

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY HERITAGE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS
IN ALBERTA

by

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Abstract

This work provides an in-depth analysis of the views of leaders of heritage language schools in Alberta. Over 25 hours of transcribed interviews and focus-group data from community heritage language (HL) school leaders and elders in the HL learning community, along with research notes were analyzed and coded for themes. 14 language groups are represented.

Chapter I describes my personal experience working in a HL school in Alberta. Through this experience I share how I came to the research questions that shape this dissertation. In Chapter II I review recent literature about community HL schools in North America. The theoretical lens used to interpret the data is explored in Chapter III. I have used both Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hornberger's Language Policy and Planning as guides so that I might understand the ecology of heritage language schools, teaching, learning and use in the province of Alberta.

How the HL field in Alberta from other places is not yet documented fully. To understand and appreciate the context of HL education in the province, I have provided vignettes of the participants in my study. In Chapter IV I describe the school leaders. I classified the 11 participating school leaders into one of two groups, emerging and emerged communities, based on the length of residency of the majority of the community members and the length of the history of the school. In Chapter V I provide similar vignettes from elders in the field of HL education in

Alberta.

Each of the Chapters VI, VII, and VIII correspond to one of the research questions and one of the systems in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. In Chapter VI, the Microsystem, I discuss the HL leaders and HL elders thoughts of the students and teachers found in HL schools in the province. In Chapter VII, the Mesosystem, I show how leaders and elders give to their communities and to Albertan society in general through their schools. In Chapter VIII, the Exosystem, I list the multiple agencies and governmental departments that work with HL schools in the province and identify ways in which the agencies and governmental departments support or deny these schools.

In Chapter IX I provide the reader with a list of recommendations which if followed would strengthen HL education, continue to support HL communities, and would further advance the Canadian concept of multiculturalism.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Gertrude Catherine Aberdeen. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Understanding Community Heritage Language Schools in Alberta”, No. Pro00044211, January 15, 2014.

Dedication

For Opal-Ann Hồng Hiến and the two women who named her.

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IHLA/SAHLA/ and my Participants: I unfortunately can’t thank you by name, but

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Alberta Education
AELTA	Alberta Ethnic Language Teachers Association
AGLC	Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission
ATA	Alberta Teachers' Association
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CASLT	Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers
CRC	Calgary Regional Consortium
ERLC	Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
HL	Heritage Language
IHLA	International Heritage Languages Association
LDC	Locally Developed Course (an approved course from AE)
L1	first language
L2	second language
NAHLA	Northern Alberta Heritage Languages Association
SAHLA	Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association
SLIC	Second Languages and Intercultural Council

CHAPTER I : COMING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Heritage language learners are those who actively engage in learning a first language (L1) and culture that is different from the mainstream culture and language in which they are currently living (Lee, 2005). Many of these learners attend weekly schools for a few hours each week where they receive formal instruction in language and culture. For young children who attend these schools there is a conscious effort on the part of their parents to develop a strong and positive identity toward their family's past and in the context of Canadian multiculturalism this is seen as contributing to their and the nation's future. According to Alberta's International and Heritage Language Association (IHLA), over 40 languages are taught in community HL schools.

However, over its history, community HL schools have faced continuous struggle for recognition beyond the borders of its communities. Early schools were established by some of the first immigrant groups from Europe – e.g. the Ukrainians (1891) and Germans (1873). Groups that shared a common religion such as Catholics were able to unite within Catholic school systems (e.g. in Ontario and Alberta) and mentor new immigrant groups (e.g. Bulgarians (1915), Poles (1913), Armenians (1910), Italians (1899)). These groups, and others, played a significant

role in creating the ‘third voice’ to the two founding fathers of French and English which lead to the rise of the official policy of multiculturalism in 1971.

How governments deal with HL community schools has been largely ignored. Although they seemed to secure a place in government thinking, they have never fallen under any particular jurisdiction (In Alberta they have been bounced from Ministries of Culture (the 70s) to Community Development (the late 80s) to Education (in the last decade).) In fact, their place in the federal and provincial governments is as confounded as every issue that fights for funds at both levels.

This dissertation explores issues faced by what I refer to as community heritage language (HL) schools. At the conclusion of the research it hopes to offer insights and recommendations from the perspectives of community HL school leaders for the development of these schools at the level of federal and provincial policy, community involvement, day-to-day operations, and the individual.

The dissertation begins by locating myself. I do so by sharing some of my experiences working with a community HL school. The chapter concludes with a list of my three research questions. In Chapter II I extend the literature review to include a rationale for the study, definitions of HL learners and community schools for HL learners, and introduce the theoretical lens through which I will explore the

issue of heritage language education. In Chapter III I present details of the qualitative research methodology proposed for carrying out the study. Chapters IV and V describe the community HL leaders in the province and community HL elders respectively. Chapters VI, VII, and VIII each address one of three research questions. Chapter IX concludes with recommendations for HL schools and public policy regarding HL schools. Due to the intimate nature of the conversations with study participants I maintain first person voice throughout the dissertation.

My Journey to My Research Questions

There is a cliché in the field of education which goes “some teachers have ten years of experience and others have the same year of experience ten times.” What differentiates these two groups is the capacity to not only experience an event, but to process it for personal meaning and to be transformed by it. Bloor and Wood (2006) describe this reflexivity as “an awareness of the self in the situation and action and the role of the self in constructing that situation” (p. 145). As a researcher, I do not come to my research topic as an uninterested outsider; I come as an informed and engaged educator who seeks to learn from my experiences as well as those of others and who works towards school improvement and theory development. I am engaged in a qualitative study which “implies a direct concern

with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’” (Sherman & Webb, 1990, p. 7). Accordingly, I reveal my early introduction to heritage language schools, including critical incidents, that permit the reader to see how I influence, act upon and inform my research topic, which will be introduced at the end of this chapter.

I come to this research project with certain biases and expectations of language learning that influence my understanding of learning a minority language in the Canadian context. These experiences and this prior knowledge influence my perception of how I view the educational programming developed by others. What follows are a list of statements about me in which I describe factors which have shaped and continue to shape my experiences. Throughout this chapter, I have also italicized awakenings that I had about the operation of heritage language learners and schools.

1. I am bilingual in both of Canada’s official languages, English and French.

In addition, I have intermediate communicative ability and some literacy in Japanese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. I have also attempted to learn American Sign Language and Portuguese in the past.

2. My most fluent language other than my mother tongue was the one in which I had no choice in learning: French. Studying French was an

expectation of the Canadian school system and I believed it was worthwhile learning because it would afford me many personal and professional opportunities and it has.

3. I am a language educator and have been for the past 20 years. It is an essential component of how I define myself. I have never professionally taught any subject other than language.

4. Until very recently, I have almost exclusively taught upper-middle class or wealthy students attempting to learn languages of power: French in Canada and English overseas. My experiences have always been in wealthy, but relatively new schools. Part of my job has always been to develop school language policy and curriculum, as well as to source materials. Funding has rarely been an obstacle in sourcing materials. Although I have had challenges in locating “what I wanted”, I have almost always been able to purchase it.

5. All of the languages that I speak with the exception of English and French have been my personal decision to learn. Almost none of my colleagues were interested in learning the local languages. I often was nominated to be the “translator” in social situations because I had the best language skills.

6. I partially used language learning as a way to move from an etic perspective of the culture I was living in towards an emic one. While I gained cultural experience through language learning, I never became a full participant in any society I lived in. I was always a member of an ex-patriot community.

7. When I adopted my daughter, I made a moral commitment to engage both her and me in the culture and language of her birth. This moral imperative has probably stemmed from two factors: my desire to learn about languages and cultures, and my knowledge of the importance in maintaining one's birth culture. I learned about this latter point by reading extensively about international adoption (Alperson, 1997; McLeod & Macrae, 2006; Ruskai Melina, 1998).

8. I have found that trying to instill the importance of learning the Vietnamese language and culture in my daughter has been much more challenging than I expected. I have found resistance in my daughter, my parents, and society in general. When I told a Vietnamese neighbour that I take my daughter to a community HL school he looked at me strangely and said, "Why bother? I am Vietnamese and I can't make my daughter speak it

to my grandchildren.”

In summary, these statements indicate that I am passionate about language learning and knowledgeable about it. Yet, I am still approaching language learning from a position of power- as an educator and as a member of the mainstream community. While I share some of the same struggles as other parents in the heritage language community, I am not struggling to teach *my* language and *my* culture to my daughter, but rather *her* language and *her* culture. My daughter is currently able to communicate with all of those closest to her; Learning Vietnamese is not essential for her present, but for her future. I have made the decision for her to be part of the Vietnamese community based on desire, rather than need. Therefore, in my family’s personal circumstances language and culture learning are a luxury, rather than a necessity.

Introduction

It is an incredibly beautiful and sunny Sunday. About 60 Vietnamese parents are standing outside of the school waiting for the security guard to open the doors so that they can enter. The melodiousness excitement of boisterous tonal voices who have waited an entire week to see one another fills the air. The children are running around and playing tag while the moms are recounting the events of their

week to one another. Some dads are carrying the drums and the dragon costume for the upcoming New Year's festival. As soon as the doors open everyone scrambles in. The children rush up the stairs to their classrooms while the parents trod along behind carrying backpacks and snacks.

The previous scene did not take place in Hanoi, Vietnam, but in Edmonton, Alberta almost four years previously. What is not obvious from this description is that, with the exception of my daughter, all of the children in the school were born in Canada. In fact, most children have never been to Vietnam at all. Many of their parents arrived as children and teenagers. These parents are often referred to in the academic literature as generation 1.5—caught somewhere linguistically and culturally between Vietnamese and Canadian (Garnett, 2012; Vasquez, 2007). It is also not obvious from the previous scene that some of the families suffer deep emotional strain due to an inability to communicate deeply with each other due to language loss (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Some parents and children are only able to have simple exchanges because the children's Vietnamese stopped developing at age five when they went to English kindergarten and the parents were too busy earning a living to learn English beyond a few work-related expressions. Yet, other children are struggling academically in their weekday school because the parents

do not have the academic skills to support them in either Vietnamese or English (Siad, 2010). Meanwhile, some are worried about their child's sense of self and engagement with the culture (Ruskai Melina, 1998; You, 2009). These parents worry that if their child is not taught the positive aspects of being Vietnamese then all they will know are the negative stereotypes that are found in the media, namely drugs, gangs, and war.

My reasons for joining the school are less conventional, but not entirely different from the majority of parents. I started looking for Vietnamese lessons for my internationally adopted daughter when we repatriated to Canada. I wanted her to learn how to speak the language of her ancestors and to have some knowledge of Vietnamese practices and culture. I worried about her ability to interact with other Vietnamese people as she got older and became more aware of her identity. And furthermore, I wanted her to know the culture beyond the surface stereotypes I knew.

My daughter and I were welcomed into the school: her as a student and I as an aide in curriculum development. When the parental community discovered that I was knowledgeable about curriculum development and that I had a large collection of educational materials and Vietnamese books, my role in the school expanded. Despite my lack of proficiency in the language, I graduated to the role

of Kindergarten teacher when the teacher responsible for the class became too busy and simply never returned. While it was a job that I was grossly unqualified for, I did attempt to do the best job possible by compensating for what I did not have (language skills) with what I did have (teaching skills and access to academic journals). I spent many hours reading and trying to figure out appropriate heritage language theories and best practices. From the few applicable journal articles I came across, I came to believe that the challenges we faced were similar not only to other Vietnamese heritage schools, but most heritage language schools regardless of language of instruction. Unfortunately, much remains undocumented about the formation and operation of heritage language schools in Canada and this lack of documentation makes comparisons difficult (Prokop, 2009).

Thus, the purpose of this writing is not only to chronicle some of my experiences with the Vietnamese school, but to understand them with the goal of contributing to the current knowledge of heritage language schools in general. Specifically I wish to address the following question: *What awakenings have I had into the issues of school development as faced by a minority-language, community HL school?* By examining this questions in light of my experiences, I hope to contribute to the field by identifying some of my educational concerns and

challenges and promote discussion about possible solutions.

Throughout the reflections in this chapter, I have upheld the ethical principles of respect for human dignity. I made the decision to begin this doctoral proposal by focusing on my own experiences; however, I must acknowledge that while these stories are about me, they do not belong to me alone. I am also telling the stories of others. While none of the participants are recognizable to the readers, they are recognizable to each other and can easily be identified by others within the school community.

Where can you learn a heritage language?

Learning one's heritage language can take place in different environments. Some of these are bilingual school programs (Bilash, 2002; Bilash & Wu, 1998; Sun, 2011; Wu & Bilash, 2000), universities/colleges (Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Chow, 2001), special clubs/ extra-curricular activities (Guardado, 2009), after-school programs (Mercurio-Berrafati, 2010), religious institutions (Park, 2010), and community HL schools (Tonami, 2005). Of importance to this project are community HL schools, which are also referred to in the literature as Saturday schools (Shibata, 2000) or ethnic schools (Chow, 2001). Although community HL programs vary according to the language they teach and the culture they extoll, they

share many similarities. Many programs are offered in church basements (Lee & Shin, 2008), offer supplementary programs in dance, arts, or music; may receive funding through the community and be spearheaded by community leaders; often have volunteer teachers; and usually operate on a Saturday or Sunday for two or three hours each week.

Cultural lessons and document writing

Our particular community HL school is working with the provincial educational authorities to develop a high school curriculum so that our high school students receive credits toward their high school diploma for their participation. As a result of this decision, we have been asked to write documents which we may have otherwise neglected. For example, I once received a phone call from the principal of the school asking for help. She was told by Alberta Education that we needed to create a statement about “the treatment of sensitive issues” and she had no idea how to go about writing it. These could be about, but were not limited to, religion, politics, privileged linguistic dialects, feminism, homosexuality, or any other landmines.

We discussed the task and its relevance for our school. In Vietnamese culture, these kinds of topics are usually avoided. If there were to be a direct

dialogue of the topic, it might clear the air, but it might also create permanent divisions. Avoidance may not be the best way, but it is the Vietnamese way. The avoidance technique is still very much alive in Vietnamese Canadian society, especially in reference to communism, linguistic superiority, and religion (personal communication, Hoa Nghiem). So when we were asked by Alberta Education to define problem issues and write about how we would handle them, it was a difficult task because we felt as if we could potentially cause group conflict by forcing discussions of “undiscussable” topics. Whatever we chose to disclose to Alberta Education could create internal issues since our statements would have to be reviewed and approved by the board. If we were to write a statement like, “We will teach Northern pronunciation over Southern pronunciation” or “We will teach all pronunciations equally”, a conflict might have been instigated. In the end, we drafted the following paragraphs which we felt defined the values of our school:

We pride ourselves on being a school community that focuses on inclusion over exclusion. While we are a Vietnamese Heritage school, our families reflect the diversity that exists everywhere within Canada. Our student body has members from all socio-economic statuses, from all levels of education, and from all kinds of families. We have students that have been

internationally adopted, that are in foster care, that have experienced divorce, that are of “mixed-heritage”, that have special educational needs, and that are single-parented. Although in many ways each family in our school is unique, there is a Vietnamese value that we all share- love of our children. We are uncompromising in our devotion to ALL of our children. No child will ever be excluded because of his or her personal or family circumstances.

We acknowledge and respect that many families in our school have strong religious and political associations. Although it can sometimes appear that our differences put us at odds with one another, we focus on our similarities rather than our differences. We require all teachers, families, students, and members of the school community treat each other with respect at all times.

This statement was translated and put before our school board. It passed unanimously and board members stated that it truly reflected our school and community values. Approximately a year later when working with Alberta Education we were instructed to collect the necessary documents for our school registration. We proudly put forth our policy statement on sensitive topics only to learn that what was required was that we sign an agreement that had been previously

drafted by Alberta Education. We still kept our statement since it reflected our core values as a school community. Our mission statement, however, does not specify what we will teach or what we hope our students will learn.

In this instance I really feel that I *acted as a cultural mediator*, one who was able to understand the intentions and values of both parties. I was able to see that a formal policy was needed by Alberta Education, and that this policy was intended to prepare us for difficult situations. From the Vietnamese perspective, this policy was contraindicative of community values. I am an educated, bicultural community member, and as such I could draft a policy in which both parties' needs could be met. Our school principal who teaches within the school system was not able to achieve this. In the end, I was perhaps wrong, since what Alberta Education required was a signed form, not a signed statement. I thought I was able to identify the intentions of our governmental institution, but it was far more complex than I had imagined.

One of the first things I tried to develop in the school was a profile of our students with the intent of using this profile for developing curriculum. Brown (1995) uses learner profiles as one of the key components of a needs assessment. He describes multiple pieces of information that can be gathered from student

questionnaires: biodata, opinions, self-ratings of language proficiency, judgment ratings of importance of topics. I had just learned about survey monkey and wanted to gather demographic data about our student body. I wanted to know why the children were in our school, how much Vietnamese homework they did, and how many language books they had in the home. I figured that getting this information about students' skills and motivations could be sampled easily through a short survey. If we had this information about our population then we could easily plan better for it (Lee, 2005).

When I took this idea to the principal and the president of the parents' association, they said it would not be successful. They felt that the parents in our school were very poor users of technology. They added that they could not even get the parents to read emails. They suggested that we could print out surveys on paper and send them home with the students, but that was also unlikely to work. It would mean that the students actually took the survey home, handed them to the parents, had their parents take the time to fill it out, and then brought them back the following weekend. Informal needs assessments could happen in classes by asking students about their preferences, but this has never happened either.

The use of technology is problematic for some of the parents and teachers

in the school. About three months ago I got a phone call from one of the parents asking if I had received an email from the principal stating that she had to take an immediate trip to the Philippines because her niece had to have an emergency kidney transplant, so could we please send \$30,000. I said that I had received the email, but obviously someone had hacked into her account. The parent explained that she had been in contact with the principal and found out that the email was indeed a hoax. She and another parent explained that they had started to scramble to try to figure out where they could come up with this money when they thought they should talk to her husband about the situation. Once they found out the story was untrue, they decided to call everyone else in the community to let them know.

At first, I was shocked that people still believed those kinds of emails. After a moment of consideration, I was amazed at the kindness and benevolence in the community. Not only did they care enough about the principal to try and get her what she needed, they did not want others to be concerned for her safety or to be swindled.

Instead of relying on mass messages by email, the community operates through a series of informal communication networks. This unsystematic method of telephone communication, coupled with once-a-week, face-to-face meetings

makes completing some tasks challenging if not downright impossible. For example, when a message needs to be transmitted to the community, it means that each person must be contacted independently. Sometimes people are missed which fuels resentments and at other times messages get changed which causes miscommunication. As a result, only very important messages tend to be passed along this way. Furthermore, when I examine the two areas where we were unable to complete the tasks as intended, neither was initiated by our school, but rather by outside parties. The first, our sensitive issues policy, was brought forth by Alberta Education due to their paperwork requirements. Our second, a student survey, was suggested by me acting as a young academic; not as a parent, a curriculum developer, or a teacher. And while both serve the interests of our school, both require us to function in ways that we cannot. Tensions exist between how we operate and how more powerful academic institutions expect us to organize ourselves.

My understanding of the limited use of technology, coupled with my surprise at the informal communication system demonstrates my limited understanding of the organization of this community. This informal system exists as it does for a reason. While a more organized system may relay messages more effectively and

allows for more research, it also would prevent personal contact. I realize that the culture than I come from favors efficacy in communication over personal contact.

How Do We Finance Our School?

Money is rumored to be the leading cause of divorce. Although I have yet to see any formal statistics, I believe it is also the leading cause of discord in community HL schools. One of my first experiences with finances came early on in my involvement with the school. In the first year of our school's operation, a rumor circulated among the parents that the school would receive \$500 dollars for each high school student registered similar to the funding that high schools receive for their students. Either through misunderstanding, misdirection, or misinformation, some parents mistakenly believed that their children would be the direct recipients of this money. At the start of our second year, our school had some irate parents calling to find out where their child's cheque was. Some parents refused to re-enroll their children when they were told that they would not get paid to attend weekend classes; they felt that they were lied to. *I was surprised that disclosing financial sources was such a sensitive topic.* However, in hindsight, I learned to appreciate that discussions of money are linked strongly with financial transparency, anti-corruption, and democracy. Members of other groups may have

not been raised in similar circumstances, and as a result of learning other government systems may not attach similar importance to these concepts as I do.

While it is theoretically possible that we receive money from Alberta Education for the delivery of our high school program since we must cover all of the same operating costs as any high school (salary, rent, text books, insurance, teacher's salary, etc.), we have yet to receive a single penny and our school is in its fifth year of operation. All of our costs must be covered through tuition fees and fundraising. In addition, our high school course must be taught by an instructor with a valid Alberta's teaching certificate for our courses to meet the requirements for Alberta Education and university entrance. Our certified teacher who currently works full-time with a school board essentially volunteers her time, effort, and expertise to teach this class. In my opinion, this is again a demonstration of the *conflict in values* between larger academic institutions and smaller communities. I say this because I have yet to see large groups of highly-experienced science and math teachers offer credit courses in their areas of expertise each week *for free*.

The second time money became an issue was when we were determining what appropriate school fees might be. Some felt that since the school was run by volunteers, everything should be without cost. This was not possible since we still

had to pay rent, make photocopies, and provide snacks for the children. Others felt that the school fees should be higher than they currently were so that we could “weed out” those who really had no interest in learning Vietnamese and who used us for cheap babysitting on Sunday afternoons. Some argued that they had three children and \$200 for each child for a year was too much. Others countered that those who complained about fees still paid for piano or hockey lessons. In my opinion, part of this conflict arose because while all Vietnamese community members share an interest in learning Vietnamese language and culture, members also come from *divergent religious, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds*. Despite great differences, Vietnamese members are expected to act in unison, share the same beliefs and have similar opinion on controversial topics. While the group never came to a consensus, we eventually came to a compromise of annual fees of \$125 per year.

