

Consociated Classrooms: Designing and implementing a second language classroom while inter-connecting curriculum, technology, and dispositions.

by

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Abstract

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This project examines the current changes in education; recent languages policies developed by the Council of Europe that are influencing language learning around the world; the need to collaborate and connect; a multiplicity of means of connecting and the benefits of such connections to language learners. The project had four stages: defining consociated (and connected classrooms), providing the rationale for consociated classrooms, and designing and implementing a second language classroom that interconnects curriculum, technology and dispositions. After reviewing information about connected classrooms and digital tools being used in second language classrooms, I expanded on the contemporary definition of connected classrooms and created my own name, *consociated classrooms*, to better define my project. After two experimental semesters with a FSL class in which a variety of these tools were used for connecting in online and face-to-face contexts, it was noticed that these tools helped increase relevance, collaboration, and engagement in the second language classroom. Finally, the first consociated classroom was created between an 11/12 FSL class and a neighbouring 10/11/12 FSL class and another one is in the works for a Beginners' Japanese course.

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Dedication

This one is for my mother and father who taught me to be independent and to go forward and accomplish all my dreams.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"When language is the only boundary between people, learning languages is holding the passport." Anonymous

Love of Language and Culture

From the very start of my language learning career, beginning in a Grade eight Core French classroom in Kamloops, British Columbia, I was hooked on learning languages. They were fun. If you had a willing and energetic language teacher you were able to eat diverse foods, go on field trips, have pen pal exchanges with other kids from around the world and learn about their way of life. Luckily at my school, we were blessed with teachers who offered courses in French, Japanese and German. It was when our French/German teacher took us on a trip to Europe that my eyes were opened to new ways of living and new people. I enjoyed it so much that I returned two years later, for a month, to backpack around Europe with my Japanese roommate from the University of British Columbia (UBC).

During my travels, I was in an awe of the many Europeans who could effortlessly change from one language to another depending on their needs. I, on the other hand, scraped by with the few French, German and Italian words I knew (my mom would play Italian cassettes when I was a child because she liked the sound of the language). While travelling, I wanted to be able to speak the languages of the countries I was visiting. I thought it was a form of respect to honour a people by speaking even bits of their language. So I registered in English, French and Japanese at UBC. After an intense first year, I realized it would be a challenge to keep up with all the languages, so I decided that my major and my concentration for my Bachelor of Arts would be English and Japanese. I would continue to learn other languages informally. In third year, I was very fortunate to receive an exchange scholarship that allowed me to study at a university in

Japan. After experiencing so many enriching experiences there, I decided that I wanted to inspire youth to become excited about language learning and to encourage them to expand their horizons by travelling, learning languages and experiencing other cultures. So, I completed my Bachelor of Arts and entered into the Faculty of Education at UBC to pursue a career in teaching languages.

Unilingualism and Plurilingualism

From day one of my career as a teacher, reflecting on Canadians, I was saddened that so many speak only one language. What one of my professors, Lorna Williams, said recently is so true; the dominant language and culture (English) has the power in the world and, therefore, its people have no need to learn about others. As a result, there is a continual pattern of dehumanization in our world. Unchecked power and unilingualism perpetuate inequality in the world. A bias I have, is the belief that unilingualism, with a focus on only one culture, is not conducive to a world of peace, collaboration, or equality. Humans have a need for healthy relationships. This means having good relationships with not only oneself and one's culture, but with people from other cultures as well. By pulling away from colonized ways of being, I want to foster value in all voices and take action by listening and learning other languages and ways of being in the world. As a language teacher, I must foster the importance of learning languages other than English. I strongly believe that we can have a better world if we are open to learning about other languages and cultures.

In addition, I believe that people who have linguistic and cultural knowledge in more than one language have more enriching lives and help build bridges among people. Such individuals become more linguistically and culturally sensitive. With plurilingualism, having access to other ways of being, thinking, and learning enriches lives. It is evident that learning languages and

cultures leads to "the formation of a cultural and intellectual life not available to the monolingual speaker" (Moll, p. 85). Plurilingualism was and is my personal and professional goal. Therefore, creating connections in education so that students can learn about others is paramount for a more harmonious world.

Furthermore, I am becoming aware of another salient factor that calls for connections and plurilingualism. It is that borders around the world are disappearing. We have evolved into a global economy and information society. People are able to conduct their jobs from anywhere in the world. Talented plurilingual individuals will be valuable assets at various workplaces. Many European countries, and other areas of the world, have acknowledged the value of plurilingualism. Recently, these values have been outlined and validated in a very important policy document, *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: Challenges and responsibilities* (Council of Europe, 2007) which is influencing language study around the world.

The Beginning of my Teaching Career

As I was about to graduate from the Faculty of Education at UBC, I applied to all school districts outside the lower mainland to teach because I wanted to live in a smaller community, craving a different way of life, after spending eight bustling years studying in Vancouver. However, a district in the lower mainland headhunted me during the end of my Japanese teaching methodology course. The district was looking for a Japanese and ESL teacher. So, I took the job and began doing what I loved: teaching languages. I was keen on using my all my recent knowledge from my degree, playing all the cool language games available and getting the students engaged in language and culture studies by organizing trips to Japan and also Guatemala. I viewed myself as a vessel and coordinator of their learning; I had come to teaching,

thinking I was going to impart my knowledge. I had never thought of knowledge transfer as a two or multi-way exchange. Much to my surprise that is exactly what happened and although I never wanted to teach in the lower mainland, I am so glad that I did because I learned so much from my students. Through their life circumstances and stories, I learned much more than I could have ever imagined. I had students from Taiwan, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Korea, Iraq and India studying Japanese and/or English with me. Yes, I shared with them my knowledge of Japanese and English. In the meantime, something miraculous happened; I was learning parts of their languages and cultures from their native tongues and their true stories. I saw glimpses of their lives. Some were very complicated and included coming as a refugee from Iraq, after seeing cousins shot ten feet away or being a young 15-year-old woman already married. It was ironic that I thought I was going to open the eyes of my students to culture and language, when they actually opened mine. This reinforced to me the importance of getting to know their languages and cultures. My classroom became a united community; it was no longer insiders versus outsiders.

During this time, I was also grateful to the other language teachers at my school. There was great collaboration on how to teach languages effectively. We emphasized the need for plurilingualism in our school culture, the need for travel, survival skills and authentic tasks in language learning.

I have to admit that my repertoire of teaching tools was limited when I first began teaching. I used a textbook and expected a lot of rote memorization. Sure, I had some fun games. I didn't follow a specific program such as immersion or Rosetta Stone because I found that students, when following a specific method do well in some aspects and not so well in other aspects of

language learning. So, I used a mixture of print, *realia*¹ resources and the text. My students followed along. I thought, at the time, that this was the best language and cultural education I could give. Some language teachers were miffed that I wasn't following a certain program, but I truly believed and still do that not any one method is the best. I am glad to see recently that there has been an agreement, among language learning proponents, about the deliberate avoidance of supporting one methodology, theory, pedagogy, or teaching practice over another and instead, emphasizing the importance of teacher engagement in collaboration and exchanges concerning language learning (Hermans & Piccardo, p. 18).

The Middle of my Teaching Career

Working as a teacher was ticking along smoothly, but in 2000, after 17 years in the lower mainland, my dream of having a different life resurfaced. I wanted to be more connected to the earth and to live in a smaller community. Fortunately, after many serendipitous happenings, I found my place in a remote ocean-side town in BC. When I approached the Vice Principal of the local high school about job opportunities, he said there would be an opening in high school French. He asked if I was interested. I said yes, but admitted that I had not really used my French since my first year of university. He responded, "Would you be willing to take some French courses?"

After speaking with the Director of Instruction about the courses I would need to take to satisfy the job requirements, I agreed to take the job and immediately enrolled in the necessary first and second year French courses. I was ecstatic to be studying languages once again and this time it was a return to French. I did not stop at the required courses; I continued on and

¹ *Realia* refers to the use of authentic documents or real objects from the language and culture of study. Three-dimensional objects viewed on the Internet are also considered examples of *realia* in language classrooms.

completed all the available courses at North Island College and then signed up for various third and fourth year French courses at Athabasca University. I was in love with being a student again. In my spare time or through school district workshops, I would study Spanish and Kwak'wala as well. During my recent studies, I was noticing that language teaching and learning was changing. It did not just involve a textbook with a token video, cassette, or pen pal anymore. Instead, computer-based technology was being used. Moodle was being used mainly for my third and fourth year courses. Without any technology help from the professors, I stumbled my way through the structure of Moodle all on my own. It was exciting and some new capabilities were evident, but something was missing in this new way of learning. I felt isolated and disconnected. I needed to connect with people to practice the language and share what I was learning.

Experiencing Changes in Education

Just as I was feeling isolated and disconnected, I began to notice more and more students becoming disconnected with their learning at the rural school where I am currently teaching. The course, as I had taught it for years, did not seem relevant anymore. The content and lessons seemed out-dated, lacking connections and relevance to the current lives of my students. Students were now arriving on a daily basis with digital devices and continually using them during lessons and assemblies, even though our school had clearly defined and visually present rules against their use at such times. After a year of being tired of taking the devices away, I embraced them.

When I started my Masters in Education, I decided I wanted to discover how to leverage these digital devices and learn about the benefits of implementing tools in my classroom, in order to have more engagement, connections and collaboration. Since implementing various digital tools, I have noticed more students engaged, excited, and talking about subject matter. *The*

British Columbia Education Plan (BC Ministry of Education, 2011) acknowledges that contexts are changing and more connections to real world and differentiated learning are needed. New technologies and computer-based learning applications are being introduced quicker than ever before. My students and I need to adapt to this new milieu in education.

Feeling that Connections are Needed

There are certain times when there is a magical energy that comes from a group getting together for a common purpose. For instance, it occurs when my Grade nine French class creates a restaurant environment and makes poutine to serve to the visiting Grade six French class. There is a common purpose in speaking French while enjoying food together. Those magical moments also occur when we receive responses to questions that we have sent to our "tweet pals" in Ontario via Twitter or when we have people from Edmonton, Victoria, Australia viewing and commenting on our blog. For this reason, I want to create as many authentic language-learning opportunities through connecting students to others.

Connection and working with many different tools for collaborative learning is the new way of education. So when the Superintendent mentioned that our district was about to pilot a connected classrooms project, I was keen. I believe that we are better off learning together, from one another, using past and current means of social interactions. I am a proponent of the social constructivist theory of learning. Many benefits result from students and teachers connecting, especially for the purposes of learning languages and cultures.

