisation de la langue et ainsi de suite)

### **C. AVANTAGES ET RISQUES**

Il n'y a aucun risque connu associé à un projet comme celui-ci au-delà de la possibilité que les chercheurs et les participants puissent à l'occasion ne pas se comprendre. Par contre, les avantages de la recherche seront potentiellement importants dans la mesure où de nouveaux mécanismes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage plus efficaces seront identifiés au cours de ce projet de recherche.

### **D. CONDITIONS DE PARTICIPATION**

1. Je consens volontairement à prendre part à cette étude. J'accepte de recevoir les chercheurs dans ma classe à plusieurs reprises et à discuter informellement avec eux les résultats de leurs observations.
2. En plus de mon consentement général à prendre part à cette étude,  
je consens \_\_\_\_\_  
je ne consens pas \_\_\_\_\_  
à ce que des enregistrements audio soit effectués dans ma classe à l'occasion.
4. Je conserve le droit de retirer mon consentement et de cesser ma participation à tout moment. L'équipe de chercheurs m'ont fournis toutes les informations nécessaires pour les contacter à cet effet s'il y a lieu.
5. Je pourrai contacter les chercheurs à tout moment si j'ai des questions ou des préoccupations au sujet de l'étude.
6. Je comprends que ma participation à cette étude est confidentielle.
7. Je comprends que les résultats de cette étude peuvent être publiés tout en conservant le nom des lieux et personnes anonymes.

**J'AI SOIGNEUSEMENT EXAMINÉ CE QUI PRÉCÈDE ET COMPREND LA NATURE DE CET ACCORD. JE CONSENS LIBREMENT ET VOLONTAIREMENT A PARTICIPER À CETTE ÉTUDE.**

NOM \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NOM DU CHERCHEUR \_\_\_\_\_

Si vous avez des questions à propos de vos droits en tant que participant à cette recherche, vous pouvez contacter Mme Adela Reid, Responsable de la recherche éthique et de la conformité, Université Concordia, Montréal, Canada au 514-848-2424-7481 ou par courriel [areid@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:areid@alcor.concordia.ca)

**Accord de confidentialité pour les chercheurs et les assistants de recherche.**

Titre du projet : rencontre de langages complexes : La leçon de l'Afrique du Sud

Je, \_\_\_\_\_, ayant été embauché pour \_\_\_\_\_.

accepte de:

1. maintenir la confidentialité de toutes les informations de recherche que j'aurai obtenues en ne discutant ou ne communiquant aucune des informations quel qu'en soit le format avec toute personne autre que les chercheurs attirés à cette recherche.
2. conserver toutes les informations de recherche en lieu sûr lorsqu'elles sont en ma possession.
3. retourner aux chercheurs toutes les informations de recherche lorsque j'aurai terminé les tâches relatives à cette recherche.
4. après consultation avec les chercheurs, à effacer ou détruire toutes les informations de recherche, quel qu'en soit le format, si elles ne peuvent être retournées aux chercheurs (par exemple, les informations stockées sur le disque dur d'ordinateur) ou formulaire.
5. autres  
(précisez) \_\_\_\_\_

Nom \_\_\_\_\_ Titre(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PROTOCOLE PROVISOIRE DE DISCUSSION

### SUJETS INITIAUX POUR DISCUSSION CONTINUE AVEC LES ENSEIGNANTS, LES PARENTS, LES ÉDUCATEURS ET AUTRES PARTICIPANTS

- Objectifs des années préscolaires et années de scolarité (préparation à l'école, les compétences de lecture écriture, sociales, et autres)
- Utilisation du langage utilisé par les enfants entre eux, dans et hors de la salle de classe
- Mode d'alphabétisation des enfants à la maison et à l'école
- Ce dont les enfants ont le plus besoin pendant les premières années.
- Ce que les enfants aiment le plus faire à la maternelle
- Ce que les enfants trouvent le plus difficile au préscolaire et grades R à 3.
- Le rôle des histoires à raconter dans le développement des compétences linguistiques
- Un enseignant idéal pour les jeunes enfants est un enseignant qui \_\_\_\_\_
- Relations des enfants avec leurs camarades du même âge, leurs frères et soeurs et avec les autres personnes dans leur vie
- Besoins des ou relations des enfants avec les objets, les jouets etc
- Le rôle des médias dans la vie des enfants
- Quel type de personne voulons-nous que nos enfants deviennent lorsqu'ils auront grandi
- Quel niveau de scolarité croyons-nous qu'ils atteindront
- Pourquoi est-il important d'apprendre l'anglais?
- Est-il important pour les enfants d'apprendre à lire dans la langue utilisée à la maison?
- Est-il important pour les enfants d'apprendre à écrire dans la langue utilisée à la maison?
- Est-il important pour les enfants d'apprendre à lire en français?
- Est-il important pour les enfants d'apprendre à écrire en français?
- De quelle langue les enfants ont-ils besoin pour bien réussir en mathématiques?
- De quelle langue les enfants ont-ils besoin pour la vie avec la famille et les amis en dehors de l'école ?

**Appendix G**  
**Concordia Research Project Ethical Clearance**



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY  
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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Name of Applicant: Dr. Allie Cleghorn

Department: Education

Agency: SSHRC, Sabbatical Grant

Title of Project: Complex Language Encounters; Lessons from South Africa

Certification Number: UT2009-006

Valid From: Feb 12, 2009 to: Feb 12, 2010

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

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Dr. James Paus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

UT2009