Financial issues resurfaced when the school was allowed to run a Casino. As soon as we had a date set, some parents began talking about how we should no longer have to pay school fees. This dispute came to a head at a school board meeting. The end result were many angry red faces, people storming out of the room, and shouting so loud that it could be heard across the campus. One of the

parents chose to sit in the hallway instead of participating in the meeting. She said to me, “I’m so embarrassed. Everyone in the building is coming to see what’s happening and they are staring at me because I am Asian and they are shouting in Vietnamese.” I sympathized.

The issue was finally somewhat resolved when the president of the parents’ association pointed out that the casino was awarded to us so that we could continue to expand our cultural program and that we had to account for every single penny spent. It stated specifically in the Casino regulations that we could not use the money to pay for things that we were currently paying for, such as rent, insurance, and books. The money had to be spent on program expansion and had to purchase things that we were not likely to be able to otherwise afford such as a professionally-made dragon costume and traditional clothing. However, after the discussion, some angered parents in the school refused to participate in the running of the casino since they felt that their participation would not benefit their children directly.

Our school has many bills to pay and *few sources of potential revenue*. It seems that each funding opportunity comes directly from the pockets of the parents: ticket revenue for formal events, 50-50 draws, tuition, and donations. Even large fundraising events such as bingos and casinos are completely reliant on the

willingness of the parents to work them. Many of our parents, especially those with less fluent English, are working weekend jobs in order to make ends meet. With almost all of the funding coming directly from the pockets of the parents, it is logical that they want fiscal responsibility. However, I wish that Alberta Education had required us to create guidelines for dealing with finances rather than statements about sensitive issues as this would have assisted us in keeping our community at peace. Prokop (2009) also voiced some of these financial concerns in relation to German community HL schools in Alberta. He stated that while some schools received funding from the government, this funding stopped in 1996. Some schools were forced to quit as a result funding shortages.

I have always understood that money was a divisive issue in any culture, including my own. Yet in my teaching experience, money was always available when it came to matters of education. I realize now that I was also working within a certain socioeconomic status, which while prudent with public finances, were not limited by them. I also come from a culture that discloses financial decisions to community members as a way of self-protection and is also a way of demonstrating fiscal responsibility, public accountability, transparency, and good governance. I have come to understand that discussions of money are even more important in the

community HL school context because when over-spending happens, someone is held personally accountable for the tab. Mistrust of others when it comes to school finances never occurred to me, and *I never thought to be skeptical*. Perhaps I can better estimate the costs of school operations, including those that are “invisible” such as rent and disposables, since I have taught overseas.

What Are Our Academic Issues And How Is Our Curriculum Developed?

As demonstrated through our school mission statement, *our school community is heterogeneous by design*. So when designing materials for our school, many important theoretical considerations should be taken into account. Some factors that a curriculum developer needs to manage are age-appropriateness, linguistic capabilities, multilevel teaching, identity development in bicultural children, spiraled learning, choice of appropriate lexical items, grammar development, balance of the four skills, learning styles, instruction of language learning strategies, selection of appropriate topics, parental attitudes and expectations, teacher development needs, communicative competence, and student interests (Kondo-Brown, 2008). Despite all of these factors being extremely important, they all seem to take a back seat to practical socio-cultural issues. In other words, who borrowed my book and did not return it? Who will help me carry

in my two suitcases full of materials? Where can I get 50 copies of this worksheet printed before class starts?

Adopting materials. According to Brown (1995), materials can be adopted, adapted, or developed. However, in my experience, materials that can be readily adopted for this context do not exist. Our school initially used a textbook developed for a community HL school in a warmer climate with a much larger population of Vietnamese people. These books initially seemed appropriate because they taught the students to combine a consonant and a vowel at a time in a very traditional Vietnamese approach to reading to instruction. Once students master a basic vowel and consonant cluster, then it is pronounced in all of the tones. Then the students practice the new words in “known” phrases which are often Vietnamese proverbs. Unfortunately, our *students do not understand the vocabulary which draws heavily on the flora and fauna of a tropical country*, nor is it phonetically consistent, but worst is that it does not include low-frequency words. The students do not understand the words that they are “learning” since they are often removed from context and the children’s knowledge base. Furthermore, the books are filled with drills and our children do not like focusing on Vietnamese spelling for three hours at a time. The parents think that these books are boring for the children. The teachers

spend the majority of their class explaining expressions and do not enjoy using them, either. However, the teachers continue with them for various reasons. First of all, *they are available*. When the school acquired the rights to use them, it decided to print them in large quantities to reduce the cost of each individual book. Since multiple copies for each grade level are still available, they get passed out at the start of every school year, and will continue to be used until no more copies remain. Second, the teachers can understand how to use them. Many of our teachers are volunteers who lack professional training (foreign or Canadian) and do not have extra time or knowledge to prepare lessons. These teachers often arrive with their children and leave with them. *They need a textbook to guide them in their practice*. Third, this book most likely *resembles how they learned to read*. Yet, our students already know how to read in English and require contrastive-phonics and meaning-focused reading instruction instead of learning about each individual sound. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, *there seems to be little community awareness of alternative approaches to literacy development* among instructors or parents.

Adapting materials from Vietnam. One of the factors that I did not consider when bringing materials back from Vietnam was what I call the “*Communist Agenda*”. Some of the materials that I had contained references to communism that

some of our community consider offensive. I expected that our community would not appreciate images of national war heroes or discussions about the economy. I did not expect members of our community to be offended at images of the new flag or at the national anthem. As a second language speaker and someone who prides herself on avoiding all discussions of economy and world politics, things that I found innocuous were offensive to others. For example, a game I thought that would be excellent for teaching reading involved children traveling around the world and returning to Vietnam. The players would roll the dice, and according to the number rolled, would move to a new country. Since the children would have to read the names of the countries in Vietnamese and match them to the new flag in order to move to the next space, I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for learning Vietnamese pronunciation. Since the context was clear and it was relatively cognitively undemanding, I assumed that the children would learn a lot from it. Unfortunately, the children had to travel to and from Vietnam and it was represented by the post-war flag. I could not use the game in the school without modifying it since the game used Vietnam's modern flag with the five-pointed star. It is important to note that while some immigrant groups have chosen to come to Canada to seek financial or educational opportunities, others have come because their

values are incongruent with those of the land that they were born in. For those immigrants in the latter group, sourcing appropriate materials from the first country may be especially challenging.

Since the game was essentially a large sheet of thin coloured paper, I wanted to have an extra copy before modifying it in case I was not happy with the results. I took it to a local office supplies store to photocopy it. The shape of the paper was a non-standard North American size so I asked the young clerk to help me. She immediately informed me that I was breaking photocopy law. I pointed out the price of the game which was 6,000 Vietnamese Dong or roughly 30 cents. I very gently explained that if I were able to afford a plane ticket in order to buy another copy of the game, I wouldn't be spending three dollars trying to photocopy something worth 30 cents. I ended up by going to another store where the adolescent service staff were less rule-enforcing and more humanistic. While this appears to be a humorous anecdote (although it did not seem so at the time), it highlights how there are cultural differences and norms in terms of copyright legislation, but also, that access to materials is not as easy as just purchasing something from a store. *Materials development in a community HL school requires an added layer of planning and complication that does not exist in weekday schools.*

Choosing materials with appropriate vocabulary is the most challenging aspect of materials development. As seen above, our children are not aware of many of the words traditionally used in phonics instruction. Furthermore, some of the words that do not exist in Vietnamese are things that are part of the children's reality and they want to be able to name them. For example, last year, we were making Christmas cards for parents. When doing this activity, students label the pictures that we draw in order to sound out words. In preparation, I asked the parents what we called candy canes. After some discussion, we decided to call them *keo nô-en* (literally: candy Noël). For another activity, we were drawing things that were cold and labeling them. One of the students wanted to draw an igloo. I asked to make sure that it was okay to call it a *nhà tuyết* or snow house. Interestingly, I learned that a snow house is a Vietnamese euphemism for prison. The parents chose to call it an ice house instead. When discussing problematic vocabulary, sometimes there are words with no associations like those found in the phonics books, but sometimes there are associations with no words like candy canes and igloos.

Using a picture dictionary from Vietnam, I asked students to copy out the written form of the numbers so that they could learn how to spell them. This activity, I believed supported my instructional theory that these students needed to learn how

to spell words that they know, rather than unfamiliar, phonetically-consistent words. From this book, I wrote the number *xe-rô* (zero) on the board and asked the students to copy it. Some parents came in at break time and corrected me. They told me that this word was spelled *ze-rô*. I showed them what I found in the book and explained that there was no letter z in Vietnamese; therefore it must be spelled this way. They disliked this modern spelling and changed the word to *số không* which is literally translated as the number naught. I know that in many of these books the English words are poorly translated, but I expected the Vietnamese words to be correct. Maybe this is a linguistic adaptation that Vietnamese people make within Vietnam, but the Canadian-Vietnamese prefer to keep the older language. Issues of language and vocabulary planning are essential for communities (Hornberger, 2006).

Adapting materials from Canada. Typically when using materials from here, they are English books translated into Vietnamese. By fortunate coincidence, I came across an award winning series that shows the lives of children in various countries around the world doing typical “child things” at the public library. Although the video was in English, it showed Vietnamese children attending Vietnamese schools, swimming pools, and piano lessons. I decided that the students would learn about Vietnam from watching this video. However, one unexpected

response *was a father who started crying!* He said he just had a sudden memory of playing among the banana plants along the river and just could not help himself. It took him back to warm thoughts of childhood. As educators, we need to make sure that we create positive images. In fact, moments like this one are what help our students to understand their parents. However, short of a few travel guides, these materials are difficult to find.

Even when you can easily buy ready-made materials, purchasing them is also not without obstacles. I once found a game at a discount department store that was marked down to four dollars. It was called *The Manners Game*. The children had to take turns asking each other to pass a picnic basket in order to collect items for their picnic. They had to ask politely, and say please and thank-you. The reviews of the game that I found on-line stated that it was only interesting for one or two uses because it simply was not stimulating enough for long-term play. They also said it was excellent for children with autism or other behavioural issues since it was designed to promote polite formulaic language. The price was right so I bought it knowing the flaws. I asked one of the parents to translate the game for me into Vietnamese since I thought it would be a perfect teaching tool. This simple game turned out to be far more complicated than I thought. *In Vietnamese, part of*

politeness means selecting the proper respectful pronoun whereas in English it means adding the words please and thank-you. Since the children are playing with parents and fellow students, the pronouns change depending on the relationship that the speaker has with the listener. The game in Vietnamese was not formulaic at all and in fact, was quite complicated. And while an understanding of pronouns is one of the linguistic goals parents hold for their children, there is simply no way that it can be introduced to Vietnamese students by drawing food tokens from a picnic basket.

So one year for Christmas, I conducted an internet search to buy some new books for my daughter. I was able to get a few new choices that were at the “just right” level. Since both my daughter and I are bibliophiles, I did not mind the expense of having books sent from the United States. Some of these translated English titles included “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”, “The Wheels on the Bus”, and “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”. My daughter enjoyed reading them and was willing to share them with her fellow classmates.

One of the greatest advantages of using these materials is that the children enjoy them since they are familiar with them in English. For the teacher, they come with an extra added benefit; multiple supplementary resources are also available. I

purchased two ready-made games for each of these books from game stores or local teachers' stores. Since these games are intended for use in Canadian schools with Canadian children, they are made to be durable, unlike Vietnamese materials which are made to be disposable and affordable. They are also made for non-reading children, so there is little print in English to translate. These games also target skills other than reading such as counting, naming the days of the week, or organizing. Teachers can also buy other teacher guides, resource plans, thematic stickers, and photocopiable worksheets which can be translated. *Having a wide range of supporting materials, in addition to the books, allows for easy lessons since everything is available at my fingertips.* The downfall of these materials, other than cost and effort to translate supplementary materials, is that they are very Eurocentric. If I could readily buy Vietnamese thematic units, I would gladly. While using these translated stories, I may be teaching students some Vietnamese words, but I feel I am also passing a not-so-nice, subtle message: English stories are better than Vietnamese ones.

I often scour teacher websites for Chinese craft ideas. Many of the cultural items are similar. For example, my class has made crafts such dragon masks and lucky red envelopes for New Year Celebrations (*Adoption Today & Fostering*

Families Today Magazine, n.d.). We play some Ni Hao Kai Lan games which include one with a dragon boat and with matching vocabulary items. The children know that Kai Lan is Chinese, but at least some of the cultural items are similar and some of the children are actually Vietnamese-Chinese-Canadian. Another web-source where I often find teaching ideas are on Vietnamese adoption websites (Dodd, n.d.). International adoptive parents are often looking for ways to promote their child's birth culture, albeit often in superficial ways. These websites often include simple bonding activities that can be done to teach about cultural elements. One of the activities I developed from an adoptive website involved examining proverbs from Vietnam and comparing them with proverbs in English. In another example, I had students create dragon masks for the New Year festival.

Self-developed materials. One of my best units began when I found Vietnamese books on the senses in the Edmonton Public Library. There were four books for taste, hearing, touch, and sight. We read one book each class and discussed it. In one of the centers, I had children cut out pictures of food from weekly flyers that represented bitter, sour, salty, and sweet. As they found a picture, they stuck it on the appropriate large poster board and labeled it. In addition, we learned the traditional song *Head and Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* and a song I

wrote *Cà Phê Ném Đắng* (Coffee tastes bitter). We also conducted blindfolded taste-testing, played with flashcards, and listed favorite foods. We wrote shopping list of snacks and had a class party. Our posters of bitter, sour, salty, and sweet were placed on display at our celebration of learning. We also sang our new songs. I know with certainty that every child in that class, including those most proficient in Vietnamese, acquired new vocabulary. This was reaffirmed by some of the parents as well.

I have found that my younger students absolutely love making their own booklets to take home and read to their parents. For a unit on space, the children created booklets about colours. The children placed a single scented happy-face sticker on each page and wrote out the name of the colour. They took their booklets home and read them to their parents or siblings. Another booklet that the children enjoyed making was about emotion words. We started to draw different kinds of emotive faces and then listed the emotions underneath the picture. When we started doing this, I soon realized that in order to teach the children how to draw the faces, I needed to learn the names of the shapes. I quickly got practice in using expressions like make a big circle for the face, use a small triangle for the nose. The children probably learned more about how to draw and how to describe shapes than they did

about expressions, but they still had fun and gained some important vocabulary. They also practiced sounding out new words with each picture. When one of the children misplaced her booklet, she cried. Luckily it was recovered without having to make a new one. It was a sign to me that it was a great activity and that the children were very proud of their work.

Creating materials is a very labour-intensive job. Many of the ideas that I have suggested have come from non-traditional sources or are everyday materials used in non-traditional ways. This form of materials creation is extremely challenging for some teachers who have been trained to think of school as completing a prescribed curriculum with a mandated textbook. They are left to prepare lessons without the benefit of guidance or expertise in the form of a state mandated curriculum. While Canadian teachers may be more adept at teaching in this fashion, they have the added supports such as computer skills, storage space, and school supplies. Since we rent space in a university building, we are required to bring everything we need and take it with us when we leave. Due to our lack of storage, we also are without a professional library, a collection of newspapers and magazines to cut up, ready-made games, arts and crafts materials, class sets of books, and sports equipment. Even our coffee pot needs to be dragged in weekly.

Again, it seems to me as if we must adapt to doing things in the mainstream “Canadian” way without the benefits that are afforded to mainstream “Canadian” teachers. This challenge makes long-term school improvement almost impossible.

When I reflect on challenges that I have had with curriculum and materials, it becomes apparent to me that I am able to compartmentalize language instruction and cultural/values transmission. I have become aware of my bias toward the language instruction as a goal of the mind, and not one of the heart. This became evident when I reflected on the dad crying at the video. I was caught off guard that he had an emotional response to a video of a child attending school. For me, the video was informational and not particularly noteworthy, but for the father it was his childhood and it was his memory of happier times.

As a result of this dualism of language and culture, I tend to stick with what I know which is language education. I have been focused on sourcing tools to help me teach and a theory to best transmit heritage language instruction to a group of multileveled learners. In line of staying with the familiar, I have been trying to collect tools to teach “The Canadian Way.” Much of my frustration has been that I want to do things in the manner I am accustomed, but yet I do not have the resources to make that happen.

What Conclusions Can Be Made?

Throughout this chapter, I have identified some of the salient challenges within the Vietnamese community HL school. These are:

- Understanding our population
- Developing school policies
- Communicating with each other effectively
- Negotiating finances
- Creating curriculum
- Identifying our community values

My goal was to understand my personal biases in community HL development and to answer my research question of “What awakenings have I had into the issues of school development as faced by a minority language community?” Throughout the reflection, and indeed this research project, I have come to understand that like the parents who attempt to teach what they know, I have been doing the same- I just happen to know different things. I have been trying to approach school development from an academic perspective and have been looking for a formula to make it happen. However, these institutions have different goals than K-12 schools (where my experience lies); they are for teaching language AND

culture. Yet, I have not focused on the teaching of culture at all.

Community HL schools may be attended by the same language group, but that in no way makes them homogeneous. Even if the schools operate independently, there are times when they must interact with the larger Canadian institutions. In our school's case, there have been two: the AGLC (for casino funding) and Alberta Education (for the ability to award high school credits). Both of these events have caused discord. However, dealing with Alberta Education has been my only experience of what I feel has been majority privilege. Through this experience I am beginning to understand that navigating a system requires an explicit kind of knowledge, and many in community HL schools do not have access to it. Our school principal held two university degrees, including one from Canada, had two decades of professional teaching experience in the public school system in Canada, and had spent many years working with curriculum documents. Yet, she still found that she was not able to navigate the Alberta Education system without other additional competencies and supports. Working with Alberta Education required a special habitus to which she was not privileged.

Feuerverger (1997) attributes lack of success in community HL schools to the programs' marginalization and lack of respect. Mercurio-Berrafati (2010) also

reported that heritage language instructors operating in an Italian as a HL after-school program in Ontario struggled to be recognized as professionals by regular school teachers, parents, and students. These teachers were not allotted physical space for teaching, they had to perform extra secretarial and supervisory duties, and they were obliged to develop multilevel classes for students who perhaps would or would not attend. Parents tended to treat the program as a free babysitting service rather than a HL course and students at times expressed that they had no real intention of learning Italian. Both Feuerverger and Mercurio-Berrafati state that schools are marginalized and suffer from a lack of respect. In my experience that has also been true. Yet, I wonder, if they are not judging their school's efficacy against the wrong criteria? Perhaps rather than respect from mainstream educators, the criteria should be the impact they make in the development in the identity of their students. Perhaps they forget that as instructors they are providing learners with a base for lifelong learning opportunities, the ability to connect intergenerationally, and occasions to perform and develop artistic skills.

What is equally interesting to me in this personal reflection is that I only spoke of my role as an educator. I never once mentioned my role as a parent, yet my daughter is my sole impetus for participating in the school. I brought her to the

school with some hope (but little expectation) that she would learn Vietnamese. I wanted her to make friends, participate in cultural events, and maybe become aware of a few fairy tales or other traditional stories. Every single goal I had for my daughter has been met.

What Research Is Still Needed?

Although some community HL schools have been in operation for many decades, much of the knowledge of these schools remains undocumented and is located within the people/schools themselves (Prokop, 2009). At times, the population within the schools can be transient and when people move on, the knowledge they have is lost. Yet, Canada is currently experiencing a period of unprecedented immigration and the majority of these new Canadians are non-majority language speakers. In fact, 2005 statistics claim that one in five young Albertans in the school system are classified as English as a second language learners (Howard Research & Management Consulting, 2006). These groups of non-English speaking Canadians strongly need the guidance and expertise of those who have come before them. While addressing the operational and curricular concerns of these schools is of the utmost importance, so is furthering our understanding of the historical influences under which these schools have been

shaped and the broader context under which these schools are currently operating.

We currently do not have sufficient research to understand how larger systems such as the Ministry of Education or financing through public policy have influenced and continue to influence the education of these children.

From this deep reflection on my experiences with community HL education, I recognize the complexity in understanding HL community schools as well as some of the biases with which I approach my research topic and my passion for the area. The quality of HL education is influenced by many factors: the school community (leaders, parents, teachers, students, and community members); access to governmental policies, resources, and funding; as well as the physical location of the schools, timetabling, and establishment of the community. While each factor can be broken down into smaller components (to name a few: teacher satisfaction is the result of training, experience, attitude, personal gratification, and pay), it is also affected by government policies which require or do not require training and funding which makes it possible. Some of this complexity is highlighted in Figure 1 (Bilash, 2005).