My Fears

I realize that making this jump is going to result in some challenges and fears. First, it is difficult to keep up with all of the current technology, so I feel that it is important to master just a few new tools at a time. Also, anytime we are working with technology we have to expect

glitches and have resilience when tools do not work as planned. In addition, collaboration can sometimes be difficult with certain parties and of course can take an inordinate amount of time. I realize too that I have probably only 10-12 years left in my career and that I could easily continue on with the status quo. This for me is not an option, though, because if students have been disengaged in the last couple of years with the current education system, I can only imagine how their disengagement would increase, as more advancements are made in educational reform and technology. Even though I have some trepidation around incorporating many tools to increase connections and collaboration in the language learning context, I feel that my Masters has given me the confidence, inspiration, and willingness to do so. I want to change the way I teach in the hopes that my students and I find education relevant, meaningful and enjoyable. I want to create a place in the world where we can share our individual gifts.

My Objective

Because language learning is a lifelong process that best occurs with interaction, I want to connect students and teachers to increase the potential for all. I want to foster language and cultural appreciation by improving language education with the best collaborating and connecting means possible. I will, as my Superintendent says, "be a trail blazer" using the latest in technologies to connect classrooms in my rural district. I will leverage the use of the latest language learning technologies with the tried and true face-to-face learning opportunities in order to have as many students, as much as possible, involved in learning other languages and cultures, by setting up a positive and engaging learning community. I have told my students that if they have their devices with them, that we will use them for language and culture learning. Using online dictionaries, French and Japanese language apps, Twitter and blogs, Web 2.0 tools, and

social media will be a part of my action-based learning plan in my classroom. I want to bring engagement and excitement back into my classroom, school and community.

Looking at the current *BC Education Plan*, I see that effective and ethical use of technology is now a large part of the goals of education. Noddings (2003) asks, "How am I going to adopt this mandated aim and is it likely to further growth or impede it?" (p. 431). I feel that I will further growth by incorporating a variety of connecting tools, with the goal of having students learn about other languages and cultures. Social interaction will occur not only by using digital technologies, but also by using additional modes of sharing space, land and meals. I will adopt a neighbourhood milieu to the actual educational setting itself- preparing and consuming tea and snacks together.

Following a hermeneutic and phenomenological approach, I will create a learning community in which we all interpret, share and experience through the various tools in the connected classroom. The lived experience becomes tweeting with a tweet-pal or enacting a real Dîner en Blanc. French will be spoken and new relationships formed. Conversations will occur in an authentic way instead of using traditional pre-scripted dialogues in an out-dated textbook. The lens through which I teach could be described as a critical situational/interpretive stance where the power of experience and story transforms and teaches all people to respect and do well for one another, and the earth, in order that we have a more harmonious society.

Once we are connected, the possibilities are endless. We will also set up online exchanges with other countries. I encourage my students to look into different exchange programs. I have found community members, who donate up to \$2500, to any student wanting to go to another country to experience a life of immersion. I have had three participants so far. These experiences are great opportunities for them to get to know themselves and others.

In my current role, I will to set up the connections, teach using the various modes of connecting, document the process and then reflect on ways to improve. I am hoping that my students are willing to take risks, open up, and create a positive learning community that values the lives of all individuals. Through connections I want to humanize all students in the educational setting because I am concerned that there is a dehumanizing nature to the way education has been in the past. My hope is to create a learning community that values Istance's and Dumont's (2010) core principles for learning environments: makes learning central; is based on the social nature of learning; is tuned into emotions; is sensitive to learner differences, is challenging, provides clear expectations and descriptive feedback and promotes connectedness (pp. 319-325). By setting up such a community, I am remaining true to my own values. Through this work, I will better understand and be able to share how the conditions created through a "connected" language classroom may result in a positive learning community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review, I will define "connected classrooms", introduce the new concept of "consociated classrooms", review language learning policies and concepts, examine educational change, explore the need for connection and collaboration, and finally examine the benefits of connection for language learners.

Connected Classrooms Defined

The term "connected classrooms" is used to refer to connecting students with other student in distant locations through technological ways. In educational settings in British Columbia, the word connected is used to describe classrooms and students that are connected through a type of video conferencing software and, in some instances, through the use of one or two other technological tools. In their study, Richardson & Mancabelli (2011) examined three specific

schools attempting connected learning spaces and found that most teachers are connecting using no more than one or two methods. They recommend that the most effective connected classrooms should do a mix of the following practices:

1. Connect student and teachers inside the classroom.
2. Publish student and teacher work locally and globally.
3. Connect students and teachers outside the classroom.
4. Connect with experts around the world.
5. Collaborate with others to create and share knowledge. (p. 71)

As a language teacher who is interested in an effective use of technologically enhanced learning in the context of a plurilingual classroom, I would like to add more aspects of teaching and learning to this list. In a languages classroom, connections can happen in so many other ways. Connecting occurs while honouring aspects of ecological, Indigenous, humanizing, and plurilingual ways of being and thinking. In this way, connected classrooms can become a synthesis of these relational and ontological aspects of learning and teaching, as well as the methods that Richardson and Mancabelli list. This synthesis may occur while using synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies such as Brigit software and many current digital platforms such as blogs, Wikis, Google docs, and Twitter. Face-to-face sessions, online or in person, may occur inside or outside traditional classroom spaces - in nature, in a local restaurant, or with the global community. Collaboration can be encouraged to occur amongst students and between the individual teachers from each participating school, or between the community and international locations where the languages that the students are learning are spoken. In this way, the teachers, students, and community involved co-construct their learning.

Consociated Classrooms: An Expanding Definition to Connected Classrooms

To address the additional aspects of a 'connected' language classroom described above, I suggest a new definition for the concept of connectedness in language education. For this purpose, I use a phrase that goes beyond connecting in merely a technological way, but also in ecological, Indigenous, humanizing, and plurilingual ways. A word or phrase that considers relationships, sharing, and collaborating for a more harmonious, understanding and respectful world is then needed. In examining the literature for a word that included all these ideas, I was drawn to the expansive and inclusive meanings of "*consociated*". Associated meanings, or synonyms, include: partnerships, associations, allies, togetherness, sharing, mentoring, friendships, cooperation, inclusion, and a joining in action. As a result, I would like to introduce the phrase "Consociated Classrooms" into technologically assisted language education contexts.² The motivation for using this phrase is to enlarge the scope and understanding of connected classrooms. In consociated classrooms, learning will ideally be collaborative and contextually relevant, meeting the social needs of the students, and creating a community that has access to nature, plurilingualism, and culture. Many scholars agree that a strong sense of community is essential in any learning environment. Peterson, Divitini, and Chabert (2008) state, "the notion of community is central to learning any language" (p. 362). Adding further to the understanding of effective learning environments, McGregor and Sanford (2013) acknowledge the need to draw on Indigenous scholarship and recognize "that knowledge is about relationships, that each context is unique and diverse, culture and place are central to learning, and that the world is continually changing" (p. 11). With this in mind, consociated classrooms become an innovation

² My created definition of consociated classrooms refers to a learning environment that encompasses, but is not limited to, working and collaborating together in friendly, active, united, connected, and cooperative ways as companions, partners, allies and mentors.

in language and culture study with the purpose of enriching students' learning experiences. The following diagram (see Figure 1) outlines the key aspects of the learning environment in consociated classrooms.

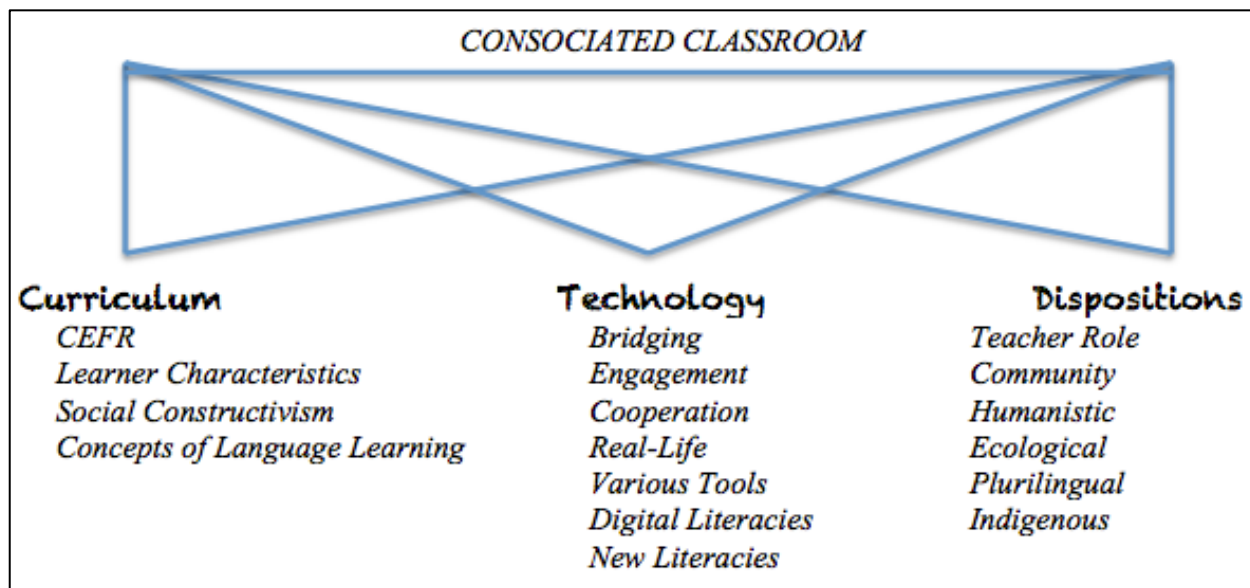


Figure 1. Key elements in consociated classrooms.

A consociated classroom arises out of the inter-connection among these three basic components. Each wedge in the above diagram is overlapping another wedge, thus showing the interdependence of each in a consociated classroom.

Consociated Classrooms in the Context of Contemporary Language Learning

Valuing languages, cultures and cross-cultural work are key tenets when connecting with others. Richardson and Mancabelli, 2011, suggest that networking and connecting “increase the diversity of their [students'] ideas and make them better prepared to collaborate globally to answer local questions" (p. 28). This mirrors a key rationale for language learning: learning languages leads to lives that are enriched with diversity, openness, and acceptance of other ways of communicating, thinking, and being (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012; Moll, 2014).

Much work has been conducted in Europe to have its peoples living harmoniously together. Various European nations have recognized the value in communication and collaboration among cultures; it has been seen as the necessary condition for peace and cooperation (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012, p. 16). As a result, the European Council has collaborated for over thirty years in designing and implementing language policies and standards in what is called *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR).³ This document exemplifies what can be accomplished when nations work together.

The Council values creating conditions whereby plurilingualism⁴ and pluriculturalism are fostered “to promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication” (CEFR, 2007, p. 3). The successes of this framework have reached international acclaim and many other countries around the world are adopting its premises. This framework is now being adopted within Canada, and is being mandated for language teachers in British Columbia in 2014. Arguably, the framework's salient features will be considered as connections occur in newly consociated classrooms.