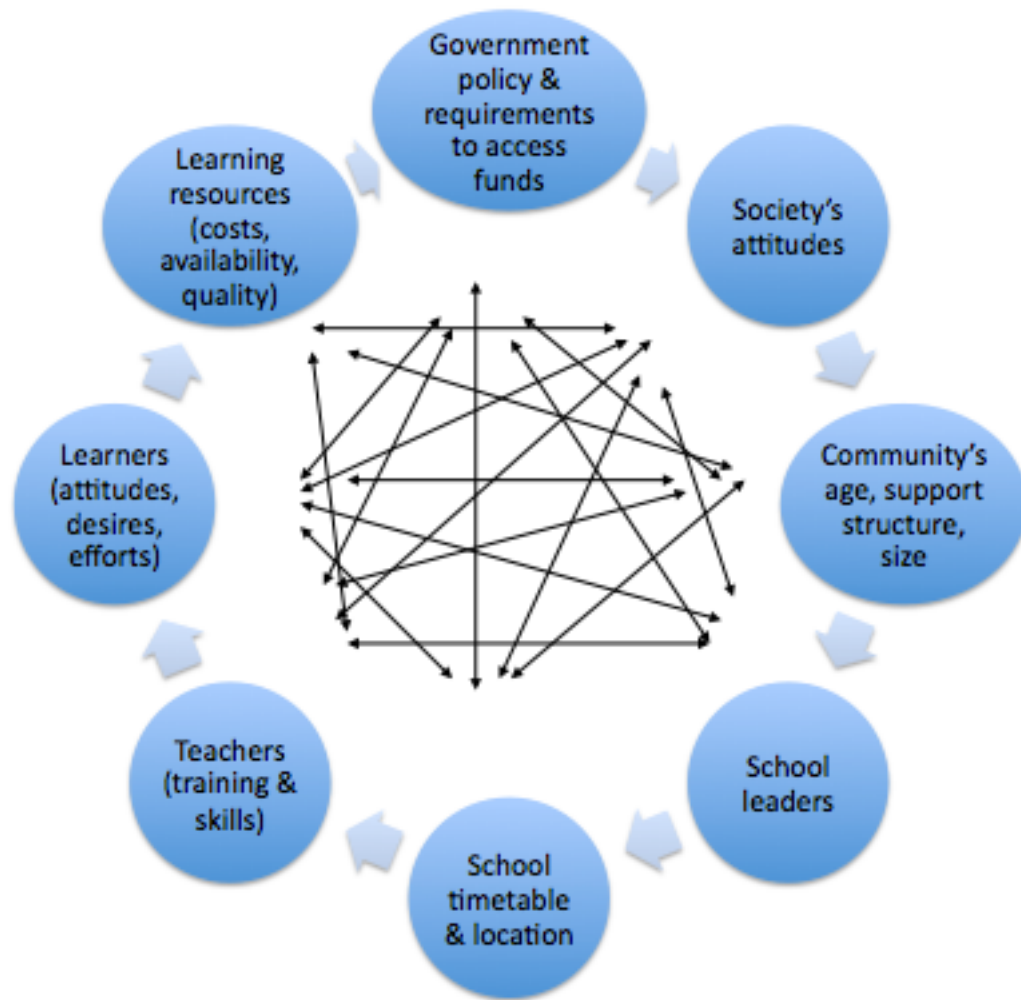


Figure 1.1 The complexity of HL education

This chapter has also helped me to both discover and disclose some of my biases: a focus on language development at the expense of culture, a language learning approach which favors the use of multiple materials, and a partial understanding of community norms. I have also been approaching these schools from a detached perspective rather than an emotive one. The puzzle of HL schools and communities is far from being solved and my passion to understand them is

even stronger. Thus, my proposed research project will examine community HL schools in relation to Canadian society, government policy, curriculum development, day-to-day operations, heritage language communities, and individuals.

There is sparse literature on the benefits of HL schools. However, my personal experience, coupled with the knowledge that HL schools have existed for over 100 years (Granic, 2009; Lupul, 2005; Prokop, 2009), lead me to believe that these schools have a great deal to offer students, communities, and the wider Canadian society. Thus, I will explore these three research questions:

1. 1. What characteristics do HL school leaders and HL elders believe
HL students and HL teachers have?
2. According to community HL school leaders and community HL
elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And how have
they aided the development and visibility of the communities in
Alberta?
3. According to community HL school leaders and community HL school
elders, how have government policies shaped community HL schools?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter I I located or situated myself. Through a reflexive analysis of my experiences, I came to understand which research questions were most important for me to answer and reveal my own positioning. I also introduced the reader to some of the research literature written about HL education, in particular the early history of heritage language education in Canada, definitions of community heritage language schools and learners, and issues that are faced by families learning these languages. In this chapter, I will provide a rationale for the study, present a literature review of definitions of HL learners and community schools for HL learners, and introduce the theoretical lenses through which I will explore the issue of heritage language education—Hornberger’s (2005) Language Policy and Planning framework and Bronfenbrenner’s (1975) Ecological Systems Theory.

Canada as World Language Leaders

Canadians researchers have been and continue to be world leaders in language research. It would be impossible to describe in a paragraph how Canadian researchers have added to the world’s understanding of language learning. Wallace Lambert contributed to the understanding of content-based language learning (as well as in other areas) through the development of the world’s first French

Immersion school in 1965. Merrill Swain developed the pushed output hypothesis in 1980 which expanded the understanding of the role of “output” or speaking in language learning. Jim Cummins created the terms Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Performance (CALP); two concepts which demonstrate how children can appear to be fluent language users, yet at the same time be unable to succeed in school. Fred Genessee is recognized as a world leader in the study of bilingualism. Nina Spada and Maria Frolich developed the *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observational Scheme*. This tool was paramount in the assessment of communicative language teaching and created an ability to quantify social interaction. This list is not only far from exhaustive, it is microscopic. However, what these world-leading Canadian scholars have in common is a research agenda which investigates language learning from the perspective of learning English or French, not only Canada’s two official languages, but two colonial *lingua francas*.

Canada has had a long history of growing its population through immigration. However, numbers of new Canadians through immigration are growing at rates faster than before. Currently, Canada’s growth rate of 5.9% is the fastest among all G8 countries (Boswell, 2012) and her population is now over 33.5

million. The province of Alberta has been leading this growth at a rate of 10.8% since 2006. In fact, 11% of Albertans considered themselves visible minorities (Lund, 2006). For the first time in the history of Canada, the population increase due to immigration in the Western provinces has outnumbered that in the Eastern provinces. Globalization is creating a demographic shift which has political, economic, and social significances (Kiernan, 2011; MacPherson & Ghoso, 2008).

Currently, one in five students in the province of Alberta is considered an English as a second language learner (Howard Research & Management Consulting, 2006). This number implies that at least 20% of the children in this province speak a heritage language, and this number does not include English as a second language students who are not coded. In Alberta some school boards offer bilingual programs in certain languages other than English (Cummins, 1992). In fact, the Edmonton Public School Board boasts that it offers eight bilingual programs and 11 second language courses (Speck, 2008). Although this appears like a wide array of choices, there are approximately 7,000 languages worldwide and only over 200 ethnic groups in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006), including 34 ethnic groups who have over 100,000 members in each group (Statistics Canada, 2006). For students, especially those from smaller language communities such as Vietnamese or

Albanian who wish to receive formal instruction in their language must attend community heritage language (HL) programs which happen outside of regular school hours. In these programs, students often take language and culture classes for two to four hours each week. Although some of these programs have been in operation for many decades, very little is currently documented about how they function in Alberta.

Heritage Language Learners

The official Canadian definition of a heritage language is one which is not an official language (English or French) or an aboriginal language (Cummins, 1992; Duff, 2008; Lowe, 2005). One could mistakenly assume that a heritage language learner is someone learning one of these non-official or non-aboriginal languages; however, the situation is much more complex. Heritage language learners are positioned between the dichotomous definitions of native speakers and second language learners. Although the terms native speaker and second language learners are ubiquitous in applied linguistics, they are very slippery to define (Han, 2004). Han (2004) provides six characteristics which describe the *ideal* native speaker (considering many who only speak one language may struggle to meet this definition), with second language speakers being those who do not meet the

following criteria:

1. The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.
2. The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar
3. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2 which are distinct from his/her Grammar
4. The native speaker has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries (the 'one clause at a time' facility) and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items (Pawley and Snyder, 1983). In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.
5. The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, that s/he is literate at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels).
6. The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker.

Yet, definitions are exceptionally important when studying heritage language learners because they limit who is included into membership of the group (Montrul, 2010). Bale (2010) has captured some of this complexity by listing many of the terms which have been used in the past to describe the languages used by heritage language learners (HLLs): “aboriginal, ancestral, autochthonous, (ex-)colonial, community, critical, diasporic, endoglossic, ethnic, foreign, geopolitical, home, immigrant, indigenous, language other than English, local, migrant, minority, mother tongue, refugee, regional, and strategic” (p. 43). Bale furthered that definitions of heritage language learners are generally broken into two basic categories: proficiency-based and affiliation-based.

The main conceptualization guiding proficiency-based definitions is that heritage language learners are fundamentally different from native-speakers who are raised in a community of speakers of that language and from second-language learners who have had a different language since birth, and linguists who employ this definition search to find out the intergroup differences and the causes of them. Valdes’ (2005) oft-cited definition includes, “someone who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in the home language and in English.”

Kondo-Brown's (2010) definition comprises "those who have acquired some competence in a non-dominant language as their first language (L1) mainly through socialization at home, but did not achieve full control over it due to a switch to the dominant language (p. 24). She furthered her definition by explaining that there are three main reasons why heritage language learners vary in their language proficiency: diverse L1 backgrounds, use and contact with the language, and sociopsychological factors. Montrul (2010) listed research which has shown that those who learn heritage languages in the home before they enter school where they do not formally learn this language differ in "vocabulary, morphosyntax (case, verbal and nominal agreement, tense, aspect, and mood), pronominal reference, article semantics, word order, relative clauses, and conjunctions, among many others" (p. 5). Montrul also noted that the interlanguage development of these speakers shows the same processes of simplification that occurs in language contact situations.

A much more inclusive definition of heritage language learners defines them as those who have a cultural or historic relationship with the language and culture, and as a result differ from second language learners in terms of goals, motivation, attitude, and cultural knowledge rather than specific linguistic abilities. Lee and

Shin (2008) defined Korean heritage language learners as “those who have an ethnolinguistic affiliation to the Korean heritage, but may have a broad range of proficiency from high to none in Korean oral or literacy skills” (p. 2) and argued that this kind of definition is more representative of the diversity of the student body that is found in a community HL school. They listed those who attended community HL school members as “goose families” (parents who go overseas for their children’s education with the intent of returning to Korea), permanent immigrants, adopted children, mixed heritage children, and third and fourth generation. Two examples of how heritage language learners are similar despite linguistic proficiency are found at the university level. Noels (2005) investigated university learners of German in a first year basic-proficiency class and found differences between heritage language learners and second language learners. Students with a heritage affiliation had greater contact with the community, spoke the language more outside of class, self-reported their proficiency as better, and had established plans for continuing study. Comanaru and Noels (2009) studied Chinese learners in university classes found little motivational differences between subgroups of heritage language learners based on linguistic proficiency (advanced heritage language learners and beginner heritage language learners), but both high and low

proficiency groups differed from second language learners when asked about their motivation for studying Chinese. Understanding differences in motivation is key for responsive university instructors who strive to develop courses which meet learners' individual learning goals. Unfortunately, little is yet known about heritage language learning motivation in younger learners.

Some scholars prefer not to use the term heritage languages because they feel that this term is equated with the past, and they feel that international language better represents this population's outlook towards the future (Cummins, 1992; Duff, 2008; Lowe, 2005; Taveres, 2000). Taveres (2000) documented how languages once described as foreign, evolved into heritage languages, and then came to be known as international. He linked this evolution to multiculturalism and educational policy. He showed how the term heritage languages resulted due to pressure from groups within Canada to acknowledge their presence and their contribution to Canada's development. The term international languages, he demonstrated, resulted from pressure from the Alberta contributors to the Western Canadian Protocol who wanted to see a greater emphasis on career and economy and a lesser emphasis on cultural maintenance. Taveres argued that the current conceptualization of multicultural education is linked to citizenship education.

Community Heritage Language (HL) Schools

Community HL schools are defined as schools which teach primarily language/culture to learners who identify personally with this language/culture (as opposed to second language learning), which are organized and supported by the heritage language community, which are supported financially through fundraising, and which operate independently from the school boards, and which take place outside of regular school hours.

Hornberger's (2005) Language Policy and Planning

Governments around the world create language policies which impact their citizens both positively and negatively, and the federal and provincial governments in Canada are no exception. A small sampling of Canadian language policies include the right to have service in both English and French in federal government offices under the Official Languages Act (Jedwab, 2003), adult language proficiency requirements for Canadian citizenship (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/language.asp>), federal funding for English and French language programs for permanent residents (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>), and funding for ESL classes for children in K-12 (Howard Research & Management Consulting, 2006).

In fact, language rights are so essential to our identity as Canadians that they are even part of Canada's highest laws—the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Jedwab, 2003). It is important to note that only English and French rights which have official status federally are guaranteed throughout Canada and Inuktitut is only official in the Territory of Nunavut (Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, 2009). In other words, in Canada there are only three official languages and only two are guaranteed under the federal constitution.

When working to protect a language, such as French in Canada, many elements of planning need to be considered. Decisions need to be made about the language's status, its users, and its standardization. For example a government can make a language official, teach it in local schools and create tools for the language such as dictionaries. These types of language policies focus on the form of a particular language. Likewise the government can write policy which focuses on creating intergenerational communication between speakers, help speakers who no longer use the language to reacquire it, develop new words for technologies which might not exist in the language. These types of policies focus on the function of a particular language. Hornberger's (2005) *Table 2.1* demonstrates the multitude of considerations that are needed when planning for the development and

enhancement of a language. Hornberger cautions, however, that language planning and policy development works best when several areas are developed in tandem. In other words, making a language official, but not planning to teach it to anyone does little. Likewise, trying to revive a language, but not taking into consideration the words that modern people need to use to talk about their lives, is not as effective as working on both goals simultaneously.

Table 2.1 Language policy and planning goals: an integrative framework. (*Note.* From Hornberger, 2005, p. 29).

Types	Policy planning approach (on form)	Cultivation planning approach (on function)
Status planning (about uses of language)	Officialization Nationalization Standardization of status Proscription	Revival Maintenance Spread Interlingual communication-

		International, Intranational
Acquisition planning (about users of language)	Group Education/School Literary Religious Mass media Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Shift Foreign language/second language/literacy
	<u>Selection</u> Language's formal role in society Extra-linguistic aims	<u>Implementation</u> Language's functional role in society Extra-linguistic aims
Corpus planning (about language)	Standardization of corpus Standardization of auxiliary code Graphization	Modernization (new functions) Lexical Stylistic Renovation (new forms,

		old functions) Purification Reform Stylistic simplification Terminology unification
	<u>Codification</u> Language's form <i>Linguistic aims</i>	<u>Elaboration</u> Language's functions' <i>Semi-linguistic aims</i>

While many languages are becoming extinct throughout the world, language revival has demonstrated that policy and planning can not only help protect endangered languages, but can promote their proliferation. Policy can impact a language's chance of survival, even when it is weaker and has less political and economic power than other languages around it as it has done in Quebec (Fishman, 1991). However, Hornberger (1999) has demonstrated that multiple levels of actors intervene between the politicians and lawyers who create the laws and the language policy and the individuals who choose to enforce (or not) and act out those policies at a personal level. She calls not only for a study of formal legal documents such as

the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but for ethnographic studies of those who interpret the laws locally. She refers to the ethnographic interpretation and analysis of language policy as similar to an unpeeling of the layers of an onion (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). This metaphorical onion is shown in Figure 2.1.

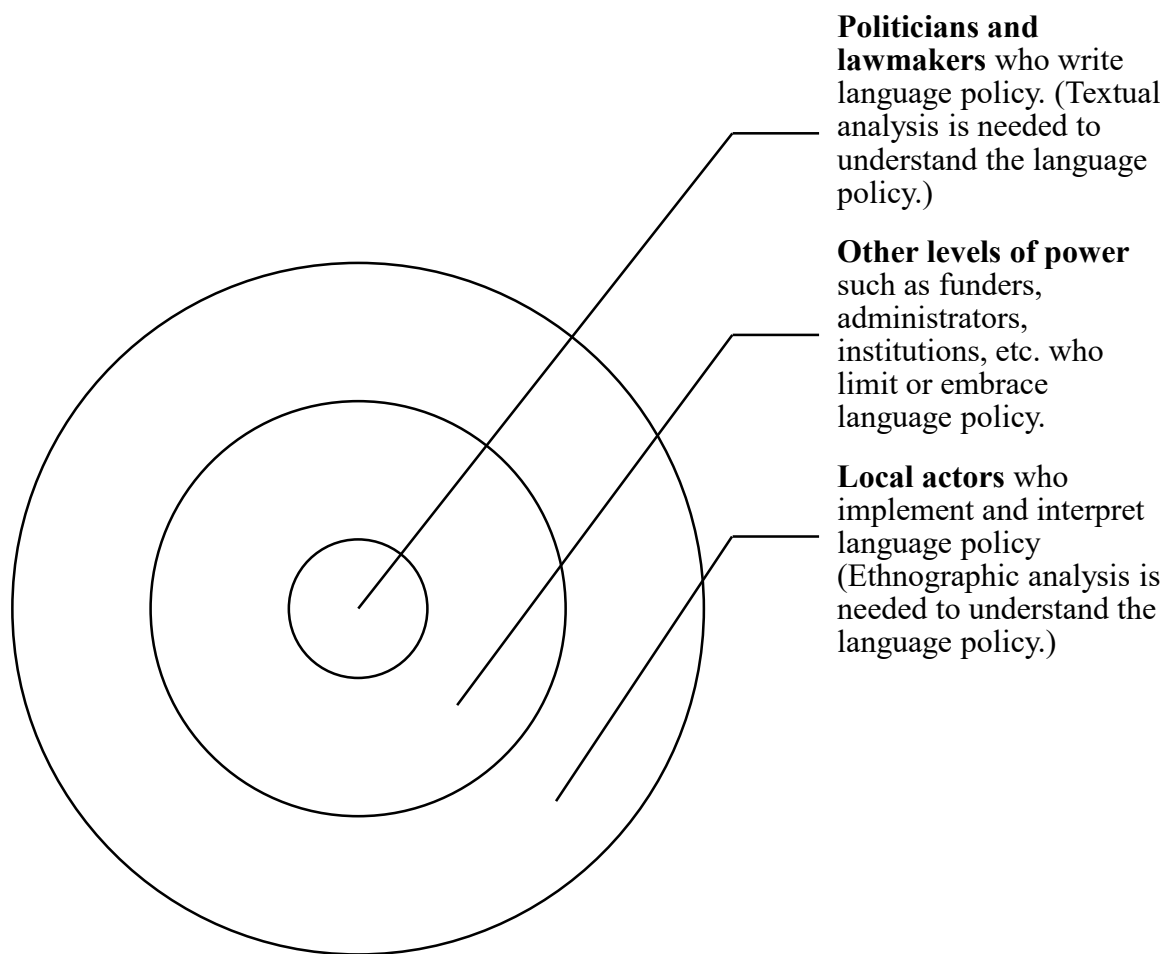


Figure 2.1. A visual representation of Hornberger's Metaphorical Onion of Language Policy.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1977) examines the development of a person from multiple angles. According to his Ecological Systems Theory, an individual does not develop individually, but rather with people who are close to him or her. It thus belongs to sociocultural theory. Bronfenbrenner calls the development of a person in close proximity to others the *microsystem*. The developing person and those with him or her interact in certain specific environments. Bronfenbrenner calls this layer of analysis the *mesosystem*. Still these environments are shaped by societal advantages or limitations which are beyond a single individual's control. Some of these might be laws, policies, or funding. According to Bronfenbrenner, how a policy at a textual level impacts an individual is the study of the *exosystem*. Further, an individual is shaped by general forces within society. Bronfenbrenner refers to general societal attitudes as the *macrosystem*. A visual representation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is in *Figure 2.2*.

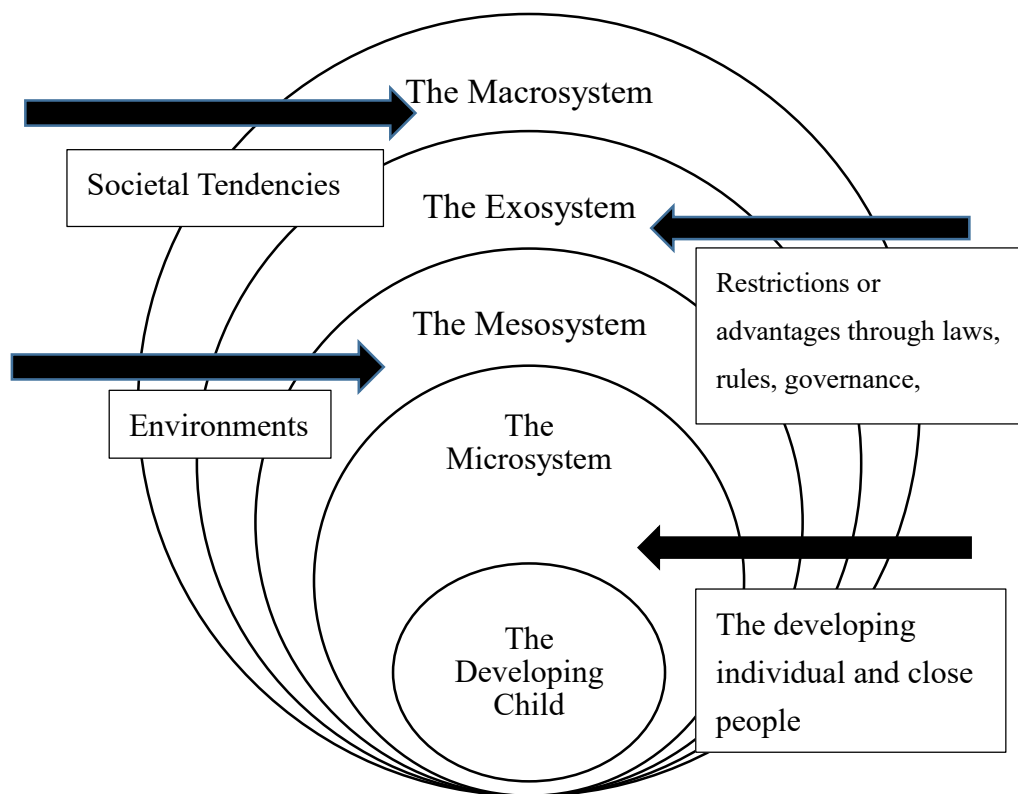


Figure 2.2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Those who use Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to analyze the development of a child from multiple angles according to personal relationships, immediate environment, legislation and societal forces can also use it to examine heritage language learners and the systems of obstacles and supports that they experience. Rather than study fluency or proficiency in a heritage language learner, I can examine a learner's relationships with those with whom the learner

communicates (family members, teachers, & peers), the environments in which they communicate (home, school, & community), language policies (Canadian multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, Albertan policy on multiculturalism, & Albertan curriculum development), and societal attitudes towards bilingualism (international organizations which fight to protect against language loss: UN, UNESCO, Linguapax and others). The remainder of this literature review interprets language learning in these contexts and finds gaps in existing literature specific to the Albertan context. Figure 2.3 shows a visual representation of an Albertan HL learner.

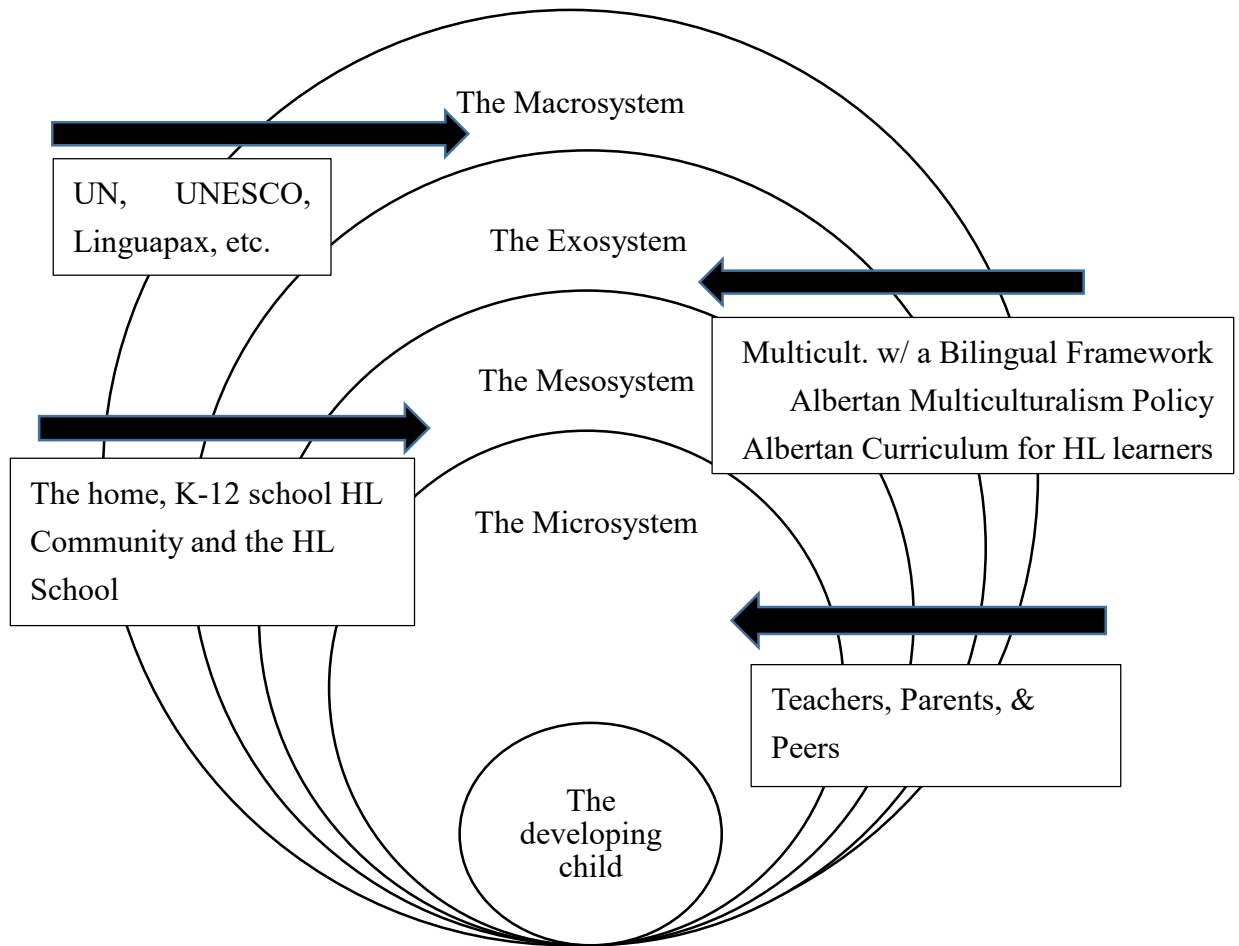


Figure 2.3. An Ecological Systems Theory Interpretation of an Albertan Heritage Language Learner.

The Microsystem

At the center of the Ecological Systems Theory model is the developing person and those who interact with him. Bronfenbrenner (1977) referred to the center of the circle as the microsystem and defined it as “the complex of relations between the developing and environment that contains that person” (p. 514). In this section, I identify current literature which examines the HL student, his or her

family, HL teachers, and peers.

Teachers. In the American context, Li (2005) investigated instructors in the Chinese community heritage language school. He found that their teachers were often parent volunteers who attended to meet their own as well as their children's social needs. These parents often had no pedagogical training and they attempted to use the instructional methods that they experienced as students in China which included repetitive drills and memorization of texts. Schools often faced teacher shortages and high turn-over. In response to community HL teachers being untrained parents with little pedagogical or linguistic knowledge, many researchers have repeatedly noted the need for increased professional development for community HL teachers (Duff, 2008; Kondo-Brown, 2008; Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2008; Lee & Bang, 2011; Lee & Shin, 2008; Li, 2005; McGinnis, 2008).

To my knowledge, there has been no Canadian study which specifically examines the identity of Canadian heritage language leaders, their professional knowledge, and their goals in deciding to participate in community HL schools. And while there is no reason to believe that the description of community HL school teachers is not similar to the one painted by Li's (2005) study (Duff, 2008), there is also no reason to believe that the Canadian situation is not markedly different. Some

Canadian ethnic communities have a long-standing history of educating their children in their heritage language and culture. One such example is Bozidar Vidov (Granic, 2009) who founded Croatian heritage language schools in Toronto and created teaching materials which have been used throughout the diaspora. Additionally, Prokop (2009) reported that German instructors in community HL schools in Alberta required professional qualifications from Canada or Germany, and of the 14 teachers who were employed by the school in 2008, nine had or had almost completed their credentials. Furthermore, the Japanese community also values professional qualifications and has a national organization dedicated to the instruction of Heritage Languages. This organization, The Canadian Association for Japanese Language Education (CAJLE), also publishes a professional journal called *Journal CAJLE* which is dedicated to Japanese instruction in Canada.

Yet, teachers in community HL programs have a long-standing history of support in Alberta. A professional organization called International Heritage Language Association exists to support schools and programs. Their mandate includes advocacy for promoting and supporting heritage language instruction, cultural events, technological support, maintaining membership, professional workshops for teachers, and professional standards.

Parents. Research has consistently demonstrated that parental attitudes towards heritage language maintenance affect heritage language learning and that parents are actors in their children's heritage language development (De Capua & Wintergerst, 2009; Guardado, 2002; Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Tse, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Wong-Fillmore (1991) described how parents became aware over time that their children's language loss was not simply a decision to use another language, but rather something that occurred increasingly without understanding what was happening until it was too late to change. Slowly, English became the language of the household and children lost all but rudimentary ability to understand. Since parents were often limited in their ability to speak fluent English and the children were often unable to understand complex ideas in their heritage language, parents also lost the ability to transmit values and culture to their children and to interact with them in deep and meaningful ways. Wong-Fillmore states:

Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be. When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the

intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings. (p. 343).

Studying language loss is essential from theoretical and moral positions. Yet, it is important to study language maintenance from successful case studies (Fishman, 2002). Guardado (2002) studied heritage language maintenance by comparing four families: two who were able to keep Spanish in the home and two who were struggling with subtractive bilingualism. Although all parents believed that bilingualism would be beneficial for the children in the future, not all were able to raise their children to use two languages. He found certain factors which separated the families who were successful in language maintenance from those who were not. Successful families promoted culture in addition to language (popular music, children's chants and games), believed in the bilingual abilities of their children, encouraged (rather than demanded) that their children use their heritage language, taught their children how to read, and realized that language learning at home was insufficient. Interestingly, Guardado pointed out that having bilingual friends did not encourage the children to speak their heritage language since the children only chose to speak English among themselves. His findings were similar to De Capua and Wintergerst (2009) who found that a German family who was able to successfully raise bilingual children had frequent visits from family

members who spoke the language, often watched TV in the heritage language, attended a community HL school, promoted bilingualism, only accepted that the children speak German with their mother, and encouraged heritage language literacy.

Literacy aids heritage language learners in maintaining their language by exposing them to sentence structures and vocabulary items that they may not otherwise acquire (De Capua & Wintergerst, 2009; Guardado, 2002). Tse (2001) found that parental influence was key for young biliterates. Only three of the ten participants in her study had attended a community HL language school and they did not rate their instructional experiences well, calling them “boring and a waste of time”. They reported that while they may have learned some of the fundamentals of print in their heritage language, ultimately they acquired biliteracy through reading for pleasure, modeling from biliterate parents, and accessing print from their community. Park and Sarkar (2007) researched Korean families in Montreal and learned parents were very dedicated to teaching their children how to read in order to develop their cultural identity, to prepare them for future economic opportunities, and to communicate with extended family members.

Guardado (2010) attempted to understand parental outlook in heritage

language maintenance by investigating how parents socialized their Spanish as a heritage language learning children into the spirit of cosmopolitanism in British Columbia. He saw that parents valued multilingual abilities, and while they desired for their children to learn their own heritage, they also wanted them to appreciate that of others as well. He found that parents did not want their children to learn Spanish to tie them to the past, but rather to gain a skill that would allow them to be globally competitive. While parents reported that language learning was essential for identity, the identity they desired was one based on globalism, rather than a historic attachment to a previous culture. Parents linked language learning with the Canadian ideal of multiculturalism. This research has demonstrated that parents want their children to speak their heritage language and they go to great lengths to promote its acquisition, even if they are not always successful.

As demonstrated by Guardado (2010), parents aspire for their children to be global citizens and they see language development as a prerequisite. Yet, to my knowledge, there has yet to be a Canadian study which specifically examines why parents chose to send their children to a community HL school for language learning or why they have decided against it. Furthermore, as Li (2005) noted previously, parents themselves have multiple roles within the community HL school:

teachers, funders, assistants, and board members. In addition, parents who participate in the school may also do so to meet their own social needs. Understanding why parents choose community HL schools and what benefits exist for both them and their children, and the relationship to the community needs further research.

Peers. Friendships shape people in numerous and complex ways. Luo and Wiseman (2000) used survey data to analyze the complexities of different forms of relationships on heritage language maintenance. In their study of 250 Chinese heritage language respondents, they examined language proficiency with peers (both Chinese and non-Chinese speakers), parents, and grandparents. They concluded that having same-language speaking peers was the most influential in the likelihood of heritage language maintenance when compared to family members, whereas having many non-Chinese speaking friends reduced language maintenance. Chumak-Horbatsch (1999) reported that Ukrainian bilinguals who spoke the language attending immersion schools and participated in a community HL school, still spoke English with peers and siblings. Guardado (2002) also found that children tended to speak English with their friends even when they have the opportunity to speak Spanish.

The Mesosystem

Moving out from the center is the mesosystem—the different environments where the individual interacts. Essentially, the mesosystem can be described as the intersecting points between one area of the child’s life and another. In reference to typical child development, Bronfenbrenner (1986) states, “Although the family is the principle context in which human development takes place, it is but one of several settings in which developmental process can and do occur” (p. 723). In the case of the heritage language learning children, language and social development often takes place in the home, but also in the community, at cultural events, and in the community HL school. These HL schools bring families together weekly, create a sense of community, and organize community events. By creating environments where the child is able to practice the language outside of the home, the child may be more likely to do so. May (2005) explains how language loss happens over three phases: a reduction in opportunity to use the language in public domains, bilinguality in the speakers allowing them to use languages interchangeably with a declining fluency in the minority language, and replacement of the minority language by the language of power. Therefore, it seems imperative to create environments where the child is obligated to use the HL.

The home. In an investigation of young heritage language learners, Jean and Geva (2012) investigated affective responses to the use of one's heritage language in the home and in the community. These researchers found that the children had more positive emotional responses to speaking and listening in their heritage language when it was used in the home as opposed to its use in public places. They suggested that young learners may associate heritage language learning with private family experiences resulting in positive attitudes. The researchers also found that the children's affective responses to written heritage language were not as positive as oral heritage language. They explained that this may be because children practice speaking their heritage language within the family, but begin acquiring literacy in their heritage language outside of the family. Furthermore, Jean and Geva found that the children were able to reflect on their experiences with bilingualism and made comments on their own emotional states in response to heritage language use. The children clearly linked positive emotional states with linguistic proficiency. In conclusion the authors state, "There remains a dearth of knowledge about the experiences of this population of Canadian children, and so the potential for further research is nearly limitless" (p. 71).

Community. Noels (2005) and Comanaru and Noels (2009), have both

indicated that motivational differences did exist between heritage language learners and second language learners. Both pieces of research point out that heritage language learners were more likely to use the language outside of their university-level class and that they were more likely to be a member of the community and participate in its events. While these researchers noted that motivation was linked with community involvement, they did not explain why or how this involvement impacted motivation.

HL Schools. Community HL schools are formed in response to individuals in the community. Mady (2012) investigated 125 adolescent immigrants to English-Canada studying French as a second language and found that 60.8% of the university students stopped studying their language once they arrived. Of those who no longer studied, 52% claimed it was because no such class was available; of those who continued to develop their heritage languages, 69.2% reported taking classes outside of the school system. One of her four oral interview participants in the mixed methods study felt that Canadians did not share the same value of knowing multiple languages as their fellow Europeans who equated multilingualism as a personal benefit. Mady explains:

The valuing of multilingualism remains therefore at the policy level,

whereas the preferred pursuit of official language duality is reflected at the practical level of education. Such a distinction leaves immigrants responsible for the maintenance of their language(s) of origin, often without educational support. (p. 82)

Students are at the heart of every school experience. Yet, Kondo-Brown (2010) found that her Korean participants who were able to maintain their language did not enjoy attending community HL schools. These young American students were often sent by their parents to attend classes because the parents felt they were not able to sufficiently promote language development at home once the children entered school. The children in her study reported that they resented missing their playtime and begrudged having additional homework. They also felt that these schools did little to increase their Korean abilities. Even more so at home, children reported that they spoke a mixture of languages with their parents, and the Korean conversations were transactional rather than meaningful.

Heritage language learning in young learners living in Toronto was investigated by Jean (2011) in her doctoral research which examined students' self-perceptions of linguistic skills in English and their heritage language proficiency and their attitudes and experiences with learning either Chinese or Spanish at home.

She found that the children over and underestimated their abilities in their heritage language. She also reported that elementary school-aged children who attended a heritage language school credited their literacy proficiency to community HL school attendance. She stated,

Outside of home, children also identified formal instruction in their two languages as the reason for their proficiency. In addition to the potential to acquire and develop language and literacy proficiency, heritage language education may provide additional opportunities for heritage language exposure, contribute to the children's sense of identity, and enable children to meet other heritage language speaking peers. (pp. 209-210)

The Exosystem

Located within the exosystem are events which impact the individual, but over which he or she has no direct influence or contact. Bronfenbrenner (1977) describes the exosystem "as a setting that does not contain a developing person, but in which events occur that affect the setting containing the person" (p. 209). In the case of community HL schools, student learning is impacted by federal legislation regarding official bilingualism, immigration policy, multicultural policy, and educational policy. Each of these exerts forces on communities in terms of who

enters the HL schools, what curricular materials are available, who is able to teach, and how the school is funded.

Canadian multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. The roots of Canada's federal policy on multiculturalism began in 1963 with Diefenbaker's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The policy on official bilingualism began in response to tensions between English and French Canada (Jedwab, 2003). With this policy began decades of debate about the role of culture in the country. By the 1970's, this discussion had led many to conclude that biculturalism was an inappropriate aim, and that multiculturalism was more responsive to the Canadian context. However, Jedwab (2003) pointed out that Quebec has never fully accepted itself as open to multiculturalism.

In 1971, under Prime Minister Trudeau, "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" was introduced. Underlienger (1992) listed the policy's four main goals:

1. To assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity;
2. To assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society;

3. To promote creative exchanges and interchanges among all Canadian cultural groups;
4. To assist immigrants in learning at least one of the official languages. (p. 14)

In 1982, Canada enacted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada's political climate has been one of balancing of French and English educational and linguistic rights sometimes at the expense of newcomers to Canada (Gallagher, 2002). Gallagher (2002) described how the politicians of Quebec enacted policies to ensure that immigrants were forced to enroll their children in French schools, even though they may have preferred an English education. He added that political arguments against bilingualism were also made in English Canada by arguing that certain immigrant groups are denied language rights, yet are in greater numbers than French-speakers outside of Quebec, for example Chinese-speakers. He points out that there are more Chinese minority language speakers in English Canada than there are French speakers outside of Quebec, yet French speakers are the only ones with minority language rights in English Canada.

Seiler (2002) examined some of the main commendations and critiques of official multiculturalism in Canada. She listed the main criticisms of this policy:

expensive and ineffective, threatening to Canadian unity, dangerous in light of terrorism, and fragmenting groups in a country already plagued with linguistic divisions. Canada has received praise from across the globe as having an enlightened policy towards dealing with diversity and difference with her citizens and has come to be seen as a leader in managing diverse populations in a country with increased immigration and greater economic interdependence. Yet, Seiler noted that inside of Canada, multiculturalism, while praised from other countries, takes a backseat to bilingualism. She signaled that in 1993 the federal government abolished the Department of Multiculturalism and blended it with Heritage Canada. Furthermore, she cited Abu-Leban (paragraph 15) who reported that multiculturalism receives 2-8% of the funding received by bilingualism. Seiler cautioned that under current world politics, “Official multiculturalism is coming under greater attack than ever before, and its profile and budget are shrinking” (p. 8).

Additionally, some scholars have questioned Canada’s stance of Multiculturalism in a Bilingual framework (Cui, 2011/2012; Guardado, 2012; Kiernan, 2011; Kirtz, 1996; Mady, 2012) stating that culture cannot exist without language. Since many are not explicitly taught how to read or write their heritage

language or talk beyond surface day-to-day topics, children did not develop skills to access their culture through other sources such as travel, technology, and the media (Cui, 2011/2012). Cultural development becomes reduced to a symbolic affiliation, rather than a meaningful connection at the level of values and intercultural understanding. Kiernan (2011) critiqued Canada's self-depiction to the world as a nation that promotes multiculturalism, yet has an educational system which devalues non-official languages. As an example, she noted how heritage language policies are often promoted based on their ability to aid in English acquisition and assimilation.

Alberta's provincial policy on multiculturalism. Along with federal declarations of official multiculturalism in Canada came provincial legislation as well. Garcea (2006) stated that there were three main influences of provinces to adopt their own multicultural policies: ethnic revival movements, political goodwill for voters, and policy emulation. Alberta wrote and enacted the Alberta Cultural Heritage Act in 1984 but revoked it in 1996. However, with its revocation, the Alberta government added policies which stated that the province valued multiculturalism and that funding would be provided through the Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism fund. Garcea reported that the government

abandoned the 1984 act without much notice from the Albertan people and did so claiming fiscal responsibility. In Lund's (2006) evaluation, the government of Alberta, while citing fiscal responsibility, really did so for less noble aims. He stated:

Using the undemocratic method of "forcing disclosure" on debate in the legislature, Klein rescinded the provinces Multiculturalism Act. Even though fiscal restraint was stated as the impetus for such targeted cuts, this excuse was disingenuous considering that the funds for the AMC came from a burgeoning lottery fund rather than the general provincial budget. In the years since the termination of the AMC, virtually none of Alberta's multi-billion dollar surpluses has found its way into community programming or education for diversity. (p. 185)

Provincial policy on education. While multiculturalism and immigration are the responsibilities of the federal government, each province is responsible for its own policies and procedures guiding education (Cummins, 1992; Decore & Pannu, 1989). However, the federal government did give community HL schools a small operating grant to cover 10% of their operating costs. Unfortunately, the federal government stopped this funding in 1990. As noted previously, the Alberta provincial government decided to discontinue funding heritage language education

when it revoked the Alberta Multiculturalism Act in 1996. The government of Alberta has often made policy changes in educational contexts according to employment and industry (Decore & Pannu, 1989). Some of the changes that the government made have been centralizing of schools and districts, creating preapproved textbook lists, reinstating the Provincial Achievement Tests, and reducing the role of the Alberta Teachers' Association. All of these measures combine to reduce diversity in the school system (Decore & Pannu, 1989).

Curriculum development. Much of the work on curriculum development in HL contexts comes from the United States where educational programming is often considered to be focused on accountability. This American research may differ from the Canadian context where values of bilingualism and multiculturalism are promoted, at least theoretically. Since differences in societal values (the macrosystem) influence the environment in which individuals operate, this work needs to be interpreted cautiously. However, Brown's (1995) text on curriculum development provides a framework for understanding and developing language programs. This text was written for developing second language programs, specifically those in an English as a foreign language context, but has been used to investigate heritage language curricula as well and was heavily cited in Chapter I.

The decision to use this particular framework as an organizational tool to understand community HL schools stems from the desire to understand how curriculums operate in their totality. Brown's design includes five interactional components: needs analysis, objectives, testing, materials, teaching, and which are combined to form an overall program evaluation. The first five components which are essential to a program evaluation are not static, however, and a change in one is meant to affect change in others. For example, if a community HL program conducts a needs analysis to determine the needs of its student body and finds that these needs are not being met, then responsive program developers should change the stated goals and objectives of the program and find alternatives to meeting them through testing, materials, and teaching. See *Figure 2.4*.