In 2003, the Canadian federal government issued an action plan for official languages in Canada entitled, *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality*. A critical goal of the plan is to double the number of functionally bilingual young people in the

³ The CEFR is a comprehensive document that provides learning, teaching and assessment ideas and a rubric that outlines the progression of language learning. The final document was published in 2001 and is the result of many years of collaboration among European nations seeking to find a common reference for language policy and for defining the various levels of language acquisition. More information can be found at the following website: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Forum07_webdocs_EN.asp#TopOfPage

⁴ "Plurilingualism is different from multilingualism in that multilingualism refers to the knowledge of a number of languages, or the fact that several languages coexist in a society. Plurilingualism stresses the contact, exchanges, and synergies of different languages and lays the foundation for a process of personal growth" (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012, p. 30).

country (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012, p. 21). With the diversity of peoples in Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) wrote a publication with a similar vision: "to recognize and promote bilingualism in a way that takes students' plurilingualism and multiculturalism into account; to invest in students' linguistic capital as they come into contact with people from other nations; and to acknowledge student mobility" (CMEC, 2010, p. 4). In the context of our *global village*, Atleo, (2013) asserted "the education sector is charged with the task of fostering the co-construction of meaning in this linguistic diversity" (p. 18). Hence, it is imperative that language teachers take seriously the importance of plurilingualism, collaboration and connection. These current visions of language learning fit in well with consociated classrooms, where all linguistic and cultural abilities are valued when connecting, so that students and teachers feel they belong and have something to contribute to the world.

Learning Languages in a Context of Unprecedented Educational Change

Numerous studies assert that the educational environment is undergoing momentous change. In his open letter to universities, George Siemens (2012), states that, "we have a climate that is ripe for massive change" (para. 4). Meanwhile, Vander Ark, a former head of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, noted that technology-driven productivity stands to change education (as cited in Schorr & McGriff, 2011). In addition, the findings from Richardson and Mancabelli (2011) conclude that the sum of all human knowledge is available online and that this has "implications for the field of education, demanding that we re-examine the way we structure our classrooms and our work with students" (p. 87). With the introduction of many new technologies and social media platforms, there has been a shift in teaching towards using multimodal environments (Hampel & Stickler, 2012). As a result, teachers need to change their practices to include the use of digital conferencing and Web 2.0 tools. As noted in the table

presented by Huang et al. (2013), a "teacher-centered paradigm" is changing to a "learner-centered paradigm" (see Figure 2). This is an important aspect of consociated classrooms, where the learning is focused on the connections with the learner, rather than transmission to the learner.

The Transformation of Teaching Paradigm		
Teaching paradigm Contents for comparison	"Teacher-centered" paradigm	"Learner-centered paradigm"
Teaching organization	To "implement" teaching	"To promote deep learning"
Teaching objectives	To deliver knowledge	To construct knowledge
Management	To provide courses	To create a powerful learning environment
Quality control	To improve the quality of teaching (How to "teach" better)	To improve the quality of learning (How to create a better learning environment)
Content arrangement	To cover all learning materials	Learning materials vary with each individual
Evaluation	"individual" evaluation	"open" evaluation

Figure 2. The transformation of teaching paradigm (Huang et al., p. 22)

In our present digital age, Richardson & Mancabelli recognize that there is no longer a need to maintain schools that are built on the ideas that knowledge and teachers are scarce, information and communication technology is limited, and age-grouped, discipline-separated classrooms are run by an expert adult who successfully completes the curriculum by a hundred or so students at a time (2011, p. 18). Educators need to engage with and become initiators of ongoing developments in language learning and connected classrooms.

Technology and literacies are now changing exponentially faster than they have in the last 200 years. The way the world interacts with text and visuals is changing. Language educators must prepare their students for the "features of literacies in a digital age- immediacy, community, interactivity, and transparency" (Mills & Chandra, 2011, p. 35). McGregor and Sanford (2013) acknowledge, in their Quality Teaching and Learning (QTL) Report, that educational change is happening that has a potential for engaged learning and collaboration (p. 11). These are all aspects of the posited practices in consociated language classrooms when educators teach with sound pedagogy and interconnect curriculum, technology, and dispositions. Traxler (2013)

reiterated that the education system as a whole "must come to terms with learning, knowledge and education having rapidly changing and fragmenting meanings in a world and in a future where mobility and connection are the defining characteristics" (p. 248).

Learners' Characteristics Are Changing

Considering the changes to education approaches in our digital age, research indicates that students' learning characteristics are changing too. Bender and Waller (2013) found that new student characteristics include being: collaborators, creators instead of consumers of information, investors of time into digital social environments and self-directors. Key assertions in their book show:

- Students today learn differently and thrive in a collaborative learning environment.
- Students today create content rather than consume content.
- Students today choose to invest significant time in a virtual, digital social environment.
- Students today are self-directed in that they wish to choose what to study, they want the option to learn on their own, and they absolutely insist on using technology in their learning. (p. 9)

It is evident that students want to have social, collaborative and connected learning opportunities, especially if one notices their involvement in social networking sites (SNSs). Consociated classrooms can include these activities when students are learning about language and culture.

Connections as a Key Theme in this New Educational Environment

As scholars predict a paradigm shift in how education is occurring, they agree that connection is a salient feature. There is a shift to a global, open, connectivist, online and cloud

based ethos in education. Wiley (2008) a leading thinker on opening up education and learning in a connected world, cited the transformation from isolated to connected classrooms as a significant shift. This means that in a language learning context students can expect to "access dynamic content in real time, often in immersive environments of virtual reality" (Richardson & Mancabelli, p. 140). Research has further shown that with ubiquitous access via mobile devices, students are reaching out to teachers from around the world to build networks of their own learning (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011, p. 139). Such shifts in personal and social aspects of language learning are important to the realization of consociated classrooms.

Theory Behind Consociated Language Classrooms

The premise that learning results from social constructivism, originally Vygotsky's idea, has profoundly influenced educational pedagogy. Being a polyglot (plurilingual speaker) himself, Vygotsky recognized the importance of connection for the purpose of learning languages. Social constructivist theory underpins consociated classrooms where language and culture study can be supported by collaboration and the interaction with others, giving and receiving input and feedback (Vygotsky, 1978; Hermans & Piccardo, 2012). Language learning is most successful when students are in environments where they receive assistance from others. Vygotsky proposed a concept for this idea where thinking is mediated by the roles of others (Moll, 2014, p. 33). The concept referred to as the "zone of proximal development" reveals a developmental continuum between what a student can do independently, representing his or her actual levels of development, and what a student can do with assistance from others, representing the proximal level of development (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, connections provided in consociated classrooms have the potential to form communities in which members are able to

learn language, culture, and ways of being and thinking from one another. Vygotsky's theory is gaining relevance around the world where diversity in classrooms is the norm (Moll, 2014).

Recently, scholars have written about adding the technology element to this theory by proposing that learning is a social process and that technology provides limitless ways to create new meanings, connections and communities (Halbert & Kaser (2013); Heiser, Stickler, & Furnborough (2013). In the next section, I will discuss the affordances in learning languages in consociated classrooms.

Benefits of Consociated Language Classrooms

Bridges geographical distances. In the case of rural districts, consociated classrooms allow for geographically isolated schools to connect and offer more options by connecting with others in order to get larger enrolment to run courses. Through connections, students will be able to access native speakers and cultures, using multi-modal ways. Students are able to connect to the world increasing opportunities for collaboration and cultural awareness. Barrs (2012) recognizes the value in these connections because "in language learning contexts a primary concern is how to maximize target language interaction both inside and outside of the classroom" (2012 p. 10). Language education often occurs in the students' native language (L1) and in a homogenous society where exposure to the target language (L2) is often limited. With new technologies, consociated classrooms can help with this access 24/7. In the study conducted by Barrs, he found that a Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) program can help students continually communicate in L2, and this is especially good for rural districts where opportunities to use the L2 may not or rarely exist (p. 10).

In rural British Columbia there is also the need to embrace Indigenous languages and perspectives. So it is essential that while we are connecting to the outside we also connect with

others who still may feel geographically isolated in our local communities. It would be beneficial for all if we embraced the local knowledge of the Aboriginals in our communities, and then we could share this expanded knowledge base with the outside world, so that our context is understood better.

Increases engagement. The broad argument in recent discourse is that pedagogy that has a high level of interaction among students increases engagement. Bender and Waller (2013) state "that offering high levels of student-to-student interaction will engage students more fully in the content material" (Bender & Waller, 2013, p. 93). Engagement and motivation increase in classes that have networks beyond the classroom (Bender & Waller; Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011).

Fosters cooperation. Connected classrooms foster cooperation and Hermans and Piccardo (2012), note, "when two people interact, they need to cooperate to create an effective exchange" (p. 45). Valuing co-operation supports our indigenous communities. Connection and cooperation benefit Aboriginal learners as it offers best practices for improving Aboriginal education through "(a) the use of interactive learning; (b) a cohesive community oriented environment that focuses on harmony, co-operation, and group work; (c) the use of co-operative learning; and (d) enabling learner control" (Dragon et al., 2012, p. 266). Consociated classrooms foster cooperation.

Adheres to action-oriented and real-life approaches to language learning. Students are learning by taking part in actions and connections set up in the consociated classroom. As Hermans and Piccardo (2012) note, it is good practice to have language learners interact with others to accomplish tasks. In this way, learners become better at solving problems, whether it is tech related issues or relational issues. This learning environment sets up real-life interactions by having students "ready for new relatively unknown situations; it means abandoning traditional

exercises and replacing them with problem-solving situations in which the solution is usually not a standard one" (Hermans & Piccardo, p. 40). Students are actively involved in the New literacies (see Appendix A). The activities are communication competency based, meaning that students are constantly practicing oral and written communication in every interaction. Students are no longer passively taking in information; instead they are engaged in reading, writing, speaking, representing, viewing, and listening (key language learning skills). Richardson & Mancabelli (2011) argue that students "need to be able to use pictures, audio, and video to shape and convey ideas and knowledge" (p. 63). Vygotsky (1997) supported this type of teaching by noting that "ultimately only life educates, and the deeper that life, the real world, burrows into the school, the more dynamic and the more robust will be the educational process" (p. 345). Learners have real-life communication opportunities, and this is better than traditional language learning practices: memorizing vocabulary, reading, and writing drills. Ideally, these opportunities will abound in the consociated classroom.

Supports key concepts of language learning. Consociated classrooms support the CEFR's key concepts (see Figure 3) in the language learning process.