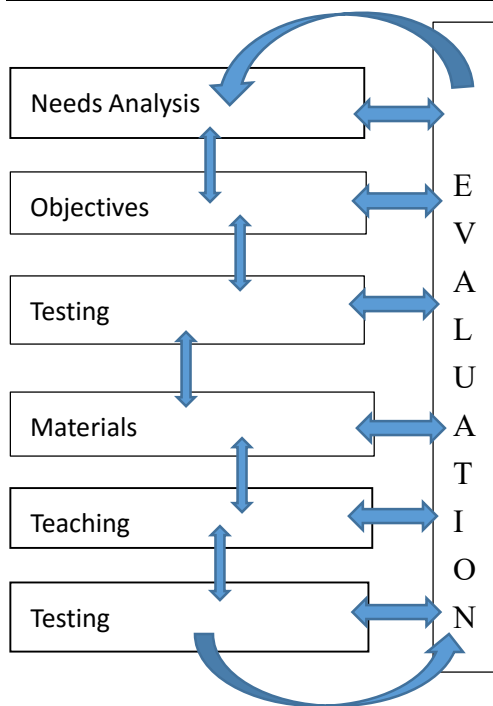


Figure 2.4. Brown's Systematic Approach to Designing and Maintaining Language Curriculum (adapted from Brown (1989a). (Note. From Brown, 1995, p. 20)

When contemplating the importance of having an overall framework that guides curricular development, Brown (1995) stated:

The process of developing curriculum should maximize the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom by giving him or her help with all the petty yet organizational, production, and logistical elements of the program—thereby freeing him or her to concentrate on delivering instruction in the best ways available according to his or her professional judgment. (p. 94)

Goals and teaching objectives. Brown, an American scholar in the field of

English as a second language curriculum defines goals as general statements about what the school hopes to achieve, whereas objectives are specific statements about what teachers wish for students to achieve. According to Brown (1995), needs assessments can be used to inform those setting program goals. In addition to using goals to document the program's purpose and guide the direction of the program, program developers also refer to goals to establish specific teaching and learning objectives for the program. He defines instructional objectives as "specific statements that describe the particular knowledge, behaviors, and/or skills that learners need to know at the end of the program" (p. 73). He also lists three components which, if included, differentiate goals from objectives: performance required by the learner, conditions that define the task, and minimum level of quality deemed acceptable. In reference to goal and objective setting in heritage language education, Kondo-Brown and Brown (2008) explain:

Greater than normal individual differences among HL students will probably lead to tracking of such students into special courses or even more individualized instruction, which may in turn necessitate even greater than normal variation in the goals and objectives that must be developed. (p. 9)

One possible solution to dealing with variation among learners in a

community HL program is to stream students into different programs according to their abilities or their goals. Creating multiple streams for heritage and nonheritage learners is a repeated theme throughout the literature concerning university language learning courses (Kondo-Brown, 2008; Kondo-Brown & Fukuda, 2008; Yu, 2008).

Despite being an obvious solution for educating groups with divergent language needs, separating learners in a class according to ability based on their goals and abilities sometimes also meets with resistance by teachers, parents, and learners. Doerr and Lee (2009) investigated streaming practices of Japanese heritage learners and their reactions to being placed in an alternative to the traditional *honshuukyoo* program. Although many of the learners did not want to struggle with language shyness or the high expectations of maintaining the same curricular expectations as native speaking students in Japan, they also did not want to be placed in what was perceived to be the “class for drop-outs”. The researchers attributed some of the resistance to the alternative program to the fact that the *honshuukyoo* program qualified students to attend university in Japan, it had international recognition, and it had clearer goals and expectations.

Even when parents self-select the appropriate stream for their children,

issues can arise for the school's program developers. Lawton and Logio (2009) investigated a Chinese community HL school in the United States with two separate streams: heritage learners and nonheritage learners. When both parents spoke Chinese at home, they tend to self-select the former class (65 students); whereas families with only one Chinese-speaking adult, adoptive families, and Chinese families who did not speak Mandarin usually chose the latter (61 students). The parents in the heritage stream indicated that they wanted their children's class to focus on language instruction and literacy. Their children, however, wanted "fun" instruction which resembled their nonheritage classmates instead of the traditional approaches and resources which focused on Confucian values. The children and the leaders argued that the cultural aspect of the program enticed the heritage language children to attend. The nonheritage parents wished for their children to have socialization with the heritage children and to learn more cultural practices such as songs, dances, and calligraphy. These parents wanted less competition and more fun. Because the materials needed to be created by the teachers in order to meet the needs of the learners, they were seen by the parents as more appropriate and responsive to the learners' needs.

Many programs do not have sufficient numbers of students for the creation

of multiple streams. These programs must deal with several kinds of learners in the same class. Programs sometimes are obligated to accept nonheritage students due to insufficient enrollment (Abdi, 2011; Cho, Choi, Krashen, 2005; Mercurio-Berrafati, 2010). In this situation, program developers must create strategies and instructional practices for teaching multileveled classrooms. In the high school context, Abdi (2011) investigated a compromise Spanish high school classroom and found that the instructor treated students differently according to their linguistic proficiency. The instructor enjoyed having heritage language speakers in her class, interacted with them more frequently, and used them as group leaders for Spanish as a second language students. She noted that because these students had higher oral skills, it felt more natural to communicate with them in Spanish, and therefore used Spanish more in class because of them. This study did not examine the students' reactions to the differentiation in treatment.

Testing. Testing of learners within a language program occurs for many reasons: placement, proficiency, achievement, and diagnosis of learning issues (Brown, 1995). Most testing for school-aged children is directed at bilingual programs. However, Kondo-Brown (2008) lists two exceptions: the Canadian Association of Japanese Language Education (CAJLE) who has developed an oral

proficiency test for heritage language learners (2000) and Carpenter, Fujii and Kataoka's (1995) oral proficiency test. To my knowledge, the CAJLE oral proficiency exam is the only standardized test developed for the Canadian heritage language context. The latter test is a series of guidelines to be used in developing oral assessments.

In Australia, Elder (2008) describes in detail the processes used to create a student proficiency test that could be used for evaluating the success of full-time bilingual programs across language groups. She found that both first language and second language assessment tools were inappropriate for evaluating language growth of heritage language learners, and as a result worked to create appropriate assessments for her specific context. She listed multiple issues with their creation such as inability to compare groups of students (newly arrived learners versus second generation Australians), insufficient piloting, insufficient revision of test items, lack of test reliability, difficulty selecting appropriate content, and difficulty targeting the correct language level for the items. Although overall she found that the tests did facilitate program development and provided evidence that bilingual programs did benefit learners, she cautioned that tests needed to be supported by additional qualitative evidence of learning, that programs should include language

learning profiles of their students, and assessments needed to be sensitive to the context of the learners within the programs.

Materials. Reading in one's heritage language offers access to increased vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural knowledge. Yet, learning how to read in a heritage language is neither simple nor straightforward. Heritage learners often report that their listening and speaking skills surpass their reading and writing skills (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Cho, Shin, & Krashen, 2004). Tse (2001) asked highly-proficient biliterates born in the United States how they achieved their skills. Only three of the ten participants in her study had attended a community HL language school and they did not rate their instructional experiences well, calling them "boring and a waste of time". They reported that although they may have learned some of the fundamentals of print in their heritage language, ultimately they acquired biliteracy through reading for pleasure, modeling from biliterate parents, and accessing print from their community.

Extensive reading, also called free voluntary reading or sustained silent reading, has often been used as a teaching technique in schools. McQuillan (1996) used this technique with Spanish as a heritage language learners in university classes. He reported that these learners improved in vocabulary acquisition, desire

to read independently, and engagement in long term reading. Cho, Choi, and Krashen (2005) used extensive reading in a Korean heritage language class with mixed-ability students. Students read comic books and graphic novels extensively for 20 minutes at the start of each lesson. They reported that many of the learners were actively engaged with reading and used this task as linguistic and cultural input. They reported that one of the main drawbacks of this activity was that learners with lower Korean proficiency had limited choices of reading material; they either had to read the comics intensively or read the advertisements. Many of these lower-level students chose not to read at all and considered the task a waste of time. One of the proposed solutions was to have more proficient Korean students create texts for lower-level students.

However, creating one's own texts is not as straightforward as it seems even when there is willingness from school systems, teachers, and authors. Bilash (2002) used Action Research methodology to document how a Ukrainian-English program undertook an initiative to improve Ukrainian literacy over a period of seven years. She lists "practices, situations, challenges, and successes of literacy development" (p. 307) so that those in other heritage communities can use the information learned to benefit similar programs in their respective languages. This improvement study

went through four cycles: an examination of materials that were available for use with children, needs assessments and interviews with teachers and students about materials and reading practices, development of goals related to literacy development, and consciousness-raising about materials use in the classroom. Through this process, Bilash noted that students reported that they enjoyed short stories, pamphlets, and easy readers; they indicated that images and pictures were essential for comprehension. When discussing reading skills required, students felt they needed support when reading, increased vocabulary, additional opportunity, interesting materials, engaging activities, and oral language. Of importance, Bilash also mentioned that teachers reported an adversity to using read alouds and sustained silent reading. Both students and teachers listed important needs when selecting reading materials: “access to more genres, books with jazzy, ‘grab your attention’ covers and titles, good illustrations, simpler vocabulary, more interesting stories, a glossary, larger print, a summary of the story on the back cover, and translations of humorous stories, comics, and other popular English-language books.” (p. 310)

Teaching. Brown (1995) uses “a narrow definition of *teaching* that includes only those activities (techniques and exercises) rationally selected by the teacher to

help the students achieve learning” (p. 179). He lists four ways that teachers can be supported in their work. These include: orienting teachers to the curriculum, supporting them in doing their job, monitoring what they do, and helping to revitalize themselves so that they avoid burnout.

In the community-based HL schools, who teachers are and what their professional needs are appears to vary in different contexts. Throughout the professional literature, researchers have repeatedly noted the need for increased professional development for heritage language teachers (Duff, 2008; Kondo-Brown, 2008; Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2008; Lee & Bang, 2011; Lee & Shin, 2008; Li, 2005; McGinnis, 2008). Despite the repeated call for more training, the researchers listed above do not specify what professional development heritage language teachers need. Four exceptions which explicitly state the desired professional knowledge of community HL teachers are Wang (2009), McGinnis (2008), and Lawton and Logio (2009). Wang stated that although there is increased interest in teaching the less commonly taught languages, the current professional infrastructure has not yet been developed to support teacher training. He argues that teachers in this area need to have pedagogical training, knowledge of content and language, understanding of sociocultural variables and awareness of identity

development. Furthermore, he adds that most instructors must simultaneously teach courses and develop curriculum independently. This demanding task, he argued was challenging even for seasoned instructors. McGinnis (2008) stated specifically what kind of training would benefit the instructors. He listed courses taught by Penn Chinese Language Teachers' Institute: second language acquisition, Chinese applied linguistics, teaching of language and culture, managing learner diversity, and national standards-based instructional methodology. Lawton and Logio (2009) listed classroom management and pedagogical approaches as being informative professional development for instructors. They stated that teachers receiving this training used more games, crafts, songs, and show and tell.

Evaluation. The concept of program evaluation is very closely linked with accountability. Brown (1995) defines program evaluation as “the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of curriculum and assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved” (p. 218). To my knowledge, there has not been extensive program evaluation of a community HL school in Alberta. One reason that an evaluation may not have been published is because some schools may have conducted program evaluations and chosen to keep them private. However, this lack

of documentation may be more a reflection of Canadian educational programming norms than of lack of dedication to school improvement. Kondo-Brown and Brown (2008) explain that the current state of community HL programming may not permit program evaluation and that it may look more similar to needs analysis. Lynch (2008) describes an alternative method to program evaluation- one that focuses on asset identification, rather than on deficiencies. He links the current model of program evaluation which examines needs and then looks for ways to compensate for them as a tool for external funders. He promotes an asset-based approach wherein community members look at the strengths of their programs and judge themselves according to their own goals and capabilities as this builds community spirit and positive relationships.

Curriculum development in the Canadian context. In the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba a document exists which outlines the main curriculum for the instruction of heritage/international languages. This document called The Western Canadian Protocol for international languages. The authors have developed this framework with four major goals in mind: high educational standards, common educational goals, ability to transfer across provinces, and optimum use of resources (p. 1). In addition, it breaks language learning down into

four main topics: applications (language use through meaning), language competence (accuracy and fluency), global citizenship (intercultural competence), and strategies usage (ways to continue language learning outside of the classroom).

Although this document has existed for over a decade, I am currently unaware of any research based on it.

The Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines the macrosystem as “the overarching patterns of stability, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, in forms of social organizations and associated belief systems and life styles” (p. 210). To enforce his idea, he points out that certain groups of people, even though seemingly unrelated, share common characteristics. One example he cites are elementary school classrooms. Most resemble one another both in their appearance and organization despite being located in different neighbourhoods, different cities, and states. Bronfenbrenner argues that these similarities are a reflection of socialization and not a result of happenstance. He also adds that “associated with each of these subcultures are characteristic patterns of lifestyle and ideology that are reflected in the goals and practices of socialization” (p. 210).

Similarly, community HL schools in Canada seem to share certain

characteristics without sharing languages and cultural norms. For example, many of these schools seem to rely on volunteer teachers, need curriculum development assistance, have inadequate space, and suffer from funding shortages. Global language loss and societal attitudes toward bilingualism and heritage language learning have impacted the evolution of these institutions.

Language planning and language policy in general are conceptualized by Hornberger (2005) as the influence the individual on the macrosystem's level. Baldauf (2005) enforces this statement by saying "planning of any sort is about the distribution of resources and power" (p. 957). Ghosh (2011) pointed out that the Canadian concept of multiculturalism is in the process of flux. Whereas in the past discussions centering on multiculturalism were focused on "protection and retention of cultures and languages of the various cultural groups to offer equality of opportunity of all its citizens to participate in all aspects of Canadian society" (p. 4), current discourses on multiculturalism tended to focus on racism, diversity, and equality. She also stated that federal politicians are limited in their ability to promote multiculturalism since educational decisions happen at a provincial level. She noted that other scholars who have critiqued the former Canadian multicultural conceptualizations of multiculturalism believing that focusing on differences leads

to divisions among groups, rather than solidarity as Canadians.

Global language loss. The modern world that we live in is becoming smaller through travel and technology. As a result of increased contact with other cultures and language groups, many people are feeling pressure to abandon their language and culture and take on those of others with more world influence (Binion, 2007). In fact, most linguists predict that by the year 2100, only half of the world's estimated 7,000 languages will survive. With the death of these 3,500 languages is also the loss of cultural, linguistic, medicinal, historic, and ecological knowledge since only 5% of the world's languages have any form of writing system. Since words are ephemeral, when the speakers die, the languages die with them.

Canada is home to 87 of the world's endangered languages (Moseley, 2010). In fact, five are located within Alberta: Plains Cree (20,933 speakers), Stoney (2,765 speakers), Sarcee (75 speakers), Blackfoot (2,200 speakers), and Kutenai (135 speakers). While the goal of this research is to examine heritage language acquisition, as opposed to the acquisition of aboriginal languages, the speakers face similar pressures to keep or abandon their mother tongue. Harrison and Norris (2012) examined the three largest aboriginal languages (Inuktitut, Cree, and Ojibway) and the three largest heritage language groups in Canada (Chinese, Italian,

and German) in order to compare language survival indicators. Their analysis of Canadian census data from 1991-2006 showed that aboriginal speakers were most likely to maintain their languages if they used them mostly at home, remained outside of urban areas and married within their language group. They also found that many aboriginal languages are continuing to grow due to increases in second language learners as opposed to mother tongue learners. Conversely, Chinese speakers in Canada doubled over the 15 year period; however this was the result of increased immigration. Chinese speakers tended to live in cities with many other speakers and married within their language group. Germans, similarly, had large numbers of immigrants and managed to keep their language alive in the home. Italians were less likely than the other two groups and also did not have the same increase in population due to immigration. In other words, immigrant groups relied upon immigration to keep their languages alive in Canada.

Contrary to the success reported of Chinese, German, and Italian, Swindinski and Swindinski (1997) found that when families in Canada manage to successfully maintain their heritage language it is a feat. They investigated heritage language transmission in Canada among multiple language groups. The researchers used 1981 and 1991 census data and discovered that heritage language transmission

rates were very poor. In fact, according to the 1991 census, 69.6% of families have both parents share a heritage language, and of those only 17.9% use the heritage language exclusively in the home. Factors which encouraged heritage language use were having both parents as recent immigrants, both coming from the same language background, being from a lower socioeconomic status, living in an urban area, low parental education, and a stay-at-home parent.

One reason why families may stop using their heritage language is related to community access. Pottie, Ng, Spitzer, Mohammed, and Glazier (2008) asked immigrants to Canada to self-rate their health and their language proficiency. They found that those who rated their health as highest also rated their language proficiency as best. Aberdeen (2012) also found that language abilities promoted community participation, and that those without language skills felt incapable to leave the house and thus remained sheltered, felt unhappy and became ill. A second reason which may encourage families to abandon their linguistic origins may be financial since Canadian families who speak English at home have an economic advantage over families who do not (Li, 2001). While Li did not argue that ethnic identity is determined solely by language use, he stated that usage was a component. His calculations found that:

The pattern of returns associated with home language is similar to that associated with mother tongue. Male Canadians who speak English as home language have a net income advantage of about \$776 a year. Male speakers of all other languages suffer a net income penalty. The penalty is most severe for speakers of Chinese home language (-\$5,702), followed by other Indo-Iranian languages (-\$4,660), then Austro-Asiatic languages (-\$4,206), and then by Spanish (-\$3,612).

Female speakers of English home language also maintained a net income advantage similar to their male counterparts, but the gain is only \$247 a year. Most female speakers of a non-official home language also suffer a net income penalty, except for those who speak Aboriginal languages, German, and Portuguese. Again it is not clear why female speakers of these languages do not suffer an income penalty like their male counterparts. But in general the income disparity among female Canadians tends to be much smaller. (p.138)

Unfortunately, numbers of speakers of certain groups (Harrison & Norris, 2012), understanding how language use is reflected in the home (Swindinski & Swindinski, 1997), and how it impacts families economically (Li, 2001) are

becoming more difficult to discern due to the cancellation of the long-form census poll in 2011 (Haider, 2014). The reasons cited for this decision were its cost and the protection of the privacy of Canadians (Thompson, 2010). It was replaced with a voluntary census which caused dissent from the provinces and a large number of organizations which required census data for planning (Thompson, 2010) as well as the resignation of Canada's chief statistician, Dr. Munir Sheikh.

Societal attitudes. Many Canadian children take French Immersion studies. Although a history of the beginnings of French Immersion education in Canada or an evaluation of the studies conducted on this population is well beyond the scope of this literature review, it is suffice to say that a bilingual education has been proven not only to not be harmful to English speaking students, but has a host of cognitive, academic, and linguistic benefits (Allen, 2004; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Lazaruk, 2007; Speck, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 2011).

Canadian researcher, Bialystok (2011), has investigated the advantages of bilingualism from the perspective of a psychologist interested in the physical manifestations in the brain. She argues the following point about the nature of bilingualism.

The research on bilingualism has investigated cognitive performance across

the lifespan, beginning with infants less than a year old (Kovacs and Mehler, 2009) and continuing into old age, sometimes including patients suffering with dementia (Bialystok et al., 2007). At every stage, individuals who spend their lives engaged in more than one language reveal differences from their monolingual counterparts in both brain organization and cognitive performance. It is logical to expect that linguistic processing and ability would be different for those who have a unique linguistic experience. [...] What is surprising is that the linguistic experience of bilinguals has consequences for non-verbal cognitive performance and those consequences are to the advantage of the bilinguals. (p. 233)

Most Canadians support the learning of French. The Canadian Council on Learning (2007) reported research from the *Centre de recherche sur l'opinion publique* (CROP) poll, a strong majority of Canadians (81%) indicated that they support bilingualism in Canada and that they want Canada to remain a bilingual country. Many heritage language learners in Canada are also interested in learning both of Canada's official languages (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Degenais & Day, 1998; Mady, 2012). Dagenais and Day (1998) point out that, generally speaking, trilingual students are considered risk-takers in language use, high in metalinguistic

knowledge, and above their first language English-speaking peers in achievement. Dagenais and Berron (2001) found that parents selected French-immersion for their heritage language speaking children because they believed there would be personal gains through a challenging academic program, it would support a multicultural outlook, and it would promote employment options in the global economy.

Some scholars have claimed that society generally accepts bilingualism when it is practiced by majority language speakers such as English-speaking Canadians learning French; yet consider it a challenge when minority language speakers must acquire the majority language (Dagenais & Day, 2001; Mady 2012; Wiltse, 2008). Mady (2012) used mixed-methods to investigate French language learners who also spoke a heritage language. She concluded that, “As the federal government enhanced status to English and French by declaring them the official languages of the country, so, too, the participants understood that English and French were of greater importance than other languages” (p. 87). She argued that since Canadian policy does not foster multilingualism, the educational system is unprepared to meet the demands of heritage language education which in turn impacts the heritage language speakers’ abilities to continue using and learning their languages. As a result many of her study’s participants reported that they did not

continue to learn their heritage language once arriving in Canada. Wiltse (2008) studied Cambodian- and Vietnamese- English language learners in an inner city school in Western Canada. She found that the teacher of these students, contrary to the students, often saw their bilingualism as a problem. Wiltse also noted that while the students may have had oral skills in both languages, they lacked academic and literacy skills in both languages. Furthermore, students had few places within the school setting to demonstrate the positive aspects of their bilingual linguistic abilities.

In Summary

According to Bronfenbrenner, human development cannot be studied without an analysis of the environment in which an individual lives. Similarly, Hornberger demonstrates that language policy and planning impact individuals at a personal level and that those who study language policy and planning need to understand its implications for those who must carry it out. Both theorists show the need to link policy and the person.

Canada has declared herself a nation which supports “multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.” This creates a very grey area for those who teach non-official languages since they are not afforded the privileges of French or

English language teachers, nor are they strictly teaching culture. Non-official language teachers are further marginalized in the field because Canada's funding and policies favor bilingualism over multiculturalism. As Seiler (1993) has shown, multiculturalism collects 2-8% of what bilingualism receives. This figure demonstrates how the federal government prioritizes bilingualism over multiculturalism. By the nature of their goals, HL programs are not able to access bilingualism funds. Instead, if they are looking to try to win funding from federal sources, they have to look to multicultural sources. They are working to obtain a piece of a much smaller pie.

While there was once funding for HL instruction, the federal and provincial governments have ended these funding programs (Prokop, 2009). As Kiernan (2011) explained often HL policies seem to be driven by assimilation goals. Furthermore, as Mady (2012) has shown, not all communities can provide language instruction for their children. Despite the challenges written in the Canadian literature that parents face in teaching, there appears little governmental support. It appears that assisting Canadian children to become multilingual in non-official languages is not a priority for the Canadian government. If assimilation is not an outright stated goal of the government, its policies show little in the way of

preventing it.