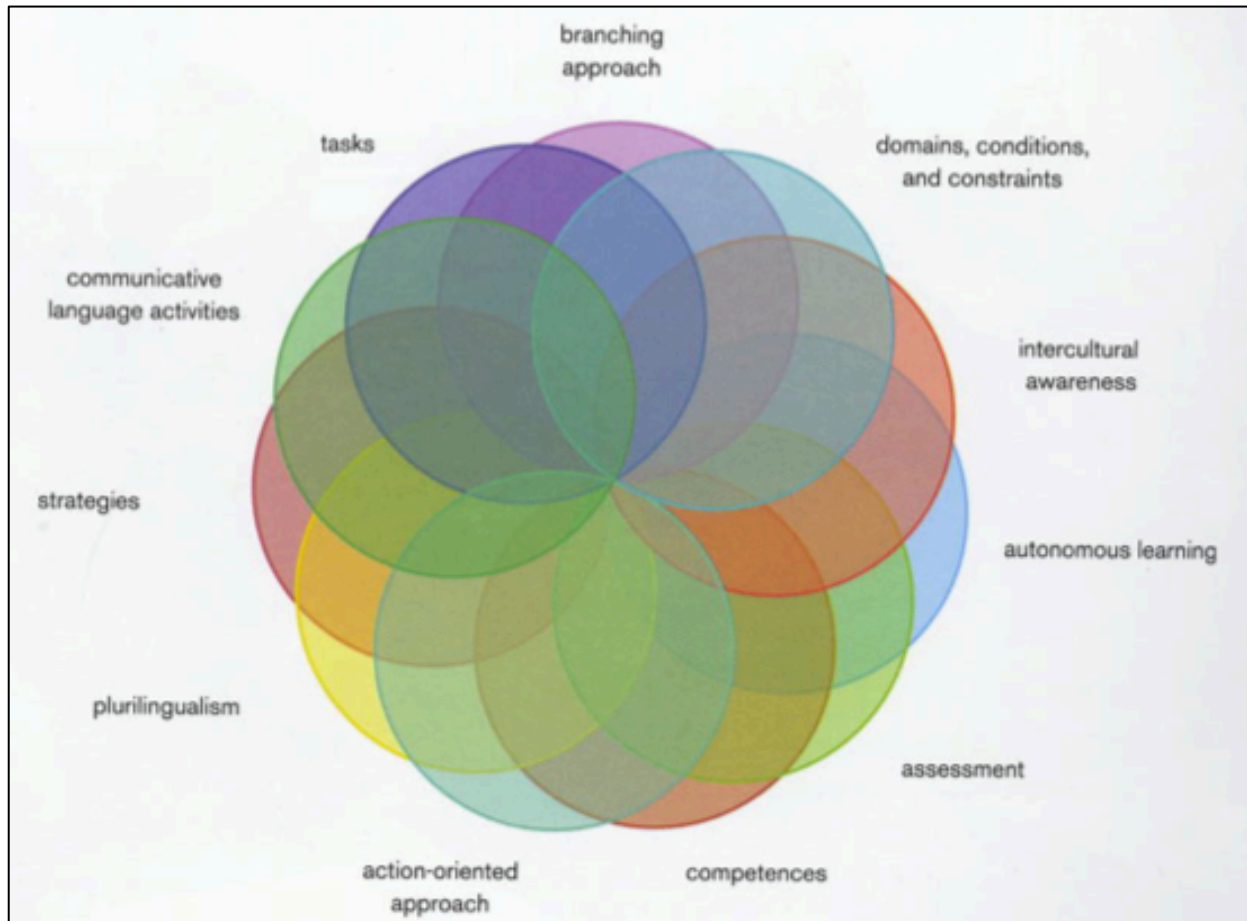


Figure 3. Key Concepts of the CEFR. Copied from *The Common European Framework of Reference: A Guide for Canadian Educators* (p. 28), by L. Hermans and E. Piccardo, 2012, Thornhill, ON: R.K. Publishing Inc. Copyright 2012 by R.K. Publishing Inc. Reprinted with permission.

In the visual above there are 11 key concepts that are considered important in language learning environments as agreed upon by the Council of Europe. Because lifelong learning, cooperation, interaction, and collaboration are necessary for successful language learning, I would add those to the above key concepts. This would then become the premise for all language learning in consociated classrooms. The tasks carried out would follow a set of adaptable tasks that teachers can use in the classroom that support assessment as, of, and for learning at their students' level in the language being taught (The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), n.d., p.1).

Shifts teacher to facilitator role. In classrooms where interaction is through face-to-face and connective technologies, "there's little paper being passed back and forth, very little homework in the traditional sense, and the role of the instructor is more that of a coach or facilitator than an all-knowing expert who delivers the curriculum" (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011, p. 88). McGregor & Sanford (2013) state too that "the teacher's role shifts from that of expert to that of co-learner, and the focus of learning shifts from content to competency" which these days is a sign of quality teaching (p. 12). Ideally, such teaching will be apparent in consociated classrooms.

Embraces humanizing, ecological, plurilingual and indigenous aspects. In consociated classrooms the connections being made with these tools honour diverse ways of thinking and being. In the context of Canada, where valuing all languages and cultures, and in particular Aboriginal language and culture is important, educators will need to make sure to include bodies of knowledge and different perspectives so that the activities in the classroom are inclusive of various ways of viewing the world. By working and connecting inside and outside with our local communities, and with persons far away, consociated classrooms will focus on providing opportunities that adhere to humanizing, ecological and plurilingual principles. Dragon et al., 2012, recognize that more research focusing on how connective tools can be used effectively in an educational context to preserve, promote, and strengthen especially Aboriginal languages and cultures is needed (p. 280).

Summary of Consociated Classrooms

Consociated classrooms will enhance students' language and culture learning by connecting learners to knowledge and information outside the classroom. Social constructivist theory is evident as students' language and culture study is supported by collaboration and

interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) and students are able to practice New literacies such as developing proficiency with the tools of technology (NTCE, 2008, as cited in Richardson and Mancabelli, 2011). Language learners will be connected to others and co-construct meaning as the teacher sets up a classroom community that strives to meet the learning outcomes of the revised FSL curriculum in British Columbia. In consociated classrooms, the second language competencies listed in the CEFR will be the focus of all curricular tasks. The affordances of a variety of technological tools can be witnessed after their use in a variety of language learning tasks. Connections made using these tools can provide a cooperative and humanistic climate. The Council of Europe and the Canadian government express that such a climate fosters a world that values the study of different languages and cultures. The dispositions of the teacher and the students in such a setting may result in the ideals of plurilingualism, indigenous, ecological, humanistic and community values. The attributes of consociated classrooms may lead to many positive dispositions among teachers and students in the learning environment.

Chapter 3: My Consociated Classroom

In this chapter I will describe numerous activities that my class and I participated in while connecting to other classes locally, nationally, and internationally. I will review the inherent curriculum involved, the technological tools used, and the dispositions that I observed as a result of these connections. I will also attempt to delve deeper into to the complementary and conflicting elements involved in interconnecting curriculum, technology, and dispositions in the context of learning different languages and cultures. This chapter will be in the form of a narrative with a rationale for each instance of connecting in a consociated classroom.

Bloggng as Step One in Setting up Consociated Classrooms

I began with my French 11/12 class connecting with the world via a class blog. My research indicated that it would be a good idea to start with a class blog to which the teacher and students contribute posts together. This was helpful advice. I believe that posting together offered an effective scaffolding step so that students could gain the skills and confidence to later have individual blogs attached to one central class blog. The class spent the semester, on a weekly basis, practicing their French by writing about different topics we were studying. For instance, I would write an exemplar about African French music or about an experience at a French restaurant, all key themes at grade 11 level. Then the students and I would write a paragraph in French about a topic. One such blog entry occurred February 6th, 2013. Together we wrote information in French about our school in the winter. We described the setting of the school and the planting a food garden. We posted that we were a typical Canadian high school with varying subject specific classrooms and sports fields. We wrote that, despite our small size, we offer exceptional programs such as cultural lunches where anyone can gather in the First Nation's room and eat lunch together. In addition, we wrote about the diverse language programs that we

offer, namely French, Japanese, and Kwak'wala. We opened up our blog to the public because we wanted the world to visit and comment.

Students and I then carried on a conversation in French with visitors to our site. These visitors were from British Columbia, Alberta and as far away as Australia. Students were excited to receive comments from around the world. They wanted to reply right away and continue the conversation by asking questions, especially with the visitor from Australia. I was quite happy to see the enthusiasm of my students. One student reflected, [I was able to] "learn new things from other classes/people". Other students wrote that blogging allowed "many students and teachers to connect and communicate". I have had parents tell me of the positive energy that their child has after having received comments from around the world in our blog.

Rationale

Curriculum. One of the performance standards at the B1.1 level in the CEFR document is to have students be able "to write a short formal [piece] asking for and giving simple information" (CASLT, n.d., p. 31). On the blog the students showed that they had enough vocabulary to write about areas of knowledge and that they could link a series of short phrases into a connected sequence of points. One benefit of the online exchange is the potential to raise oral and written communication skills; students writing about their passions for a real audience will improve their writing level (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011; Rott & Weber, 2013). For instance, they used the superlative, compare and contrast, and elevated school vocabulary for this specific blog entry. In my class I witnessed students mastering the *imparfait* verb tense and increasing their descriptive vocabulary in relation to places at school. When students were stuck on a word, they would often ask a partner next to them, or the class, for advice. If they remained stuck, I told them that they could use their digital devices and check for useful vocabulary on the

following_website: www.wordreference.com. Before we pressed the publish icon, the whole class would proof-read the blog entry and I would make the needed changes on the Smartboard in front of the whole class. Students' knowledge about other places and a repertoire of new vocabulary grew as a result of interacting with others on the class blog which is evidence of students socially constructing knowledge as they work on curricular outcomes. Rott and Weber (2013) conclude that the peer review and the subsequent interaction about the content and language in collaborative forums are two essential aspects of a constructivist perspective of language learning.

The CEFR Toolkit suggests doing a writing task as a response to a problem stated in a magazine, an image, or an advice column. However, I believe that by having my students write a response to a problem one of the commenters had left, I am providing an opportunity for real written communication. For example, one commenter from Edmonton wrote about the issue of snow at their schools. In hindsight, the class could have commented further after checking the weather forecast in French, or offered advice on how to handle such weather conditions in order to continue the authentic communication. Overall, I feel that the blog is a vehicle for me to use in order to support curriculum outcomes. The connections we made on our class blog adhered to key tenets of a consociated classroom because the students were involved in real-life written conversations with other Francophones around the world.

Technology. Many scholars, like Hampel and Stickler (2012), have concluded that there are many tools available now "that have the potential to support learner communication and interaction, thus aiding second language acquisition both from a psycholinguistic and a sociocultural point of view" (p. 116). I believe that blogs are one such tool that can offer a rather user-friendly and real-life way for teacher and students to connect to others. As a result, I chose a

blog as a tool for connecting students, who are geographically distributed, in a constructivist or collaborative way. By regularly creating blog posts I have had a positive impact on my students' writing fluency. Richardson and Mancabelli (2011) state that currently there are over 200 million blogs online in various stages of use and on many of them you'll find some of the best writing and thinking anywhere. Fortunately, my language students are able to connect to this writing and thinking by reading other blogs and by creating their own with a sense of excitement and engagement. In addition, students are developing their own understanding of digital literacies. Thus far, my class sets aside a few minutes a week to read and respond in French to other class blogs in Victoria, Port Alice and Ontario.