Unfortunately, understanding how Canadian HL schools operate in Canada is poorly understood. Much of the literature surrounding children's attitudes towards their HL, the teachers' professional skills and training, and curriculum development are based on American literature. This is problematic because, at least in theory, the political climate and the attitudinal differences towards maintaining one's culture should be evident in the children, the teachers, and the curriculum.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Merriam (1998) suggests that the selection of a research design should be determined by how a problem is shaped, the questions it raises, and the end product desired. In this Chapter, I describe a rationale for using a qualitative research methodology, identify my epistemological and ontological stances, and present the proposed design and data collection tools of the study which will be used to answer the following questions:

1. How do community HL leaders and community HL elders believe that HL schools contribute to the development of HL teachers and HL students?
2. According to community HL school leaders and community HL elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And how have they aided the development and visibility of the communities in Alberta?
3. According to community HL school leaders and community HL school elders, how have government policies shaped community HL schools through finances, curricular development, and day-to-day operation and functioning of the schools?

Qualitative Methodology: A Rationale

Differences between qualitative and quantitative research exist on multiple levels: epistemology, design, method, generalizability, and assessment of quality. Qualitative research “is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1994, p. 1-2). Researchers who conduct qualitative research do not position themselves as neutral in the inquiry process. These researchers work to benefit those in society who hold lesser positions of power such as minorities, immigrants, the underprivileged, and the colonized (Flick, 2007a). Qualitative researchers do not examine people from an objective stance and assume universalities in the human condition, but rather, they look at people’s experiences and try to understand the significance that people attach to them. A qualitative research design strives to understand not only the “why” of a thing, but also the “how” and “what”. It focuses on a depth of experiences, lived and understood by the author and the participants. “‘Qualitative’ implies a direct concern with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’” (Sherman & Webb, 1990, p. 7).

The goal of qualitative research is to better understand experiences and

behaviour. Using qualitative research, the researcher strives to accurately represent the participants' perspectives on their experiences as they mediate and interpret them. Such research also focuses on developing a deep understanding of the experiences of people in their worlds and the meaning that they have constructed. Meaning, accordingly, is of prime importance (Creswell, 1994) and is gleaned from interaction with the participants, and probing questions encourage a dialogue or a conversation between the participants and the researcher. This method of data collection is referred to by Kvale (2007) as a qualitative interview between the researcher and the interviewee.

Flick (2007a) argues that beyond this moral orientation are research tools and traditions which have been developed to answer the questions that qualitative researchers seek. I have specifically chosen to use interviews because they “are particularly well suited for studying people’s understanding of their lived world, describing their experiences, and self-understanding and clarifying and elaborating their own perspectives on their lived world” (Kvale, 2007, p. 46). Since the goal of this research project is to examine carefully the experience of community HL school leadership and the many hats that this demographic wears, the best method for collecting information to answer these questions is through interviews. To my

knowledge, similar research has not been conducted in Alberta, a province with unique legislation and attitudes concerning bilingualism and multiculturalism. As stated previously, this timely work occurs in a period when Alberta's immigrant population is continuing to expand. Heritage language community schools just beginning to form would benefit from the guidance of their predecessors and established schools would benefit from added documentation about their histories and developments over time.

Theoretical Lens: Bronfenbrenner and Hornberger

According to Johnson and Christensen (2007), theory refers "to an explanation or an exploratory system that discusses how a phenomenon operates and why it does" (p. 20). Furthermore, they add that researchers use theories for three main goals: explanation of a phenomenon, comprehension of the phenomenon, and the ability to make accurate predictions. Throughout this study I have used two compatible theoretical lenses to help understand the data. These lenses are Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hornberger's Language Planning and Policy. A detailed description of these theories can be found in the literature review in Chapter II.

These theories were chosen because they allow the data from the

participants to be interpreted from multiple levels. Both theorists postulate that a learner develops in relation to and is shaped by his or her immediate environment, and that this immediate environment is also shaped by much larger forces such as politicians, laws, societal attitudes, etcetera. In other words, a developing individual is shaped in an environment that is controlled by powers outside of his or her control. Both Bronfenbrenner's and Hornberger's theories were used at all stages of this project: selection of material for the literature review, development of the research questions, creation of the interview and focus group protocol, the analysis and interpretation of the data, and discussion and recommendations.

Epistemology and Ontology

In this empirical study I examined the experiences of HL school leaders and HL school elders to understand how HL schools operate in the province of Alberta. I began this study with the expectation of documenting processes followed by schools and recording challenges faced by the participants who implement them. I aimed to seek out positives in HL teaching in the Albertan context as well as to identify concrete ways to ameliorate current practices.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe the interconnectedness of the terms ontology, epistemology, and methodology:

Three interconnected, generic activities define the qualitative research process. They go by different labels, including *theory*, *method*, *analysis*, *ontology*, *epistemology*, and *methodology*. Behind these terms stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies the set of questions (epistemology) that he or she examines in specific ways (methodology). The researcher collects empirical materials bearing on the question and then writes about them. Each researcher speaks from within a distinctive interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural gendered components of the research act. (p. 30)

Guba and Lincoln (1994) define critical theory's ontological stance as "historical realism" and epistemological stance as "transactional and subjectivist" (p. 110). They state that research conducted with this epistemology and ontology are "dialogue [that] must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehensions (excepting historically mediated structures as immutable) into more informed consciousness (seeing how the structures might be changed and

comprehending the actions required to effect change) [...] (p. 110). Guba and Lincoln's thoughts are aligned with those of Hornberger (2013) who rejects a positivist and advocacy approach to research in favor of an "empowerment-oriented approach" which she describes as using "interactive, dialogical methods and seeks to take into account the subjects' research agenda, involve them in feedback and sharing of knowledge, consider representation and control in reporting of the findings, and take seriously the policy-making implications of the research." (p.105)

Study Design

A study design outlines the plan that the researcher will use to answer the research questions. I have chosen to organize my study design according to the visual listed below (see *Figure 4*). It lists the following components: participant selection; data gathering tools; ethics; sufficiency and saturation; thematic coding; reliability, validity, and triangulation, the role of the researcher, and interpretation.

Study Design

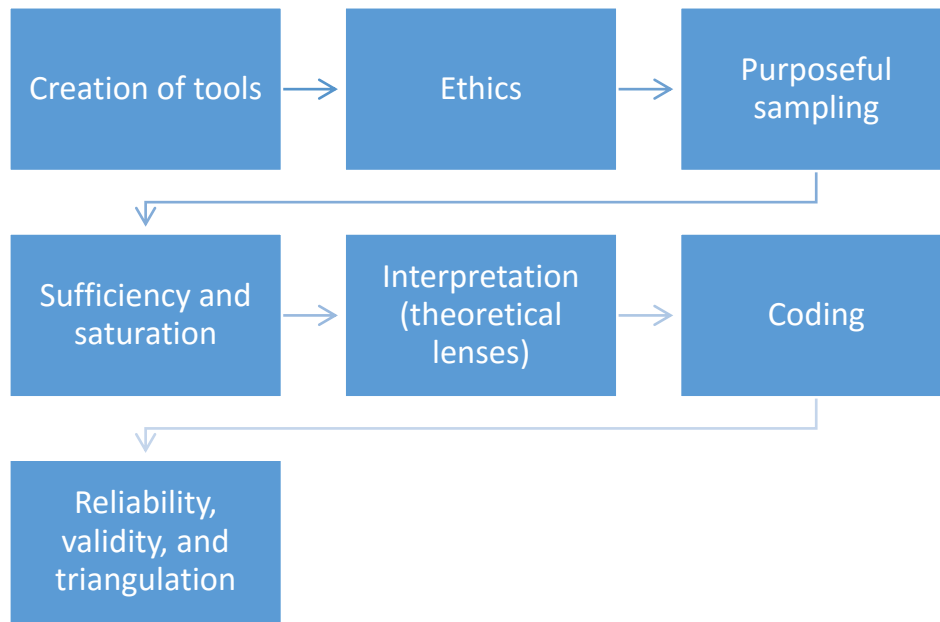


Figure 3.1. Study Design.

Selecting the Participants and Purposeful Sampling. Qualitative research requires two conditions to achieve systematicity: a definition of case and documentation of how participants are selected (Merken, 2004). Merken (2004) explains that for qualitative research “the case is represented with as many facets as possible” (p. 167). As an example, he argues that it would be inappropriate to study the culture of an organization and only examine the leadership or one single department. Bloor and Wood (2006) define purposive sampling as “the selection of cases based on the researcher’s judgment about which will be the most useful” (p. 154). Flick (2007b) argues that sampling is essential in qualitative work in that it opens our study to diversity and prevents a reduction in theory development. In line

with this thinking, I selected two main groups of participants: community HL school leaders and elders in the HL community. The community leaders could then be further broken down into subgroups. I chose this method strategically to ensure that multiple voices from the HL community would be represented.

After obtaining ethics approval I began contacting both the International Heritage Language Association (IHLA) and the Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association (SAHLA) in order to help select the most appropriate school leaders. The organizations sent out letters asking for interested school leaders. I spoke with each interested participant over the telephone before making an appointment. I met each participant at a location of his/her choosing. These included public libraries, coffee shops, university rooms, individual schools, my place of work, a church, and IHLA and SAHLA offices.

In order to fill in gaps according to the proposed matrix which I had created to ensure “maximum variation sampling”, I used the websites from IHLA and SAHLA to find the contact information for schools which I thought would meet my criteria. I contacted these schools by either phone or email. I spoke with each participant over the phone before we met in person. Once I had interviewed all of the school leaders, I began interviewing the HL elders. I sent each member an email

asking if they would consent to an interview.

Pseudonyms: In this study all participants are referred to by a pseudonym that has been selected by the researcher. While some names may appear to reflect certain language groups no relationship exists between the participant and the language or culture affiliated with that name.

Community HL School Leaders: Participants were recruited through one of three ways: invitations emailed from the International Heritage Language Teachers' Association (IHLA) or the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Teachers' Association (SAHLA), through personal invitation using their contact information found on either the IHLA/SAHLA websites, or through a personal connection. I was able to recruit 11 schools willing to participate in interviews. Three schools had more than one interviewee: Fane's community (five community members), Fabian and guest (working with the group on community development issues), and Laurie and Rory (school principal and leader). Originally I had planned to find nine schools willing to participate from African, Asian, and European schools, but I was fortunate to be able to add two participants from Middle Eastern languages schools.

My method for choosing participants was based on maximum variation sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). I chose to maximize the variation of this

sample by choosing schools based on the following characteristics: language community, length of operation of the school (non-operational to over 30+ years), shared teaching and leadership responsibilities, ability to award Alberta high school credits to high school students, and reception of support from the former country (state designed textbooks for native speakers, state-designed textbooks for heritage language learners, or curriculum redesign for the diaspora). This study used data from 11 different language communities spanning from four world regions. The data included schools not currently operating to long-term schools (three schools not operating, two schools operating between 2-5 years, two schools operating between 6-10 years, one school operating between 11-15 years, and three schools operating more than 30+ years), schools with shared teaching and leadership responsibilities (six yes, five no), schools with the ability to award high school credits (six yes, five no), and four schools with some form of home country support (two used national textbooks designed for native speakers, one used a textbook designed by the home country for heritage language speakers, and one participated in curriculum redesign for L2 language learners). The characteristics of particular leaders and groups are identified in *Table 3.1*. Each participant is described in detail in Chapter IV.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of HL school leaders.

Schools	at interview	Length of operation	Teaching	Administration and	High school credits	Home country support	IHL/SAHLA member
Emerging Schools							
Fabian	not for	past year	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fane	not for	past year	Yes	No	*national textbooks	No	No
Fritz	not for	over 10 years	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Monique	2 years		No	No	No	No	No
Emerged Schools							
Ford	3 years		No	No	*national textbooks	Yes	Yes
Alice	30+ years		No	Yes	*heritage	Yes	Yes

				language curriculum	
Sage	12 years	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Victor	5 years	No	Yes	No	Yes
Laurie & Rory	5 years this school, 8 years at a different HL school	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lydia	30+ years	Yes	Yes	*L2 CEFR for curric. redesign	Yes
Violet	30+ years	No	Yes	No	Yes

Community HL Elders. I investigated the experiences of one community development specialist (Candy) and five heritage language elders (Iola, George, Imogene, Inga, and Linda). The community developer was active in her profession

and was currently working with many different immigrant and refugee communities. She was also a member of a HL community as a child. Each of the HL elders was active in IHLA or SAHLA for many years and was a paid employee of the organization at some point. Each of these six participants was asked to participate in my study by email. I conducted four one-on-one interviews and one focus group meeting. With the exceptions of Candy and George, all four other participants taught HL in Alberta at some point. Details of Candy are told in Chapter IV whereas all other IHLA/SAHLA elders are described in detail in Chapter V. Each member of this group is or was affiliated to a HL community either for themselves or for their children.

Data collection tools. Four sources of data were used throughout this study: face-to-face interviews, three focus group interviews with HL school leaders, a combination of focus groups and face-to-face interviews with elders in community HL education in Alberta, and personal field notes. In the following section I have described how each of these tools was designed and the data that have been yielded from each of them.

Face-to-face interviews. Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal (2004) define autobiographical interviews as, “the narration of an experience seems to be a

suitable vehicle for imparting one's own experiences to others, as a result and a process, in such a way that both they and the narrator can reconstruct these experiences and thereby jointly understand them" (p. 259). I used interviews to learn about and reconstruct the experiences of community HL school leaders while analyzing these experiences through a theoretical lens. The ultimate goal for me, and hopefully for the school leaders as well, is not only to document and remember these experiences, but to reconstruct them for meaning. In this research project I conducted 12 one-on-one interviews with HL school leaders and 4 one-on-one interviews with HL elders, *Process of Developing Interview Questions for Face-to-face Interviews with HL school leaders*. Research questions developed for this study are guided by Hopf's (2004) statements that they should be free enough to allow participants to reveal what is most important to them and by Liamputtong's (2010) statement that questions need to be direct as to avoid misunderstandings. I attempted to draft questions that would allow the participants free thought, but still specific enough to know that they were answering with the kind of information I was looking for. I also used Kvale's (2007) question template for crafting my questions. I went back to my research questions and Ecological Systems Theory as a guide. I listed the information I sought in the left-hand side and what I felt was a

question that would elicit this information on the right. The interview protocol is listed in Appendix A. This interview guide was used for all face-to-face interviews and most focus-group interviews who were HL school leaders.

Process of Developing Interview Questions for Face-to-face Interviews with some HL elders. As I interviewed HL school leaders I spoke with Dr. Bilash and I realized that I was not sufficiently aware of the history of either IHLA or SAHLA. I went to both organization's websites and attempted to make a timeline of events based on newsletters or whatever historical data was presented such as posters from former conferences (Bilash, Palladino, & Pallard, 2008). I used this timeline as a guide to ask questions about past events from some of the IHLA/SAHLA leadership, notably Linda, Iola, George, and Imogene. It was because of these interviews that I gained access to historical data through IHLA/SAHLA records and archival data found in both the Municipal and Provincial archives. (interview with Linda)

Process of Developing Questions for Focus Groups. Barbour (2007) reminds us that focus groups use open-ended questions and as such allow participants "to reflect on issues and concerns salient to participants rather than closely following the researcher's agenda" (p. 32). This is precisely why the collective knowledge of these participants needs to be gathered in this form. Since

no research to my knowledge has examined the collective concerns of those with decades of experience in heritage language education, there is no clear way to predict what these issues might have been. Bohnsack (2004) has suggested eight principles for conducting group discussions: 1. questions address all group members, 2. topics are suggested not prescribed, 3. questions are vague, 4. researchers do not intervene in who speaks and who does not, 5. questions are aimed at representations not narratives, 6. questions that provide follow up are given priority over new topics, 7. topics of interest to the researcher are addressed after the topics of interest are explored by the participants, and 8. the interviewer discusses the topics of the discussion which are contradictory or striking to see if they generate new discussion. A focus group protocol is listed in Appendix B.

In this study I had originally anticipated conducting focus groups with only IHLA/SAHLA elders. In the end, however, I conducted four focus groups: three with HL school leaders and one with IHLA/SAHLA elders. At two of the scheduled face-to-face interviews multiple people involved with the HL school arrived without informing me beforehand. This happened in two interviews. I accepted all who showed to the interview and used the interview protocol listed in Appendix A. In Fane's case, five adults presented and the room was quite noisy with adults and

children frequently entering and leaving the room. A third focus group was conducted with Laurie and Rory who were both actively involved in the same school. Again, since they were both HL school leaders I used the interview protocol listed in Appendix A.

The fourth focus group that I conducted was with IHLA/SAHLA elders. I began this interview by closely reviewing the history of the two organizations and by asking the groups questions about past events. Near the end of the interview I reviewed the focus group protocol listed in Appendix B to make certain that all planned topics in the protocol had been discussed.

Field Notes. Researchers use field notes as a way to record observations and pieces of speech (Bloor & Wood, 2006). When creating field notes, researchers are encouraged to list the environment, the artefacts used, the people present, the activity, the component actions, the wider activity, sequencing of events, intended goals, and feelings expressed (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Johnson & Christensen (2007) explain that field notes must be purposeful and planned. They offer a list of questions pertaining to each observation that involve a series of who, what, where, when, why, and how questions. The act of taking field notes is intended to be a private act conducted by the researcher which occurs as soon as possible after the

events in order to remain faithful to what actually happened. Kvale (2007) states that insights made throughout the interviewing process aid the researcher during the analysis, member-checking, and final writing of the project. I used several notebooks throughout data collection and analysis to track my research project.

Data Collection. As stated previously, this project collected verbal data from 24 participants in 12 interviews and four focus groups. In all there were 25 hours and 24 minutes of data which when transcribed produced 289 pages (176, 535 words) of written data. *Table 3.2* describes the verbal data collected.

Table 3.2. Verbal interview and transcribed data.

Participants	Interview in Minutes	Interview in Pages	Interview in Words
Emerging School Leaders			
Fabian	117	26	16,575
Fane	81	15	9,365
Fritz	81	12	7,492
Monique	61	13	6,741
	340	66	40,173

Emerged School Leaders			
Ford	69	11	6,971
Alice	86	20	10, 347
Sage	84	17	9,639
Victor	92	17	9,934
Laurie and Rory	104	15	9,355
Lydia	100	22	13,004
Violet	177	33	20,906
	712	135	80,156
Total Leaders	1,052 (17h 32 m)	201	120,329
Elders			
Candy	44	11	7,020
Focus Group	205	29	17,516
George	67	15	9,994
Inga	106	22	13, 741
Linda	50	11	7,935
Total Elders	472	88	56,206

Total	1,524 minutes (25h 24m)	289 pages	176,535 words
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Member checks. Member checking is central to both the concepts of ethics and validity (Flick, 2007b). Since the researcher examines the participants' lives, it is essential that he or she portrays as accurate a description as possible so that participants can accept, reject, or modify it. Member checks can occur at three stages: by allowing the participants to review their interview data, by asking the participants to review a synopsis of the data, or by asking the participants to examine the overall project. It is the final stage, asking the participants for their insights into the overall project, which adds validity to the study. This can be done by asking them to read a summary of the findings, by asking them to check the final report, or to aid in the analysis.

Each member was given copies of their transcribed interview as well as their vignette as it appeared in Chapters IV or V. They were asked to review it and check for any inaccuracies. No member reported back with any. -

Ethical Considerations. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), ethics are fundamental to a critical theory paradigm. They state, "Ethics is more nearly intrinsic to this paradigm, as implied by the intent to erode ignorance and

misapprehensions, and to take full account of values and historical situatedness in the inquiry process. (p. 115)

This specific research project aims to serve both the research community by adding to current understanding about the operation of heritage language schools and to the ethnic communities themselves by documenting some of the factors which impact them. By choosing to participate in this study, participants can expect benefits. First, I will describe some of their experiences in my research which will aid them in documenting their school's history. Second, through this research, they will be given a venue where they can share experiences. As a result of discussing the history of their schools, participants may become aware of possible weaknesses in their school's programming and may be inspired to work on school improvement. Finally, some participants may enjoy sharing their experiences with a researcher interested in school development. Risks to participants greater than they could reasonably expect in daily life were not anticipated and to my knowledge were not of consequence.

All of the ethical issues faced in this study involved anonymity. I was not overly concerned that Mainstream Canadians would be able to identify the participants, but rather I was more concerned that community members would be

able to identify their leaders or that the elders would be able to recognize each other (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I was aware that anonymity among community members would be an issue since HL communities are generally quite small and leaders within them are easily recognized by their members. I attempted to not disclose personal details about the participants in case they could recognize these details in one another. However, due to their knowledge of and history with one another (this is especially true for the IHLA/SAHLA elders), I made certain that they were very comfortable with the information that they were sharing. To prevent HL community members from identifying their HL school leaders, I chose to remove the names of the specific languages of the schools. By removing the names of the specific languages, it is much more difficult for groups affiliated with this study to identify their own leaders. Furthermore, since this study investigates the general state of HL instruction in the province and not a series of program evaluations of specific schools, naming specific language groups seemed unnecessary and left schools potentially open to unfair and unnecessary judgment from outsiders. To additionally obfuscate the identities of participants, I corrected their comments for grammatical inaccuracies since an educated linguist might be able to guess language groupings based on errors.

While it may be considered respectful and common practice for qualitative researchers to allow their participants to choose their own pseudonyms, in this study I chose them myself. I made this decision for ethical and practical reasons. Ethically, I was aware that many participants were members of HL communities and might have chosen names which reflect their language and culture. As a result, they may have inadvertently given away their anonymity. Practically, I named the participants which would make remembering them easier for the reader.

Sufficiency and Saturation. A key question for researchers conducting an interview study is to select an appropriate number of participants for their study. Seidman (2006) lists two main criteria: sufficiency and saturation. The first term refers to selecting participants who represent members of the chosen community.

The second term given by Seidman (2006) in reference to participant selection is saturation. This occurs when “the interviewer ceases to learn new information from the interviews and senses that he or she has heard a similar story from previous participants. This does not occur at a given number of participants in a study, but rather it happens when the researcher no longer finds that the process of interviewing itself is becoming laborious instead of pleasurable” (p. 56). In order to reach saturation in this study three participants were added because they added

important information.

Thematic Coding. To code the data thematically I followed the five stages put forth by Schmidt (2004). The first stage of thematic coding involves the researcher becoming aware of the themes in the data. For me this began by transcribing the interviews and focus groups verbatim. Not only did I transcribe the interviews, but once finished I read along with the transcripts to ensure accuracy. I then read and re-read the data multiple times.

In the second stage of coding the researcher creates descriptions for a coding guide. I shared these themes with my supervisor. At times we discussed the exact definition of the themes and re-adjusted when necessary. In the third stage I went back to the transcripts and found data which reflected the themes. I cut and paste these data into charts which I later used while I was writing. The fourth stage involved quantifying concepts expressed by the participants to become aware of their frequencies in the data.

In the final state of data analysis, Schmidt describes the researcher as drawing conclusions on the data based on the chosen theoretical frameworks and answering the research questions. To complete this section on the task I read works by Bronfenbrenner and Hornberger and linked the conclusions of the data to their

theories. To each section of the data I added references from one of the two theorists for illumination of the responses given by the participants.

Emic/etic perspective

Emic and etic are terms which are often used to describe qualitative approaches to research. Etic approaches, often referred to as “outsider” approaches, are often used by researchers who wish to explore participants’ data in light of a pre-determined theory. In contrast in emic approaches, often referred to as “insider” approaches, data are taken from the participants and interpreted as to what is most important for the researchers. Lett (1990) describes emic perspectives as “accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the native members of the culture whose beliefs and behaviors are being studied” (p. 130). Alternatively etic approaches use “accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of scientific observers” (p. 130). Stake also describes these terms in their relation to designing an interview protocol. Stake (2010) says, “Although the interview will usually be structured by the issues of the researcher (etic issues), it is sometimes better to ask an open question (“What was your experience early

on?”), letting the interviewees just comment or tell stories (structuring around their own emic experiences).

In this study, I adopted a blend of emic/etic approaches while interviewing participants. I had previously constructed an a priori interview protocol which was based on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory. I believed that certain actors impacted individual students’ successes in HL acquisition and that certain governmental agencies, policies, and departments also assisted and limited these actors’ abilities to meet their goals. This demonstrates an etic perspective to research. However, since I was relatively new to HL education in Alberta, I needed to use my participants’ insights to truly understand what these issues were and thus used an emic perspective to understand HL education in the province.

Trustworthiness

I adopted the following strategies to establish the trustworthiness of this study. First of all, the issue of credible information received was addressed through the triangulation of my data. The different data sources from interviews with HL school leaders, IHLA/SAHLA elders, newsletters and documents from IHLA/SAHLA. and research notes helped me understand better the multileveled context in the micro-, exo-, meso-, macro- and chrono- systems, which helped my

interpretations of the data. Secondly, member checking was used to establish the trustworthiness of this study. Finally, I developed detailed descriptions of the contexts which help enhance transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These descriptions are presented in Chapters IV and V.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the degree of transferability as a “direct function of the similarity between the two contexts,” what they called fittingness. The authors refer to fittingness as the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts. If the two contexts are sufficiently congruent, working hypotheses from the sending context may be applicable in the receiving one (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 124). I collected thick descriptive data with detailed descriptions of different participants/contexts—“everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the finding” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 125). This should open comparisons of the HL communities in urban Alberta to other milieus because “in order to establish transferability, similar information must be available for both sending and receiving contexts” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 217)

Delimitations

This qualitative study took place in Alberta. Readers outside of this province

should be careful in assuming that the findings apply to other contexts. In Canada, education is under the authority of the provincial government. Since many of the findings are linked with provincial educational policies, readers must be cautious not to assume that policies in their respective provinces or countries are similarly constructed or interpreted. As has been shown throughout this dissertation, Alberta's HL instructional situation is unique in many ways.

There are many environments in which one can learn a language. HL schools are but one option for some language communities. This study only examined data from those involved in community HL schools. It did not examine data from leaders in any of the other known language learning environments: K-12 schools which offer language programs, full-time preschools, bilingual programs, or private language tutoring. These programs may be governed by different laws and have different histories. Furthermore, parents and students who seek out these programs may express different opinions about language learning, which in turn, impacts the opinions of school leaders. Not enough is currently known about these other options to assume that participants would share similar or dissimilar beliefs.

While this study does examine the opinions of leaders in 15 different language communities from four different major world religions and three

continents, there are many more groups than this in the province. It would be inappropriate to assume that all HL language voices share similar interpretations. Furthermore, while some participants were specifically targeted to meet sampling criteria, most participants were self-selecting. These participants may have chosen to participate because they believed that they had something to say, whereas others who chose not to participate may not have done so for important reasons.

Finally, all participants in this study resided in major cities in the province. HL leaders of schools which are located in rural environments may not have similar experiences.

In Summary

This qualitative study uses a transactional and subjectivist epistemological and an empowerment-oriented ontological stance to investigate the experiences of HL school leaders and HL elders in the province of Alberta. Data were collected through a series of one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions. Data were collected and interpreted through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hornberger's Language Policy and Planning framework.

CHAPTER IV: CONTEXT: DESCRIBING HERITAGE LANGUAGE (HL)

SCHOOL LEADERS

This study explores three research questions relating to HL community schools. In order to respond to these questions it is imperative to understand the diversity of HL schools and the roles they play in the eyes of the participants.. Understanding the operation of HL schools in Alberta requires descriptions of the participants themselves and the context in which they operate their HL schools. In Chapter IV, I describe HL leaders from two kinds of communities—those from communities fairly new to Canada and those whose communities have existed in the country for many decades. These have been called emerging and emerged respectively. This background will lay the groundwork for the responses to the research questions found in Chapters XI, XII, and XIII. In this chapter are the HL school leaders' stories and how they have worked to ensure their community's linguistic and cultural survival in line with Hornberger's language policy and planning work. These community leaders often work one-on-one with both teachers and students to create their programs.

It is essential to remember that while many of the HL leaders in Chapter IV and the HL elders in Chapter V speak about organizations, government departments,

and legislation, these comments may be one-sided. Only HL leaders and HL elders took part in this study. Organizations, government departments, and legislators may interpret events differently.

Community HL School Leaders in New or Recently Arrived Communities

In this study the leaders can be divided into two groups based on the characteristics of the members of their community. In this section most of the community members are recent arrivals in Canada (less than 20 years) and are considered part of “emerging communities”. In three of the four communities (those of Fritz, Fane, & Fabian) a large percentage of community members were refugees (as opposed to economic immigrants). In one community, Monique’s, the members were a mixture of refugees and economic immigrants. Candy, the community developer has worked with both types—“mostly” refugee groups and a combination of refugee + economic migrant groups. The following are HL school leaders general comments on their schools and the issues they are facing.

Emerging communities: Fritz. “Well one thing is that they know each other. They know each other as same being of the ethnic groups. And we were hoping to learn the language and at the same time get to know each other. Then they will be the

same community. So we believed that friendship would come after they got to know each other. I was hoping we could do that.”

Fritz was a political refugee. However, he came to Canada over 30 years ago. He first arrived and it took almost a decade before his family could be reunited: “I came before, which is 1984. And my three kids and my wife, they came together in 1991”. His two youngest children were seven years old before Fritz first laid eyes on them; his wife was pregnant with twins when he fled. His memory of his children’s early years was “The two twins, when I was in [a city on another continent], they were born. I knew them only by their picture. But my first child, when she was one year old, I had her on my lap. When Fritz arrived in the city, there were “50 people with our children, now is about 5000.”

Fritz originally attempted to start classes when he arrived but his school was unable to remain operational. He attempted again in 2003 with the support of the International Heritage Languages Association/ Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association (IHLA/SAHLA), but again met with little success. He feels the lack of continuity of the program stems from two main issues: community discord (“because of the political problems, we don’t have unity”) and insufficient parental support (“The second, like I said, the parents did not help us.”).

Community discord has affected the people in multiple ways. First, those who support the current government financially by paying taxes while overseas are allowed to return temporarily for family visits. Those who do not pay overseas taxes, which is the position supported by the Canadian government, are arrested upon arrival into the country. Fritz explains, “Those who are supporting the government they can go back home to visit their family; I do not. I would go to the airport they would put me in jail.” Disagreement over issues such as this one stops people in Canada from discussing ideas and getting to know one another. Fritz states, “But if the country is united as one people in one country, it is easier to bring them in. Everybody might not have the same level of consciousness or interest, but at least we could bring them in.” He continues:

Because as a community we don’t discuss with each other. We don’t have any meetings, when you have any kind, like the way you can meet each other, then you can discuss. You can say bless our children, bring them, teach them, let them know that they are the same origins, let them know that there are, what do you call it, successors. Who will be the successor of my children? How will my children do it if they don’t know about that?

Fritz describes the parents in the community today as struggling to make

ends meet. Their priorities are “focusing on work to get money.” These people “don’t have the ground to put themselves into the community.” He realizes, however, that language teaching cannot happen in three hours a week and is dependent on community and familial support. He explains:

[...] If the parents would like their children to learn the language, they have to make effort and they have to play a big role. Parents have to play a very big role and they have to talk in their language at home, they have to help them with the homework and with what we teach them. I think without the parents it cannot be implemented.

Fritz tells of how his eldest daughter is a classic case of language loss. Despite only speaking her language until moving to Canada at age seven and having parents who will only speak to her in this language, and having her parents start language classes, she still finds it difficult to use the language productively, although she understands well. Fritz describes her language as “losing, losing, losing.” His youngest two struggle even more with the language. He believes that the cause of this is that parents in Canada have very little actual time to spend with their children once they enter school. He explains:

So when I count the time, in the morning, they have breakfast, they go to

school, when they come home, and they eat whatever and they go to the movies, I mean watch TV. So it is very little time that they have with us. So we tried as a community with my friends to volunteer, every Saturday we would go to school to teach the kids. So the parents did not help us by sending them regularly. Some of them they came today, we would teach this today, this Saturday. The next Saturday another would come, the first one wouldn't. And I think a lot of children's programs are on Saturdays, too. They let them listen or play with that video, listening TV, watching TV, or so that didn't help us.

Although the losses of operating a community school have been great and prompted him to make the comment, "It costs a lot of money to volunteer, but I didn't feel anything. When you don't see any results, it's a double dose", he still believes that community language schools are valuable. He explains, "I like my people to know each other and to communicate in my language, and to know each other in school. You can kill two birds with one stone, you know. Number one, as a community they know each other. Number two, they will know their language of origin. This is my wish to be able to teach them this."

Fritz still dreams of restarting classes for youth wishing to learn his

language and culture. However, he now believes that classes would best be directed at older learners who are willing to make a personal effort would be most productive. He concludes, “Sometimes I think about it. It would be best if the students were about 18 or interested to come themselves, it is their responsibility.”

In Fritz’ case, he described the language loss experienced by his children who arrived in Canada and began elementary school. His children were an example of what Hornberger (2003) described as “the erosion of community languages by dominant languages of wider communication such as English and French” (p. 300). He worked to slow this language erosion in his children and even was fortunate to have some supports not accessible to other emerging groups, such as the help of the IHLA/SAHLA. Yet even with the supports available, Fritz and his colleagues still faced multiple obstacles: 1. a fractured community due to colonialism, 2. an impoverished community of recent arrivals focusing on financial survival, and 3. a lack of parental support and commitment to language and history education.

According to Hornberger (2003) “the community school plays a role not only in linguistic reproduction, but also social and cultural reproduction; and further, that the fostering of cultural resources, including literacy, provide an indirect means of promoting (oral) linguistic resources as well” (p. 300). However, what is not

explicitly stated in this comment is that the community who works best towards these goals operates generally as a cohesive whole. In Fritz' community, an added layer of complexity faced by the school was that many political issues happening outside of Canada separated members. The school community was unable to overcome their differences to work towards language conservation/maintenance. Although it was his goal to get the children to know each other and learn the language, Fritz was not able to meet his goal of "kill[ing] two birds with one stone."

Emerging communities: A focus group with Fane's community. "We are not trying to teach the kids the language so that they can go home."

A meeting was scheduled with Fane to discuss the history of his non-operational HL school previously functioning in his church. As a testament to the dedication of his community, seven adults arrived to the research interview, including the church pastor, the school organizer, and teachers. Their now non-functioning community school "started with a grant of \$1,000" and then "finished that program [and] went back to the city and then [the city] gave us 5,000" (speaker 2). In the second year, the community "found a balance that we didn't use" (speaker 2) and were able to even return some of the funds.

Fane's community is dedicated to providing services for their community's needs, but realizes that what he can offer depends on the funding that he can secure. "If we have enough funding we can even bring them to outreach for them" (speaker 4). In addition to creating a heritage and language school for the children, they also hope to create a summer camp "at a national park" (speaker 4) for the community's children and to offer Bible and literacy classes for the parents in the community who "want to read the bible in their language" (speaker 7). A lack of community literacy impacts what Fane's community hopes to offer at every turn. Literacy even prevents some children from participating in programs since parents, often single mothers, are unable to get their children to classes. Fane states, "Because some mothers they don't even know how to read and write, we cannot forget where we came from is very sharp. Even some of the moms, they bring the kids, they bring the kids on the bus. They cannot even read the signs on the street for driving, so we have, because some of them they are single moms" (speaker 4).

Those involved in the program are very passionate about teaching their youth appropriate behavior so that they know how to be successful in life. This success, they believe, stems from strong familial and cultural ties. As one focus group member stated, "If the kids don't learn the language, they go around steal,

and become drug addicts and alcoholics. How can the mom tell her kids not to do that if they can't understand her when she speaks to them?" (speaker 7). In this manner Fane's school is similar to Fritz's whose group tried to create a space where students could not only learn the language, but become friends with one another. Schools also are essential for creating community and "good relationships" by bringing people together in a city where many are randomly dispersed. Speaker 4 comments:

This city is a very big community. Somebody is on this side of the city, somebody is on that side; they don't even see each other. That is a challenge, too. Monday comes and it is busy for them to go to the big school. So they don't have time to attract to each other; so that when they grow up they know each other. They don't have to say, "Who are you?" They have to know each other.

According to Fane's focus group, while heritage and language education are important for the safety and future prospects of the children, it is also essential for the health and safety of the parents. One of Fane's members states, "When we had the language school like we used to have it also helped the parents come together some times. Sometimes here we have people who are a little bit distressed" (speaker

3). Many parents ask their “children to translate from you to their mom” and explain of academic concepts in “doctors’ visits” or “lawyer things” (speaker 4). As speaker 4 states:

So what the doctor just told him or her and said translate it to mom, so the language is stuck in between. Maybe dad is not there because of the family issue thing. So this is also a challenge. So mom came from a community where she never actually learned and she never went to school, and the kids only know how to speak it a little bit, but not that much. When it comes to doctors’ visits or lawyer things, or everything which is complicated, she is stuck. She needs her kids. And our kids cannot actually speak our own language in order to explain it back to mom. So this is also a challenge that is facing us.

According to members of the focus group, schools help with parental mental health issues such as feeling “distressed” or “having depression” by opening an avenue “we are together in one place” so adults can discuss important issues such as “finding a job” and find social supports by “keeping our relations actually strong” (speaker 3). Speaker 3 states:

That will help bringing the parents together. They will mingle and they will

discuss. They will talk about the tribes, what happened to somebody else's job, "What did you do last week?" So they will ask how the people are, depression here, you know, it is like this. When you are alone and maybe you have some bills to pay, family issues.... But when you bring together with people, you come and sit and you say, "Ah hah! Everybody here has a problem, too, not only me." So you will feel okay. You will feel relief; you can relax now. You will say everybody is the same as me now. It is not only you with a problem, it's also everybody else. So our community, we need to attract together, and by bringing our kids together, we will actually keep our relations actually strong.

Operating a culture and language school has not been easy and the focus group has expressed numerous challenges. From the organizational side, challenges include getting the children to the program as most mothers cannot drive, "finding some teachers", "develop[ing] some curriculum, creating books as they only currently have "three or four books (not sets of books)", "bookkeeping, how to keep records", and "organizing how to start" the program. Financial challenges listed were paying for "the snacks for children", "pay[ing] the teachers" a salary (those who could teach preferred to have part-time jobs and earn a salary for their families),

and “sign a rental agreement with whomever the owner might be” who is willing to house 60 students (speaker 4). Of all of the problems, the two greatest were sourcing an appropriate location and creating a curriculum. When discussing space, speaker 4 says,

Here in Canada, we know that once, even in a community church like the one we have, here is being paid. And who is paying? We even collect \$5 each Sunday so that we can use this church for services and we have to leave so another group can come in.

Developing a curriculum has also been a major challenge for the community. One member told of the goals of the program as “So we are not trying to teach them beyond level Four or Five. Just the basics so they know exactly where they are from” (speaker 4). One community member talked about how challenging it was to find appropriate materials, even when they could get books from the home country stating, “When it comes to the books though, to take just any book and just bring it here is difficult, because for the children who grow up in Canada, their language is not that strong” (speaker 1).

Most importantly, speaker 4 who was also a parent drove home a point about how the children here are connected to the global community. He said, “We are not

trying to teach the kids the language so that they can go home.” Speaker 4 adds,

“But the thing is the kids they have uncles back home. So when somebody calls to say hello, and the guy doesn’t speak English, and the kid here will say who are you? They kind of forget. That is why we want to give them a little understanding of how to say I am so and so. Because back home the uncle will say why don’t you teach these kids the language?”

Fane’s community realizes the importance of literacy for language and community survival, yet it has few resources to promote it within its community members. In this community parents are often unable to read themselves due to “gr[owing] up in a refugee camp where they never actually learned the language well” (speaker 4). In the Canadian context, the responsibility for HL education often falls to parents or community members, yet in the case of Fane’s community, there are few skilled adults who can be responsible for this task. How can parents be responsible for teaching children to read when the parents cannot read themselves? This situation is similar to the one faced by the Cambodian community in Philadelphia in Hornberger’s (1998) ethnographic study. She reports that:

Khmer literacy in the United States starts with a number of strikes against it, not even counting the strong assimilatory power of English: the tradition

of little or no schooling that Cambodia's rural farming population brings with it, the recent history of schooling disrupted by war and turmoil, and a current scarcity of printed material amidst a relative abundance of audiovisual stimuli. (1998, p. 83)

Much like the Cambodians, printed material in Fane's language was difficult to acquire. The group explains that access to books from the home country was also challenging since they could not "take just any book and just bring it here is difficult, because for the children who grow up in Canada, their language is not that strong" (speaker 1). Many parents describe a desire "to read the bible in their language" and the community looks to the children to teach the parents how to read. This is similar to Hornberger's conclusion of Khmer children:

The pattern repeats itself family after family, interrupted Cambodian schooling leading to a lack of Cambodian literacy, the more so for families in which the parents had little or no schooling. These children surpass their parents by becoming literate once in the United States; however, they become literate in English, and not necessarily Cambodian. (1998, p. 79)

Sadly, Hornberger's prediction for the Khmer community's literacy is bleak. She (1998) claims that "Khmer literacy will require vigorous cultivation if it is to

survive beyond the next generation in America” (p.83). With so many gaps in language planning for Fane’s community, it seems that the future for literacy in Fane’s community appears equally as poor.

Emerging communities: Fabian. “People have to find the best way to live together, without eliminating anybody and their language & culture. We need to practice this.”

Fabian came to Canada as a refugee less than ten years ago. When he arrived, he was planning on taking the opportunity to “relax” and reorient himself in his new homeland. Before he got the opportunity to acclimatize, members of his community learned of his service work and leadership potential and he soon found himself working for the benefit of his community because he was told he had “to do this”. He describes his situation as the following:

When I came here and the community elected me to be their leader of my ethnic group. Because when I came, I was already tired because of the community stuff. I wanted to come here and just relax but people they put me in the place, even if I don’t have enough English don’t know where I can go, they say, [Fabian], you have to do this.”

When Fabian began to do service work, he felt that to be an effective leader he needed to reflect -“to sit by yourself [sic] and you have to think about what you

are going to start.” He remarked that he found little support in developing his leadership skills and that those that he did develop here came about haphazardly claiming, “Nobody comes coaching you. You have to try how to start some stuff. We do dialogue with the community and my office and the same thing. I look to what I know about the community and I know how the community can organize.”

The community members that Fabian was called to represent are, like him, mostly refugees: “They are refugees, nobody comes here by choice, because we don’t have any money to come to Canada. Even myself, I didn’t expect to be here.” As in both Fritz’s and Fane’s communities, parents in his community cannot teach their children to read their language at home because they are not able to do so themselves. Without first language literacy, learning English as a second language is particularly challenging for the parents and they struggle similarly to Fane’s community. Unlike their parents, children who attend school pick up English quickly. Fabian explains:

Because it is the same. Most of the letters are the same. The first week they know how to say it because those kids they are very fast. They learn even better than the adults. They say what happened to you guys, because they are oral language, they don’t know. The kids are always quick learners.

Poverty also adversely impacts the families in Fabian's community. Most families have "to feed your five to seven kids at home", and with few academic skills, limited employment opportunities, and the repayment of "transportation loans", money borrowed from the federal government to pay the cost of their flight to Canada or other expenses (usually medical) incurred while in a refugee camp, they have little chance to escape from poverty (see <http://ccrweb.ca/en/transportation-loans> for more on this issue). Mothers and fathers often have to work multiple part time jobs in order to make ends meet, leaving the children under the supervision of an older sibling ("They say that if you have big kids they can be with those little kids"). This lack of supervision creates two main problems from Fabian's point-of-view: parents are not present to pass along oral language to their children and children are susceptible to negative influences ("You don't know what is going on when everybody has a computer and a laptop.") According to Fabian, "As an adult, we suffer from building the foundation for them [the children]". While Fabian's community talks about parent-child separation in terms of technology, Fane's community spoke of children having academic concepts in English. Both communities demonstrate that an imbalance of power emerges in recently arrived immigrant families; while the child has abilities

to speak English and participate in mainstream society through academics and technology, the parents' struggle with English limits their access to many aspects of social life.