Dispositions. As noted in my literature review, a sense of community is important to language classes. Many researchers have found that blogs and Wikis become popular mediums for establishing and maintaining online communities (Petersen, Divitini, & Chabert, 2008; Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011). Having the students appreciate that they are able to learn about others shows a disposition towards a wider community. Many of my students told me that they enjoyed learning, connecting and communicating with people from around the world. Three students went beyond the weekly class blog entry and started French conversations on their own with three of the people who responded to our blog. In one touching story, a student from my class, who is planning a trip to Australia, ended up continuing on a conversation about surfing with a commenter from Australia. The blog is a place where we share our ways of being and thinking at our school and celebrate our values. By having the students share some highlights of their small isolated school, such as the many languages and First Nation's food gatherings being offered, their pride of place is apparent. The interactions can be done with people from around the world and as Richardson and Mancabelli (2011) state, "connection with someone in another

part of the world will exhilarate you" (p. 57). When I witnessed my students run up to the Smartboard to say "look at this; someone commented from Australia" and then want to respond and ask questions immediately in the target language, I knew it was exhilarating to us all. In addition, students bridged geographical distances and were more engaged with their learning compared to just reading and responding in a traditional language text. By modeling openness and interest in other people and cultures in my consociated class, I hope to inspire other foreign language classes to do the same.

Implementing the Consociated Classroom Framework Through The Power of Twitter

My work with Twitter began as a result of needing to use it as a tool to attract the attention of readers to our blog. After our first two class blog entries, in the first week of the semester, we had not received any comments to our blog. So it was clear that when my class and I posted our third entry, a week later, on February 6th, and no one was commenting, I needed to do something. I had to figure out a way to get people to read our blog and leave comments. My students were upset that they had written three entries that went unnoticed. Each time we posted a blog entry, the students would return the next day asking if anyone had commented yet and I would have to say no. So as a result of not receiving any comments in the first three weeks of the semester, I talked to a couple of colleagues who had successful blogs and visitors to their sites and asked them for advice. I asked, "How do I get people to comment on my students' entries on Kidblog?" I was given two very useful tips. The first tip: send out the blog URL on Twitter and ask people to comment on student entries. The second tip: find a class blog from another French class and leave comments and then ask them to read our class blog and comment. So with that advice, I tweeted out our Kidblog URL and found a French class blog in Victoria on which we left comments.

It worked! The very next day we had six comments on our blog and to my surprise we had a teacher from a grade six French immersion class in Ontario wanting to connect not only on the blog, but also on Twitter. He wrote a tweet to me asking permission for his students to converse with my students on an agreed upon hashtag stream. He said that his students needed to practice their writing. I was thrilled with this idea and told him that my students could benefit from reading French immersion tweets. Thus, a fulfilling semester began of shared tweets and a creative story written and read on Twitter.

On February 11th, after receiving some interesting Tweets about the winter holidays and even a couple French immersion math word puzzles from the class in Ontario, my students suggested the idea of creating a story together on Twitter. We decided on an alien theme and so the beginning of the story started off as "*L'extraterrestre...*" For a full week, students read each other's tweeted additions to the story and contributed their own. Students were coming to class and saying, "Cool, we get to tweet today" and "I wonder what's happening now in the story". One day during this week, I forgot to begin with our daily Twitter lesson and instead was focused on something else. Well it wasn't very long before one of the students said, "Mademoiselle, what about Twitter?" Of course, we returned to Twitter and to our continuation of the alien story. It was great to have my students so enthusiastic about reading and writing French. In my class, you could hear the students talking about the daily tweets while they tried to figure out what each one was saying. These discussions often broke out into laughter as students tried to compose a humorous additional line to the story. All in all, it was a fun week and even I was compelled to laugh a few times at the comic twists and turns of the *l'extraterrestre*.

Rationale

Curriculum. During the initial sharing of tweets between the two schools, the students were using many of the core skills involved in language learning. Students were reading, writing, viewing and representing. The French immersion math puzzles were sent to us in picture format through Twitter and we would send a representation of our thinking back. Daily, students were required to read all of the other students' tweets and then respond by writing a Tweet in French. This is evidence as Lanshear and Knobel (2006) note of a "new ethos, or mindset" where people participate in multimodal, distributed, and co-constructed learning. Twitter fits in well with the learner characteristics of the 21st century as defined by Bender and Waller (2013), by allowing students to participate in collaborating, creating, and investing time in social environments. Bender and Waller also add that "students spend nearly unimaginable amounts of time in the digital, social environments of Facebook, Twitter, and many other social networks, and this desire for virtually unlimited social interaction can and should be harnessed as a powerful educational force" (p. 11).

One of the performance standards at the B1.1 level in the CEFR document is to have students be able "to follow the story line in simple stories" (CASLT, n.d., p. 25). Having the students participate in the creation of a story on Twitter involved my students reading grade 6 French immersion levels of writing. Even though my students are in Core French grades 11 and 12, the level of French they were reading was appropriate and contained phrases or verb tenses that they were learning. For instance, the grade 6 immersion class often used the *imparfait*

verb tense naturally and that happens to be a verb tense being mastered at the Core French grade 11 level. Twitter empowers students. Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012) found, after reviewing twenty-one studies on microblogging in education (MIE), that microblogging has great potential

for promoting learning and, in the particular, language learning. One study showed that it provided opportunities for learners to practice the target language in authentic environments. In their review, they noticed that nearly half of the students connected with native speakers with whom they may not have access to otherwise. They then concluded that Twitter "helped learners develop communicative and cultural competences" (p. 789). Furthermore, students were able to practice reading a short story looking for markers of time and recognize key vocabulary and structures specific to setting, characters, conflict and denouement. They also had a chance to use context clues to infer meaning.

Technology. Twitter is easy to access and use. It requires a very short set up time and once students are aware of the agreed upon hashtag, they can be sending out tweets at any time. Students are able to connect to others with similar goals and interests around the world. It helps bridge geographical distances as witnessed in the Tweet-pal exchange between British Columbia and Ontario. It leads to cooperation. Twitter allows our community to view the learning of our students and it offers a place to showcase language learning in an isolated community that lacks multi-lingual signs such as posters and menus present in larger urban educational settings. I have received many encouraging comments from parents, trustees and other educational stakeholders. I have heard comments such as "It's great to see the students so engaged." "Thanks for keeping the learning relevant." I have also had others who are involved in teaching the local indigenous language, Kwak'wala, ask me to show them how to set up a Twitter hashtag for them, so that they can revitalize Kwak'wala and keep it a living language.

Dispositions. My students' dispositions towards a humanistic element in their classroom were evidenced by their willingness to participate and interact with a younger immersion class from another province. Usually, I notice that high school students have the attitude of not

wanting to interact with younger classes, but in this case they were quite open to the idea. Because the language of the grade 6 class was advanced and near the level of my own students, I believe it was a humbling event and that my students realized that they could learn from others who may not be the same age as them. In our current school system students are often divided into classes based on their age. Twitter allows a natural interaction to occur between students based on interests and abilities and transcends arbitrary divisions such as age and location. I feel that the dispositions of cooperating in an online community reflect the willingness to put aside personal egos and "my way" or "my ideas" for the making of a collaborative story. Twitter offers many voices on a variety of issues and quick interactions. Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2010) found that students are able to build strong relationships across diverse groups and "students who otherwise may not be active participants in class are encouraged to participate" (p. 11).

I have seen firsthand the impact that a simple tweet can have not only on students in my class, but also on students and adults from the Francophone world. Twitter has proven to be a tool that fosters many of the attributed dispositions of a consociated classroom. I noticed that it fostered cooperation, increased engagement and embraced a sense of community. It was a highlight for me to see relevant and fun tweets, situated in my class, being shared, viewed and appreciated by both local and world communities. It was a joy to have parents and community members stop me in the streets to acknowledge the work of my students and to inquire about taking part, themselves, in the French tweets as well.

Using Skype in a Consociated Classroom to Practice Spoken Interaction

Blogging and Twitter are proving to be useful digital tools in my Consociated Classroom in order to practice the CEFR's writing and reading tasks. Equally important is the spoken use of the second language. Although, my students in class have opportunities to listen and speak

French whether it is with some language CDs we use, or dialogue practice, we rarely have the opportunity to interact with other French speakers outside of our class walls. As a result, if I value connections, I need to find venues where my students can speak with others.

Around the end of the 2013 school year, the superintendent of my district announced a pilot project of connecting the three high schools in our district, thanks to the pioneering work of two other Master of Education students. Our superintendent invited what he called "trail blazers" to experiment with the connected opportunities in which the district is investing \$20,000. One of the main connecting tools is going to be the use of Brigit software that allows students and teachers to interact and share lessons through video using the Smartboards. However, the installation is yet to take place, so my colleague and I thought we would get similar connections started by using the free application Skype.

My colleague at the other high school who had already been connecting through email and Twitter with me embraced the idea of using Skype. During our first week of the new 2013-2014 school year, we had decided that the first Friday, September 7th, of class would be dedicated to our two senior French classes interacting in French on Skype. We had our students prepare some information about themselves that they would present to the others and after which they could interact by asking and responding to questions. Neither one of us realized the ramifications of introducing this activity so early in a new semester. Even though some of our students were excited to share and interact, most students became very shy and unwilling to interact online. My students in particular ran up to the camera and quickly said a line or two in simple lower level French and then ran away. I know that my students, especially at grade 11 and 12 level, are able to carry on a conversation in French for a sustained amount of time because we have classes in which we speak only French for an hour once a week. My students and I are not allowed to speak

English during these times. So I was surprised to see my students say only a line or two in French to the class we were connecting with through Skype. My students had prepared write-ups, useful expressions, and questions, but I realize I didn't provide enough practice time with each other or at all on a video-conferencing platform, so they were very uncomfortable interacting on Skype with the other students. I had told the students that we were going to do a video-conference with the other school on the north island, and I suggested that they prepare by writing a few lines about themselves, their interests and daily activities, as well as, some questions and answers that we anticipated would be relevant to the context. Despite this work being completed beforehand, a couple of students refused to go in front of the camera, and said, "No way I'm speaking in front of strangers." I know that some of my students interact already with the other students through sports and other activities while others did not know anyone in this class, yet they all seemed to be uncomfortable interacting on Skype. My enthusiasm transformed into a sense of failure and defeatism. The whole idea of interacting using Skype, needed some intense reflection on what went wrong. Perhaps the issues of wanting to speak only perfect French, a lack of social cues, or certain social affiliations lead to more tensions. The combination of personal identity and representing a school and community may lead to discomfort in this type of interacting venue. After checking in that evening with my colleague and the next day with my students, most of us agreed that using Skype is pretty "cool" when you know the people or have lots of practice. So with that in mind, we all agreed that we would try again, but next time we would front load preparation time getting to know each other with some real-life face-to-face connection before we met again using video-conferencing software.

Rationale

Curriculum. One of the performance standards at the B1.1 level in the CEFR document is to have students participate in spoken interaction by being able "give and seek opinions when speaking with my friends agreeing and disagreeing politely" as they talk "with classmates on topics such as pop culture, youth trends, controversy in sports, local/school issues etc." (CASLT, n.d., p. 13). In this context, students should have enough vocabulary to talk about interests, be able to speak reasonably accurately in familiar situations, and be able to keep the conversation going with some pauses and time to plan and correct. However, despite the fact that I know that my students are able to meet these learning outcomes in other contexts, such as the French only hours in my classroom, they were not prepared to do so in this particular context of video-conferencing. I still believe that there is potential for using video-conferencing in the language classroom, but I need to find an effective way to do this; I need to have buy-in from my students and to find ways to mitigate the barriers involved in this type of activity.

Technology. I feel strongly that a video-conferencing platform, such as Skype, offers a great way to connect and bridge language learners separated by geographical distance. The use of this technology may help to overcome the potential barrier of not having access to French speakers outside our classroom. In addition, such platforms lend themselves to real-life interaction and cooperation while students and teachers exchange information and opinions. Hampel and Stickler (2012) noted the advantages of videoconferencing by contrasting it to using telephone or written online environments. They said that "videoconferencing offer[s] a number of benefits to learners, especially in a distance setting: they allow for a combination of different modes and multiple parallel representations" (p. 134). I thought my students would be keen on doing spoken interaction online. Many of my students have told me that they interact with family

and friends on Skype, so this is an extension to that behaviour by having them Skype with students from other schools. However, it seemed to me during this experience my students like to interact virtually with people they know but not with people they may have not met with previously. This became very clear to me after having visited another school district and observing their connected classrooms. I observed the classes eagerly participating in an English lesson where students and teachers interacted. In this multimodal environment, I witnessed students and teachers switching from audio, to visual, and to text, contributing to an understanding of the material and fostering collaboration. According to the lead teacher and some students their video-conferencing participation improved after they included three field trips where the interacting students could meet face-to-face and participate in mutually agreed upon activities. Blake reported that meetings using video cannot replicate face-to-face interaction but instead can offer channels of communication that can bridge physical distance (Blake, 2005, p. 498).

Dispositions. Due to the unwillingness to fully interact on Skype the first time, it led me to reflect on the statements and actions of my students during their spoken interaction task. The students did want to connect and collaborate, but for reasons that I am going to try to figure out, it seems that my students prefer not to be forced into video-conferencing. Perhaps if I allow my students to design the task, with less influence from me in setting up the activity, it will be more successful. Also, I am thinking that there may be a preference for more privacy when a video camera is in use and perhaps if the students were Skyping one-on-one with others, it may be easier in comparison to a Skype chat that is very visible at the front of the classroom on a Smartboard. At an age when students may be lacking self-esteem, anything from an outbreak of acne or a "bad hair day" could derail an interaction in front of the class or in front of the camera.

In conversations with colleagues and parents about the use of video-conferencing, one parent said, "my daughter needs to feel a true real-life connection with whom she is speaking and in addition she needs the interaction modeled and practiced many times before being tasked with video conferencing." I also believe that with the influence of First Nation's principles of learning in our rural community, that the connections being made are important but that fostering these connections needs patience, time and a more authentically humanistic interaction through a face-to-face venue prior to commencing video tasks.

Using a Wiki in Consociated Classrooms to Prepare for our First Face-to-Face Encounter

While I work on understanding and perfecting interaction through video-conferencing, my colleague, students and I agreed that our next major interaction would be a face-to face-encounter. The two teachers decided to ask the students to suggest topics for our meeting. The students decided that each class would study and rehearse the themes of food, hobbies and music. Once we had decided on our themes, we needed a way to share the learning outcomes, the vocabulary, and the relevant language structures with both classes. I had two options that I could use for setting up an online shell in order to disseminate information about common themes. My district had Moodle up and running for distance language courses and said I could use that forum as a way to connect the two schools and have them reading the same plans and themes. However, Moodle was under a revamping and it was difficult to access it when we needed it; consequently, we chose to create a Wiki through www.wikispaces.com.

On September 10th, 2013 I was able to quickly and effectively start a Wiki on which I included the themes as pages. My class and another island class, along with my colleague and I contributed to the Wiki together. The goal was to have the students look at the vocabulary and structures that the teachers posted on each themed page and then add their own contribution.

Most of the students contributed. Students liked the idea of being able to access this at any time and would often contribute writing on their own time, outside of class. They also liked the fact that all the information that they needed for their food and hobby projects was in one place.

During their contributions, I would hear comments like "It feels like we are creating our own textbook". Because the writing on the Wiki was visible to all the students in both classes, they often checked their writing with me to make sure it was correct before they saved it. When students were on the Wiki it wasn't unusual to hear, "Before I save, can you check this for me?"

Rationale

Curriculum. Like blogging, the Wiki lends itself to written production. Students are able to ask for and provide simple information, a CEFR based B1 level task. Students are able to use enough vocabulary to write about areas of knowledge, can make a person understand the important points, and can link a series of short phrases into a connected sequence of points (CASLT, n.d., p. 31). For example, students contributed vocabulary and the instructions needed for some of the recipes that other students were working on. Students are modeling and practicing writing with the class. The Wiki also is a venue to practice peer-editing, though it cannot be done simultaneously. In my own classroom, once I have seen evidence that a particular student has mastered a vocabulary or structure, I let the others know that they can ask this student to peer-edit their work around the same vocabulary or structure. In this way, the students begin to trust peer-editing and do not need to wait for or rely on my final edit for correctness. Students are able to correct work and place in accents where needed. Rott and Weber (2013) concluded that the peer review and the subsequent interaction about the content and language in collaborative forums are two essential aspects of a constructivist perspective of language learning.

Technology. With Wikis students and teachers are able to share and create content collaboratively and in a participatory manner. Wikis are a tool for connecting students who are geographically distributed. The students' learning occurs in a constructivist or collaborative way, but not in real time. In the connected language classroom, online exchanges have the potential to raise written communication skills; students writing about their passions for a real audience will improve their writing level (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011; Rott & Weber, 2013). In my classroom, I would often bring the Wiki pages up on the Smartboard and we would look at the writing. This would always start a discussion about the writing on the Wiki. As a class, we would decide what we still needed to add and what still needed to be corrected. The writing, as a result, would be improved upon. On another note, we realized that only one person could contribute at a time, making it impossible to have the class working in synch on the Wiki. This means that they cannot all work on the Wiki at the same time as others in class. Dependable email addresses for each student also need to be set up with the Wiki because students have to accept the teachers' invite to the Wiki through email after which students will be able to contribute to the Wiki. In our case, we had two students who were unable to connect due to email issues.

This type of technology leads to a lot of teacher collaboration. My colleague and I worked together contributing relevant French vocabulary, structures, pictures and links to the student chosen themes. We spent an afternoon face-to-face working on the design and the essential elements for each page on the Wiki and then we emailed each other to suggest further additions. We sent about seven emails back and forth with ideas for the Wiki. We took turns posting our work to the Wiki. Many scholars support teacher collaboration that occurs through connections as it "provide[s] educators with career-long personal learning tools and resources that make professional learning timely and relevant as well as an ongoing activity that continually improves

practice and evolves their skills over time" (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011, p. 11). Moll (2014) also added to this argument by saying, "central to the work is the formation of study groups for teachers' professional development, which I refer to as mediating structures in developing the expertise to identify and document funds of knowledge and formulate an activity-based pedagogy for their use" (p. 44). Connected teachers can have discussions about "engaging content, well-designed assessments, and effective instructional strategies (Richardson & Mancabelli, p. 28) and this "collective action" working with others to affect positive change in the world — may be the greatest aspiration of all our connections" (Shirky, 2008, as cited in Richardson & Mancabelli, p. 74). McGregor and Sanford (2013) concurred in their paper; collaboration and connectedness are two of the key features of learning, teaching, and teacher support. After working collaboratively, I realized that both my colleague and I benefited from shared resources of which we debriefed and critically analyzed. We also spent a couple of evenings on the phone sharing ideas and reflecting on the activities in which are students were participating. We both implemented new teaching strategies and games. For many years, I had been an isolated language teacher without the opportunity to bounce ideas back and forth with another language teacher. I have to say this collaboration has heightened my passion for language teaching, inspired me and led me to many new discoveries that are having a positive influence on my teaching and student learning.

Dispositions. The Wiki has proven to be a place where students are proud to show off and share their knowledge of French. Because so many students were accessing the Wiki on their own time and creating their own vocabulary lists and model sentences, this shows that they want to create and share. In a sense, the Wiki became an online community check-in spot when we were not able to meet face-to-face in our true community settings. Working on the Wiki presents

a cohesive task in which students' dispositions toward cooperative group work are apparent. In the Wiki contributions, there was evidence of wanting to write well. Students would often ask me to check their work and to offer suggestions on how to make the writing perfect. They knew that the Wiki was going to be used as a reference for our themes of food, hobbies, and music, so they did not want mistakes on the page. Students appreciated both teachers checking in and editing. They also liked that fellow students cooperated as a team to create a useful resource together.

Face-to-Face Dîner en Blanc Complements the Consociated Classroom Framework

On October 7th, 2013 we had our first face-to-face connection between our two high schools in the district. The French 10/11/12 classes prepared French and West Coast (local) style food and brought it to my classroom for a potluck luncheon. We emulated a Dîner en Blanc and had white tablecloths, white shirts, white dishes and white flowers in vases. The room as the principal stated was "beautiful." Students introduced themselves in French and then shared a meal together. Once finished, we played a French language game together, with one class teaching the rules to the other. Lots of laughs were shared and we ended with a group photo. All in all, it was great to have classes connect "live" after we had connected previously by commonly shared Twitter streams and a Wiki. This activity was so successful both teachers and the students decided to meet again a month later. We decided that the students would share in French some type of write up about their hobbies and interests while using some form of digital technology.

Rationale

Curriculum. The face-to-face opportunity lends itself well to the spoken interaction. Students prepared a French dish or a locally and culturally relevant food item and then presented, in French, the recipe with the class before all sitting down and eating and talking together. This

opportunity set up an authentic and meaningful exchange where students talked in detail about their experiences, feelings and reactions in French (CASLT, n.d., p. 20). For example, students spoke in French about their recipes and their experiences preparing the food. Students used French expressions such as "délicieux" and "l'odeur de ce qui se cuisinait embaumer la classe" to indicate their reactions to the food. At the same time, students were required to listen for content and ask clarifying questions (CASLT, p. 22). Much of the research and the writing for this task took place on the Wiki. Specifically, the CEFR can-do statements and the purpose of the task; the links to resources referring to the authentic Dîner en Blanc in Paris; the possible learning strategies for completing the task; the expectations; some recipes for student choice; the vocabulary and structures needed; and the support available to ensure student success. (CASLT, p. 5).

Technology. Even though this face-to-face meeting took place without digital technology, digital tools were used in preparing for the task. For instance, the two teachers emailed each other for particular structural plans and timing details while the students wrote on the Wiki. Some students were even sending texts or emails on their own time. This way we did not make duplicates of food and had enough main dishes and desserts. Preparing for any language task this large is paramount in making sure the logistics run smoothly and in achieving student second language efficacy. Unlike the Skype interaction where my students barely talked, they conversed more in French during this activity. I think it helped that the students had prepared ample information, thanks to the use of digital tools about the dish they were sharing and that the other teacher and myself created French games at their language level. The conversations seemed a bit more "natural" in this live context than on the day they Skyped each other.

Dispositions. This activity encompassed so many of the positive dispositions that lead to an effective consociated classroom. Students showed humanistic and ecological tendencies. They were all very supportive of each other and most were interested in each other's food offerings. We had a lot of authentic French cuisine, as well as, locally grown and caught foods. For instance, one of the teachers brought in a soup made with all locally grown vegetables, while some students brought in salmon or meat they had caught or hunted. For this reason, I believe that this kind of activity supports the community and the land. We were interacting using the French language while sharing a meal together, leading to a focus on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of shared place and experience. A true allied community resulted from these days of interaction. I will be encouraging face-to-face meetings indoors and outdoors while connecting over food. These types of meetings will foster an appreciation of nature and linguistic ability in a foreign language.

In my rural community where 50% of the students are of Aboriginal decent, it is essential to align teaching to aboriginal ways of thinking and being. In the case of the Dîner en Blanc, even though it is a French cultural celebration, it is a chance to adhere to the First Nations Education Steering Committee's (FNESC) principles of learning (2011) namely: supporting the well-being of the self, community and the land, and learning that is holistic, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships and a sense of place). This opportunity to eat and talk together allowed me to develop and enact these principles. For me, it is interesting to note that many of these principles of learning are similar to the goals of the CEFR's ideals for language learning around the world. I want to instill these goals in my language classroom, under the Consociated Classrooms framework, because I believe it is a practice that honours the self while considering and respecting the ways of thinking and being of

other cultures. In this case, French culture and language is explored over a meal shared together. Such excursions lead to a more authentic and humanizing space for language and culture study. The games we played after we had eaten a meal together helped to establish mentor roles as some students knew the rules, so they taught them to the others who did not. As I observed the two classes interacting, I noticed that the hosting group genuinely took care of and felt responsible for the visiting group. This activity set up an ethos of a true caring community where students feel comfortable when connecting and sharing with others. Face-to face interactions help to establish a shared history, a trust, and a common ground (Petersen, Divitini, & Chabert, 2008). These important factors establish a sense of community. I feel that field trips that consist of preparing meals for others will lead to successful interaction among students in consociated classrooms.

Leveraging the Affordances of Digital Tools for Presentations in a Consociated Classroom

On November 12, 2013, the two north island classes met again and shared digital presentations about hobbies in the target language. The Dîner en Blanc was such a success, that we realized we needed to do this again. So we shared food once again and students presented their interests and hobbies. The students were given the choice of digital tools. As a result, we had Prezi, Power Point, iMovie trailers, apps such as Telligami and Sock Puppets, used to disseminate their information. It was interesting how the digital tool choice suited the different personality types in class. For example, students who are usually shy public speakers chose to record their French spoken production using a Telligami avatar and then played the recording to the class, thus avoiding having to stand in front of the two classes and directly speak to the others. The creativity, the visuals, and the music that students showcased in these presentations

helped the classes to get to know each other well. By the end the class, most of the students were asking if we would have more chances to meet up and do fun activities like this together again.

Rationale

Curriculum. Having the students present their interests in French, led to them being able to "talk about their experiences" which is a B1 proficiency level task (CASLT, n.d., p. 17). For example, students shared information about trips they had taken or sporting events that they were involved in. Students were able to recount events, express emotion, and use transition words. Furthermore, this task proved useful in reviewing the structures of retelling past events.

Technology. The students had the benefit of learning French while interacting in both face-to-face and digital modes during this activity. Not only the face-to-face connection, but also the use of many multi-modal digital options, led to a successful showcasing of each student's language ability. The technology tools chosen by the students helped them to complete their presentation with maximum impact in front of the class. Some students had dramatic iMovie trailer presentations of a family trip they had gone on, while other students chose to present by using a more comical and humorous application, Telligami, on which they recorded their own voices into an avatar made to look like them.

Dispositions. During this activity, I could not help but affirm the importance of connection. Even before we met up this day, students from both classes were excited to show off their own creations about themselves. I heard students saying, "they'll find this funny" or asking "what day do we go to meet the other school?" Students do want to speak French and be part of a larger learning community, as long as they feel comfortable. By allowing the students to pick their own topic and digital tool for their presentations, I feel that the students are more inclined to participate and be motivated to create something of which they are proud and want to share. In

the end, they were smiling and feeling confident in front of the others. This encounter is evidence that students want to meet face-to-face and share real-life stories. Students requested and made an even stronger effort to meet face-to-face again. Their energy and effort levels indicated their tendencies toward working together as allies. The digital tools at this point are a technological means to share their individualism and creativity.

I felt a sense of accomplishment and encouragement with this second face-to face encounter because my students were the ones who requested it and who took the initiative to try a variety of new technology tools. By organizing this opportunity, I offered my students choice in their learning tasks and variety in the ways they could present evidence of their learning. I plan to use this with my younger grades now as well to establish a sense of choice and to allow students to engage in new 21st century learner characteristics.

Issues, Insights, and Recommendations for Implementing Consociated Classrooms

After implementing the Consociated Classroom in my French 11/12 class, I have reflected and found some issues to which I will provide some insights and recommendations for improvement.

Have discussions and communication with parents. In digitally connected classrooms, a main concern is the safety and the privacy of students. Richardson and Mancabelli (2011) agree that safety and ethical use, transparency, assessment, ownership and rights, and parents' opinions are key concerns when setting up networked classrooms. They acknowledge that there are valid concerns that the Internet houses incorrect information or harmful strangers. However, they argue that schools instead should be more concerned with showing students safe, ethical and effective ways of using the tools in order to take full advantage of the potential learning opportunities that these tools offer (p. 32). With this in mind,

many school policies need to be updated to include the effective use of many contemporary communication tools. To help with school policies, Richardson and Mancabelli (2011) recommend that teachers describe their use of social networks in teaching as "learning networks". This recommendation may help alleviate some concerns about using social networks and other connecting tools for teaching. These authors state that no system is perfect and that educating children will not be an error-free process. As well, creating a safe haven in which no student or teacher ever sees a piece of content that they do not want to see will be impossible (p. 132). Through student and teacher dialogue and practice, they firmly believe that connected classrooms are more beneficial than closed ones. In my case, after sending a letter home indicating my plans, all of the parents indicated to me that they supported the activities in my classroom.

Keep up with the latest advances in technology. As always, teachers and students may struggle initially with the technological skills required (Barrs, 2012; Hampel & Stickler, 2012). Compton (2009) notes that teacher-training programs are "not focused on preparing language teachers for the challenges of teaching in an online environment" (p. 96). She proposes an excellent framework for teachers who want to have connected classrooms. This framework (see Figure 4) offers a step-by-step process for the integration of connective tools, an essential element in setting up consociated classrooms.

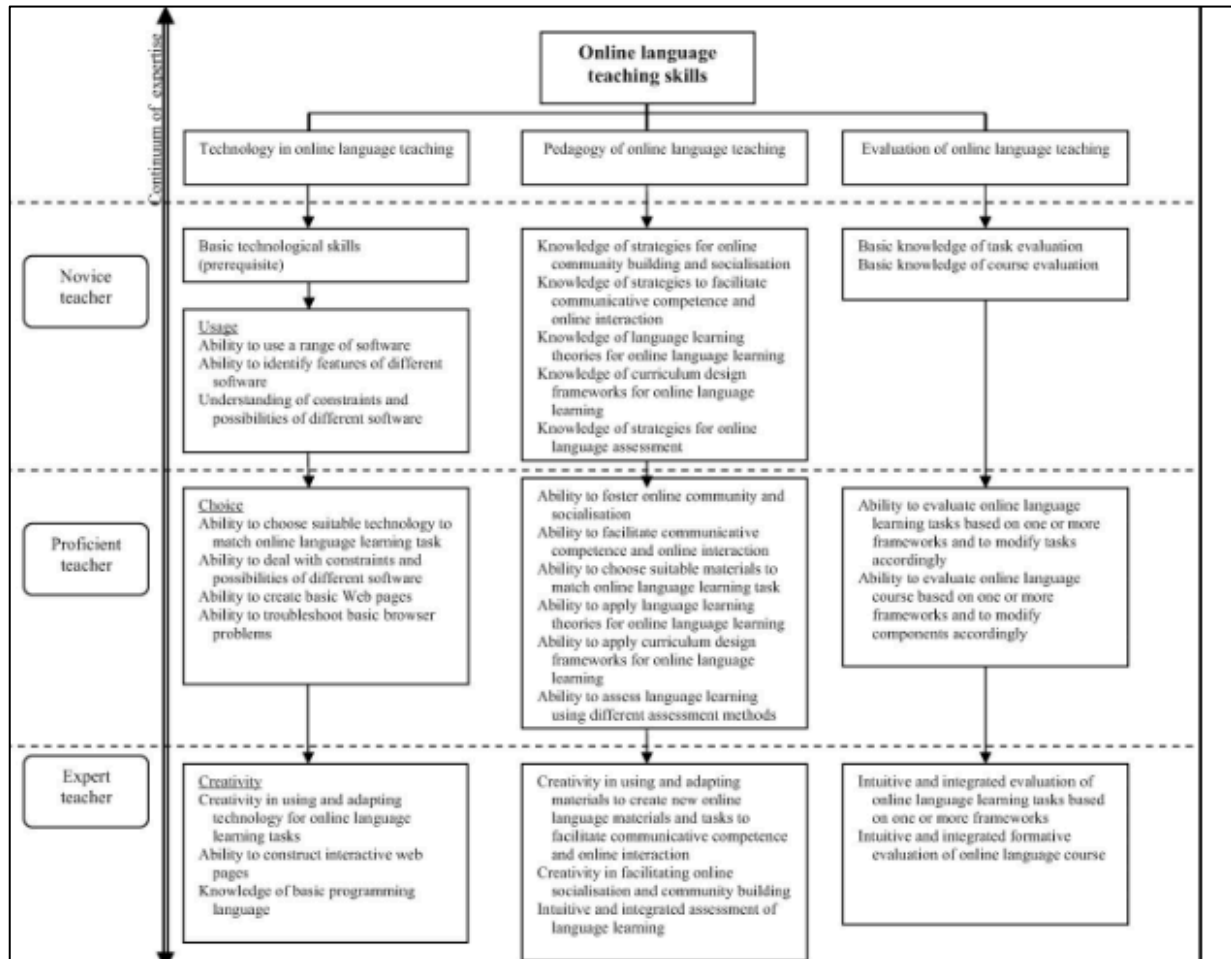


Figure 4. Proposed framework for online language teaching skills (Compton, 2009, p. 82).

Scaffold and model. Teachers cannot assume that every student is a digital native and competent in using specific software (Heiser, Stickler, & Furnborough, 2013; Huang et al., 2013). Therefore, in consociated classrooms teachers would need to model and teach what engaged and sustained connection and collaboration looks like. In regards to collaborating, I noticed my students on Twitter and the Wiki initially wanting to only write their own contribution, ignoring the fact that we were working on a given piece together. It seemed to me that once I gave them a simple reminder to contribute their own ideas while considering the larger context of materials being made together, they effectively collaborated. I recommend scaffolding by having teachers teach and model step-by-step the use of Wikis. It is also important

to note that when starting a networked classroom, it is recommended to start small. To truly reap the benefits of connection in language classrooms, teachers and students need to innovate one step at a time.

Adopt bring your own device (BYOD) in consociated classrooms. Many of the tasks happening in a consociated classroom require accessibility to digital tools. Sometimes there may not be a classroom available full of computers or iPads. With the advancement of various hand held devices, we no longer have to depend on every student having access to a computer. For many students the reality of their lives now includes a mobile device as part of their wardrobe. This is great in a language classroom where these devices can be used instantly to access online dictionaries, translation, language apps, or Twitter. So, students bringing your own device works well in the language classroom and should be considered a viable means to meet the main goals of computer assisted language learning (CALL). The majority of my students had their own devices and were happy to use them. For those who did not have a device, they were allowed to use a computer in the class or a friend's device.

Many scholars have agreed that having access to a device in class increases enthusiasm and motivation (Bender & Waller, 2013; Traxler, 2013). Devices make it easy to share, interact, collaborate, and create. In addition, devices provide a fast and easy way to improve language learning (Peters, Weinberg, & Sarma, 2009). The BYOD idea is still very recent; thus, it is essential that more research be completed. Perhaps parents can be involved too at this point, so that they can see the benefits of BYOD. One thing is for sure, "mobile devices can extend, enhance, enrich, challenge, and disrupt existing ideas and assumptions about learning" (Traxler, p. 238).

Find audiences who give feedback. From my experience, I noticed students getting discouraged on the blog if no one was reading their posts. I observed that students do enjoy using technological tools for language learning as long as they have an audience and adequate feedback. Thus, educators will need to find appropriate audiences and ensure timely feedback.

Create a comfortable and safe space for sharing. During many of the tasks in my Consociated Classroom, I noticed that students initially wanted to express their ideas at the same level as they would in their mother tongue. However, language teachers know that the students at CEFR A1-B2 levels have limited lexical resources and have to sometimes simplify their ideas. It becomes difficult for them to rephrase ideas in their own words, an issue inherent to any project in a second language (Rott & Weber, 2013). These authors found that, "students oftentimes did not have the language skills to circumlocute target language expressions without trying to compensate with first language word-for-word translation" (p. 191). In my consociated classroom, I am constantly telling students to use only words they know, rather than a translation site, when they are trying to create their ideas in written form. I see the value of reminding students that the collaborative nature of a consociated classroom allows for them to check with the teacher, other peers, and the messages they have received from afar. Fortunately, with teacher prompting and scaffolding, students are encouraged to choose to opt for words they already know in the target language. For example, a teacher could say, "with words you know, how do you say...?" As a result, students realize their ability to link together their fragmentary French to communicate to the world. Using any tool that allows for short exchanges is useful because students can readily compose on their own, with the luxury of not having to write a paragraph. For instance in a tweet, a sentence will do, so even with modest proficiency students can actively participate.

Another consideration around the idea of comfort focuses on the misfortunes of receiving unsolicited comments or Tweets that contain offensive language. My class received two tweets targeting offensively the French language itself. In the case of Twitter, Greenhow and Gleason (2012) state that there is a lack of control when it comes to managing received tweets. Twitter does not allow us to delete or erase these tweets, but they did allow us as individuals, to block such people from making future tweets to our class hashtag. Therefore, I recommend teachers closely monitor tweets and block anyone who is sending offensive tweets to the class hashtag. My students, who became quite protective of the French language and who showed a disposition to using French seemed satisfied to report that in the last few months we did not receive any more inappropriate tweets. Such stories could lead to a discussion about authentic bigotry and students reflecting on their own feelings about the language. Consequently, a perceived negative encounter could result in a positive learning outcome in a consociated classroom, such as being able to review good online etiquette and behaviour.

Steel and Levy (2013), found that over 50% of beginner level language students felt comfortable choosing to use online Dictionary tools and web-based networking sites, opposed to only 30-49% who chose blogs and Wikis, and less than 30% who chose and felt comfortable with conversations through video-conferencing. This issue directs attention to the fact that beginner students benefit more from vocabulary building tools than from video-conferencing software. Educators need to keep in mind the language level of their students when implementing videoconferencing activities that call for connection and collaboration among students. Upon reflecting on my class, I recommend making sure my senior students have had over three years to build up their vocabulary and language usage before connecting.

After my experiences, I realize that offering students opportunities to share at events like the Dîner en Blanc where students are eating, sitting, and talking together as if at a family dinner, is a great way to comfortably connect students.

Realize that spoken interaction may take time, patience, practice and risk-taking. The incident with Skype video-conferencing in my consociated classroom has led me to ponder the setbacks my class and I experienced during this activity. To begin with, as a language teacher and learner myself, I know that one of the most difficult skills is spoken interaction. This skill for many is more difficult than just reading, writing or presenting in the language. The idea of having to produce sentences quickly in an oral platform, opposed to a more delayed written platform, may be a bit overwhelming. Successful spoken interaction involves so many factors. Such factors include but are not limited to: having confidence, knowing appropriate levels of formality, picking up on body language, listening well, and using correct pronunciation. Therefore, I feel that when spoken interaction does not work with foreign language learners, the reasons may not be straightforward. It may be a combination of a variety of factors.

In the case of my class, a fear of having to speak perfect French when we are on camera in front of another group may be a reason to shy away. I will need to share with my students the idea that there is no perfectly spoken language and that in fact even native speakers of a language make mistakes. I would like to be able to alleviate the fear of having to speak "perfect French" when we are connecting. Thanks to the recent policies of the CEFR, the 'ideal native speaker' is no longer the ultimate model, but rather there is an aim to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012, p. 30). This fear could be the biggest contributing factor to a lack of participation in video-conferencing, since I know that in other contexts my students perform so much better when they are connecting with others. This

idea of having to have perfect French in spoken and written work needs to be tackled by the teacher. In addition to the CEFR 's language policy about accepting the idea that there is no perfect native speaker, I am inclined to also offer my student's the words of John Hattie (2012) who states that a safe environment for learning is one in which error is welcomed by both the teacher and the students. Good language learning strategies often emphasize taking a risk and using the bits of language that fits the context. Throughout different language learning assessment rubrics, it is acceptable to be able to scramble together the main ideas without having to be perfect. As a language teacher I think it is crucial to stress the importance of not letting the "correctness factor" inhibit the extent of interaction.

Furthermore, the lack of social cues on camera may be a factor influencing my students' lack of engagement while interacting through video. Language learners may not comprehend a situation fully, due to a lack of social cues only available in real-life interactions. Videoconferencing misses out on a lot of live face-to-face practices such as intonation, facial expressions and gestures that aid with communication. In digital connections, finding ways to express oneself effectively is difficult. It therefore is recommended that students include the use of emoticons or comments in a side bar. An important skill becomes the "ability to project and interpret social presence in online communication on the other" (Heiser, Stickler, & Furnborough, 2013, p. 228).

Embrace, encourage and honour all languages and cultures. Knowing that our world functions better when we all are willing to learn other languages and cultures, it is important not to ignore the languages and cultures of the First Peoples around the world. All of the First Principles of Learning (See Appendix B) fit well with the aims of the CEFR's goals for language study around the world. These ways of knowing and being can be followed by any language

learner in order to have a deeper understanding of what it means to explore one's identity alongside the identities of others and to live in the world with tolerance, inclusion, respect, and acceptance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, linking the learning in consociated classrooms to social constructivist theory is fundamental in establishing the purpose of connecting language students. Connection that incorporates sound curricular implementation, useful digital tools and positive dispositions such as those evidenced in a consociated classroom has led to effective language learning. I will end by concurring with Blake (2005) who states:

The potential benefits of collaborative exchanges, whether set in the classroom or managed online, depend more on sound pedagogical design of the tasks the participants are asked to accomplish and the methods or tools with which they carry out their exchanges rather than the actual locus of the learning event. (p. 498)

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Appendix A

Definition of New Literacies:

- Developing proficiency with the tools of technology;
- Building relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally;
- Designing and sharing information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Managing, analyzing, and synthesizing multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Creating, critiquing, analyzing, and evaluating multimedia texts;
- Attending to the ethical responsibilities required by those complex environments.

(NCTE, 2008, as cited in Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011, p. 24)

Appendix B

Common Elements within First Peoples Societies Regarding Principles of Learning:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

(FNESC, 2011, accessed at <http://www.fnesc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/PIPEL-6342c-FNESC-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf>)

Appendix C

Glossary of Terms Used

Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD): refers to students bringing and using their own devices in and out of school to take part in mobile learning.

Cloud computing: refers to storing and retrieving information in the Cloud. The ability to access resources through web-based tools and apps.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL): refers to the use of computer programs to aid in language learning

Emoticon: refers to a picture that represents a facial expression or body gesture. These representations are used in virtual environments where there is a lack of real-life physical cues.

Hashtag: refers to the hash symbol # typed together with a word or phrase used to organize and direct tweets into specific themes on Twitter. Eg. #French

Language One (L1): refers to a person's first language; mother tongue

Language Two (L2): refers to a person's second language or target language

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC): refers to organized classes online. Participants can take part simultaneously or can watch archived sessions later.

Moodle: refers to a free open-sourced web application that allows teachers to create online course in a modular format.

Microblogging in Education (MIE): refers to typing less than 140 characters in communications; popular forums for microblogging include: Twitter and Tumblr

Social Media: refers to websites and other services that support networking, collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing online. Allow users to share multi-modal forms of information or documentation. Popular sites include: Facebook and Twitter.

Social Networking Sites (SNSs): refers to the specific sites where social networking takes place
Social Presence: refers to the presence that a person is seen to have or not have while taking part in visually connective interactions.