Fabian states that many in his community have found life in Canada challenging for these reasons. He tells that as soon as families can achieve financial means, they repatriate, preferring a possible death to language loss and familial division, stating "Because when the kids grow up, they have no connections, there is a language barrier between me and my kids." According to him, "Back home maybe one kid will die, but other kids will be successful. But here, it's very dangerous like a crocodile."

When those who can organize themselves financially leave, they take with them their business skills and professional knowledge, leaving the community as impoverished as it was before that particular family "made it". He had hoped that local businesses would be able to help with the costs of the school, "there is not a lot of business communities here. The business leaders are [back home]." Fabian had expected that once he created a school and the families found it beneficial, they would be able to "pay a little bit of money", but that in "the end and we don't have money".

Fabian's language and culture are passed on orally, although a writing system does exist; written materials in the language are scarce. At the time of the interview Fabian "knew someone who told me that we have some books in the UK that somebody wrote about the language in 1920" so that his community "can come and sit together and they can fix that thing." Although "the book was good, they have some areas there that is not right" because it was "right about our culture a long time ago." Fabian reasons that cultural inaccuracies are due to colonialism, those who were able to write were often those who were least connected with the culture since being educated meant that one left his community and attended a religious institution. Fabian explains, "At that time when British come [...] they start using that language for everyone who wanted to get to the seminary. And then teach them [my language] first and then English. And then those people who get that chances, they have the ability to write." Complicating things even more, concepts were often softened or made more palatable in order to be accepted by the colonizing academics. Fabian explains, "But if you start asking them a lot, especially if you are white, they say why are they asking me like that? Give the wrong idea, the wrong information."

According to Fabian, the children are Canadian and they need to be taught

in a specific way that meets their learning styles He feels that the curriculum of the school needs to focus on teaching cultural concepts like “drumming”, “traditional dance”, “beading”, and “cultural dress”. He explains that when they can show dances and performances to relatives overseas, there is a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction. “They see our children and they think that our culture is alive and well. They feel good our culture is not dying,” and “Then they will be proud. We don’t have to say that was their language was somewhere else, they can say this is my language here in [the city].”

Organizing a school for Fabian’s community is rife with challenges. The school lacks curriculum and is unsure of- how to build one. When asked about a school curriculum, Fabian asked me for support and stated, “Struggling something like that. But it is good to have a curriculum and we will do it together. And the thing is, half of [the people], let them know how to read and write. And we let them know how to talk. They go to school and they kept this knowledge here.” Within his comments, he indicated that while literacy was an important skill for children to acquire, so was oracy.

Finding teachers is a struggle since there are not many who are literate (“We have about five of them, but we have two of them that are good.”) and these same

elders need to work multiple jobs to support their families (“You are working with the people; they are just poor”). At the first opportunity, teachers leave for paid work since even minimum wage jobs pay better than volunteer ones. Even when volunteers are available, they often bring their families with them; young children need supervision while their older siblings are in classes.

Emerging communities: Monique. “When I took my kids for the first time to my country, they had to speak with their cousins. Because they wanted to play with the children, they either had to learn to speak to their cousins or they had to be isolated. They know how to learn, but they needed the environment to push them to understand.”

Monique came “to Canada about 12 years ago”. Since she arrived she has been actively involved with social work for her community of about 1,000 people “or maybe we have more”. Her community contains three groups of people; “Some of them are refugees, some of them are immigrants, and a few percent are [international] students”. She claims that the first group arrived in Canada by choice. She explains that “they [immigrants] have to depend on themselves to provide the life. To find housing, to find health care. This kind of stuff.” They have to meet

certain criteria to get accepted into the country, they often have a lot of formal education and work skills which give them more realistic expectations of what they will find here. She tells the immigration story of a friend, “I have friends who just came as immigrants, but they applied as skilled workers. Both of them are educated, both of them understand that they will depend on themselves. They googled Canada before they came here. How is life in Canada? What is the system?” These members use their networking skills to help them settle into Canada and find the resources that they need. Refugees, according to Monique, have a different story. She explains, “The government will support them and be responsible for them for one year. So the government will provide them with money and find a house for them and coverage for them. These are the refugees, so the government will be responsible.” Despite the assistance refugees receive, they still have challenges resettling because they have fewer coping skills stating, “While the refugee people, no, they suffer. They have issues from the home country. So they moved and lived in another city waiting for the UN to provide them with a safer place.” Monique highlights that the two groups, despite their differences, share common goals: “But both of them are looking for a bright future for themselves and for their families.”

Monique does a great deal of community service work for her community

in addition to being a mother and organizing her HL school. She helps coordinate cooking classes for immigrant women twice a week. She takes calls from newcomers to Alberta (from outside the country and within) and helps them to settle into the province. She states, “Some of the immigrant people google and they find our website. They find our phone numbers. I still receive phone calls for example from Ontario, Toronto, Quebec, they phone me, they don’t know me personally, but they know our organization.” She describes the typical kinds of information that newcomers seek:

They say, “Well, I need to find an apartment, which part of the city should I look in? How much is rent? How can we get a house? What is life like there? That kind of stuff.”

Monique’s volunteer work is directed at helping some of the city’s needy access appropriate services such as “they need to go to the food bank or bank, or they need a translator for the hospital or for doctor’s appointments, or find a school, this kind of responsibilities”, social assistance programs, and subsidized housing. She knows some of the social workers in the city and they also call on her for support.

For example, I have a new family that moved here last month. In the

beginning, they asked me where they could find doctors in the areas, local schools, the options for them. Then she asked me about assistance. I referred her to the food bank. She asked me, “So how can I get food?” I told her to go and see her counsellor at Catholic Social Services and ask the counsellor to fax the food bank. And I know the counsellor, we keep talking. I know him and he knows me because we are helping new families, too. We are supporting them. Although we are not taking any money because we are volunteers, we are supporting them. So, I have been talking with the counsellor about this family. I picked them up and dropped them off at the food bank. They got their food and I brought them back.

Facilitating the organization of the HL class is just one more of Monique’s service work tasks. Her school formed in 2013 with a small operating “fund from the [municipal government]”. They also managed to secure a free space from a public library in the city centre so that they could hold the language class for their “15-18 students and their ages were 5-10”. She describes the origins of the program, “We looked for an appropriate grant and we found one so we applied for that and we opened it and we got a space. They were very helpful with us. They provided us with a free space.”

Monique describes accepting her role as program organizer as a passive one, because no others were willing or capable to take it on. She says “I took the initiative. I took this responsibility. Nobody showed up and said I can do it. So, I found myself in it. I had to get the responsibility.” She has found that the job is very labour intensive and not many parents are willing or able to support her. Organizing the school requires many volunteers, but she finds herself doing many of the volunteer jobs herself. Some of the tasks involve getting in touch with parents “by mouth [...] because I always tell the women, I can’t phone and tell each of you please, tell the others. This is my struggle with every event or program or news that I want to distribute it”, making snacks for children, bringing in all of the materials each week, creating completion certificates, and taking the children to the washroom in an open-access building. She says “If you believe in this, you have to do it by yourself and depend on them less.” The school may be in session for only a few hours each week, it is a much bigger job than most people realize, according to Monique.

While it has been a great effort to get the school operational, she believes the project has been worthwhile. She feels that the children are “happy to come”. If the children are unhappy or unwilling, it is most likely a reflection of the fact that

the children “find it is sometimes difficult to learn the language”, according to Monique. When asked what her biggest successes in the school were she said:

We do very well in planting the love of our main language to our children.

This is important. And the other thing is that we create awareness for our children that learning other languages is important for them and their future.

Because as you know, when you get older the opportunities are better if you know two languages rather than one. So they will have more chances to get a good job in the future. That is what I am telling my kids. Maybe here in Canada or maybe overseas, they can go.

Although there are not many children in Monique’s school (the class began with 22 and finished with 13), the student body is diverse. Even with such a small number of students, not all speak the language at home, some families speak the language mixed with English, and some of the students are bicultural (meaning their parents come from two different countries), and some are age-appropriately fluent. While both parents may be immigrants, they may speak English at home. She describes some of the families “Well this has happened with just one student or two because at home they speak English. So he doesn’t understand [the language] from zero. Because their dad is not [from my country]. Their dad was from [another

country with a similar language]”. While my kids for example, although they have a hard time speaking [the language], but they understand. She “think[s] the school is the only school that teaches [the language] from the alphabet”. Still, both parents and teachers in the school would consider a Canadian approach to teaching them their language would be most appropriate and interesting

At times Monique feels frustrated by this position. She feels that many people rely on her to get things done which benefit them greatly, but they are unwilling to make a personal contribution. She says, “Well you know I feel bored from that because I give. If they want something that is a benefit from them, why don’t THEY ask? We do. WE always need to give all of the information?”

At the time of this interview, Monique was unsure if the language program would continue. She was fairly certain that she would no longer be willing to organize it.

Monique’s interview demonstrated how she worked to help meet the needs of her heterogeneous community. She pointed out that the community itself had a combination of “refugees, some of them are immigrants, and a few percent are students”. Even with her very small number of students at her HL school, diversity was evident with children near fluent and children not yet speaking their HL.

According to Hornberger's power relations in the continua of biliteracy (2002), literacy and literacy instruction are structured differently in less powerful communities than in more powerful communities. Her literacy theory explores the context of instruction, the development of literacy, the content of what is taught, and the media. Throughout the interview, Monique has shown that she is aware of the differences between her community and the mainstream community. She has reasoned that her school seeks to be more similar to a traditionally more powerful community by a) "teach[ing] [the language] from the alphabet", b) not using traditional religious methods of literacy instruction, and c) using cultural materials from the media such as "songs from my country" which are easy to find now because "on the internet you can find anything." Monique believes that her community's children need more than language lessons; that they need an educational approach which is based on what they already experience in K-12. She speaks of the curriculum: "The way how we teach the kids should be not the same as back home, because it's boring and they're now used about learning through play in their schools. Always we have to put interesting things in front of them", she is demonstrating that the children understand the educational methods of the mainstream, and if HL school is going to attract the children, then the teaching HL

methods need to match the children's expectations.

Emerging communities: Candy (Community Development Specialist). “My good news stories are more about the people who organize it.”

Over the course of her career, Candy has worked with multiple ethnic communities, helping them to achieve their goals of integration into Canada. She identifies with immigrant cultures since her parents were European. She understands that people are capable of being a member of an ethnic community as well as Canadian and believes that this duality is beneficial. Of her personal experience, she states, “I believe, I came from immigrant parents as well, after a war, and I believe you keep some of your culture and your HL and you live and grow in Canada, so you can get two cultures in one person. And that's great.”

Candy defines her job with the statement, “The work I do is to empower communities to do the programs that they feel their communities need as one that empowers communities to meet their own personal targets”. In most instances, she says, “Everybody comes here first to say I need money.” So she asks them to step back and analyze their community's needs and aspirations. She then requires them to look at the issues that they have identified and to look for the capacity located

within the community itself. She helps them to “start a board”, define its “vision, mission, and goals”, and then as a final step, apply for funding if it is appropriate.

She describes her role as the following:

So everybody comes here first to say I need money. So I say hang on here, let's back up, let's talk to your membership and whomever you believe is your community and we will ask everybody what you want to do. So there is usually capacity within your community to deal with different issues, right. So, that is kind of where I start things at. Then if there is money for HL or an arts group or whatever, then I connect them up, if they have the capacity, board, or whatever, to do that.

Setting up a board is a fairly simple process to accomplish, but it has many legal ramifications that are poorly understood by not only groups with limited knowledge of English literacy and Canadian legal systems, but also mainstream Canadians as a whole. Candy says:

In Alberta, you can get a one-page bylaw off a website, sign it and have three people in a room and have yourself a board in 20 minutes. Would you like to start a board with me, we will get one more person down the hall and it is just that easy. That doesn't mean that they have a full understanding of

how to do a board or to make it legal. You need to have a legal entity to run money and have members to rent and a lot of that kind of legal stuff sets groups up for failure because it is hard. Like I am on boards with all sorts of main stream Canadians. We struggle.

According to Candy, most groups' first goals include setting up a language or arts program for the communities' children. She says, "It's a burning need in every community. It's always in their bylaws. It's one of the goals in any society that I have ever seen." This goal of teaching the children language usually is set by an elder in the community who has lived in Canada a little bit longer than most and sees that the problems that are created when parents and children are unable to communicate with one another. She describes the start-up procedure as:

So there are always some senior elder-type people who have been here for a bit and the new immigrants and refugees come and they always start organizing around these issues, youth are losing the culture and they don't know the language, or the kids are getting in trouble. We need something for them to do. [...] People are worried that their children don't have the same language, there is always that issue of the parents can't learn English fast enough, so how are you going to talk to the kids anymore?

Candy feels that the successes of language, arts, and heritage programs have multiple benefits, not only for the children, but for the adult leaders and the communities as a whole. Benefits for the children include “get[ting] a little glimpse into their parents and their culture, or they hear the language at home and it kind of drifts away and then it comes back again if they come back to these schools.” For the communities, organizing schools, festivals, and performances is a great sense of accomplishment and personal pride. About groups, Candy explains, “There is a real culture, especially in this city to be organized around your culture. So they see other groups doing it and they say that is how we should be doing this. That is how we show ourselves; that is how we show our pride.”

While children and communities benefit from the schools, the true beneficiaries, according to Candy, are the program organizers. Before coming to Canada, most of the community leaders were well respected in their countries and communities. She sees these programs as allowing them to meet personal self-esteem needs: “They might have a low-status job at who knows where, like [a factory], but here they are president. And they have some power and that is huge.”

And when you have lost so much, a lot of people have lost their land, their culture, and everything, or they come from places where they couldn't

practice certain things. Having HL and arts is extremely important. So these are the things that kind of fill that need. I have got the job now, I've got some ESL, and what am I going to do for my community now? I need to organize.

Candy defines the schools that she has seen as “organically-organized”. To begin, the program’s needs are low and include a whiteboard, chairs, pop & chocolate bars and chips (also referred to as “healthy snacks” to appeal to funders), and teachers. Problems with keeping the school organized include finding on-going “decent funding”, “volunteers who get burnt out”, lack of “childcare” and “transportation”, lack of budgeting skills since “they don’t really know how to allocate properly”, and no proper curriculum. She also says that one of the first things that the teachers learn (who usually are also the same people who are organizing the program) is that they have to teach children, not only language. The children who attend these programs come with “all of the behavior problems” of a day-to-day public school class. Not having the required skills to manage the children’s behavior “causes volunteers to really get burnt out.”

The skills acquired by the leadership are numerous and included grant writing, budgeting, record-keeping, leadership development, paying people, and

teaching language. When asked about her dreams for HL education Candy offered the following recommendation:

I do think that so many groups want to do this and it is hard, they have to do it from finding the space, writing the grant, the budget, hiring the teachers and all that, to it would be great if there was kind of an incubator model.

And of course, decent funding: decent and continuing funding. And there are always going to be communities who need full support forever, and is that appropriate? I'm not sure. I always think that there should be more of that kind of stuff because it is preventative in the larger scheme of things.

And our government focuses too much on employment and LINC lessons rather than look at what supports a person in their new communities in those other aspects of life like language and culture and heritage, mental health and art, all of that has to happen with your survival job or your future job.

But nobody really thinks that way, so that is my dream.

Through Candy's comments one can see the development of a community through the skills acquired by specific leaders. She describes how leaders become aware of their community's needs, talents, and goals. As they work to meet these goals, which include parent-child relationships and cultural transmission, they

develop a set of business and leadership skills which they take back to their community. Hornberger's statement (1998) "By the same token, to what degree could such communities of support exist without the often heroic efforts of particular individuals?" is echoed by Candy's testimonial, "My good news stories are more about the people who organize it."

In Summary

With the exception of Fritz's HL school which had not been operating for many years and when it was in operation it was receiving provincial and federal grants to keep it functioning, all emerging schools faced challenges in keeping their schools operational. Three of the four schools were restricted to small operational grants offered by local municipalities. HL leaders were not able to offer their teachers' salaries due to restrictions of the available grants. HL leaders were also not able to collect money from community-sponsored businesses or families. Community-wide poverty limited the leaders' abilities to build the school. See *Table 4.1*.

Table 4.1. Characteristics of Emerging School Leaders' Schools.

	Fritz	Fane	Fabian	Monique	Candy
Finances					
- Municipal grant	no	yes	yes	yes/no	yes
- Salary to teachers		no	no	no	no
- Students pay fees	no	no	no	\$20/yr	no
- Business leaders	no	no	no	some	no
Curriculum					
- Formal curriculum document	no	no	no	no	no
- Access to L1 books	no	no	no	yes	no
- Other teaching materials	no	no	no	yes	no
Day-to-day operations					
- Sufficient numbers of teachers	no	no	no	no	no
- Need to provide snacks		yes	yes	yes	yes
- Need to provide transport	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
- Access to a secure space		no	no	yes	no
Community-wide issues					

- Lack of parental L1 literacy	yes	yes	yes	some	Yes
- Community poverty	yes	yes	yes	some	Yes
- Parent-child division due to language loss	yes	yes	yes		Yes
- Power imbalance in family due to language loss	yes	yes	yes		Yes

None of the four HL leaders in this study had a curriculum document designed to support teachers in their schools. As Candy, the community developer states, curriculum and school activities tend to be “organic”. Only Fritz worked with the IHLA/SAHLA to develop curriculum. It is not known if Fritz found IHLA/SAHLA’s help in curriculum development as a result of search for funding, but Candy recognized that emerging schools need support and called for an incubator model to copy. Monique’s school had an advantage that the other three did not have—multiple books and teaching materials available in her language. As she explains, she seeks materials for her school from neighbouring countries, but selects songs and YouTube videos from her country. This luxury is not available for Fane and Fabian. Fane’s school curriculum consists of attempting to use a national

textbook and Fabian's community has almost no written texts at any level.

Poverty impacted the community and was comorbid with low levels of familial L1 literacy. HL leaders struggled to find a safe space for classes, provide snacks, and get children to classes. Once children entered the K-12 system they quickly surpassed their parents in literacy skills and oral English. Community HL leaders report that HL parents tell them that the power shifts within the family in favor of the children as a result of schooling and that parents feel disempowered to parent their children appropriately.

The four emerging communities in the study had many parents without formal education in their first language and were often illiterate in any language. In addition to the language loss experienced by the community's children, community members were plagued by poverty and faced challenges integrating into Canadian society or what Bourdieu (1973) would call learning habitus. Many of the parents had weak language themselves, as a result of years spent living in a refugee camp and being denied the opportunity to attend school. These HL leaders show that their primary concern is for the well-being of the community as a whole and that the organization of the school is one small but significant part of that. In other words, concern about the individual student's well-being is inextricably woven into the

well-being of the community. Due to financial, familial, and community pressure, leaders spoke about often tiring from trying to be too many things for too many people. Still, whilst these community leaders are attempting to create positive energy and development for their communities, they are also learning business and organizational skills which help the community integrate into the larger Canadian society or habitus (1978). If Monique's HL school seems to be the most "advanced" among the three, it is most likely because her community is the most connected to other communities who could teach them "the Canadian way" for securing space, seeking funding, organizing curriculum, and ensuring safety. This was evidenced when she explained that her children attended HL school in another community and one of the parents accessed materials from a third country. It is exactly this knowledge within the community that leads to schools being sustainable institutions.

Community HL School Leaders in Long-Standing HL Communities

The second group of community leaders are from "emerged" communities. Some of the common characteristics of these communities are that they have been in Canada for extended periods of time (more than 20 years), are leaders of schools that have existed at least five years, and have families in their schools with economic security. Although their original community may have once been

refugees, the most recent of immigrants (if there are any, since some HL schools have few or none) to these communities would now be economic migrants, entering Canada with language skills in “English and/or French, education, work experience, and other factors that have been shown to help newcomers prosper in Canada” (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp>).

In emerged communities, a shift occurs and the school, which was once a place where the children could both meet and help their parents adjust, transforms into a place where the children can learn the language for their own personal benefit. From the leaders’ points of view, the leadership role means taking more responsibility for a school instead of taking care of an entire community. Still, their workload remains large since the expectations in the school grow to Canadian norms. As you will see in the stories, many communities (not all) still have memories of being “emerging”—when they once came to Canada as refugees. Over time, these once refugee communities become more settled and adapt to the expectations of mainstream Canada.

Emerged communities: Ford. “OK, we have to do something that is ESPECIALLY for the kids. And it is only for them. Because they grow up when

they are 25, 20, 18, they HATE their community because it didn't give anything to them when they were a child. They couldn't understand, they didn't have any attraction to go there."

Ford is an accomplished science and math teacher who explains that his true interests are not in the sciences, but in the arts. He explains, "I am a physics and math major teacher, but my passion is literature. I am myself a poet. I write poems. I am a very good writer." He has worked in this field for many years in Canada, but was saddened that his language and culture was not represented in the languages taught in high schools. He tells that "Plan A was to have [our language] as a credited course in high schools. But it's a long process, very long. You have then to have an Alberta Education authorized curriculum. You have to have a certain registration and non-denomination." With a passion for language preservation and a dedication to the fine arts, he decided to open a cultural and language school. He began his school by exploring with "two mentors" who "were founders of the schools that couldn't succeed." He learned from them that the school had to stand alone from other community organizations since their foci were not purely educational and that, because the schools were linked with other organizations, they were subject to outside attacks and conflicts of interest. He tells about what he discovered:

There was in fact a school like 25 years ago, but they shut down. And then another group started 17 years ago, but then they shut it down. I talked to those people as pioneers. And then I figured out why they didn't succeed. The reason was that the whole school was part of a society, part of the community. It was not independent. It was dependent on something that was not educational purely. It means that the principal and the teachers should be chosen by elected members of the boards. And so one year they were good. And another year they were enemies. Oh! He's doing so good, so there was some kind of envy. So they started to push him down. And the other school was very much into religion. So again they were dependent on something which was purely educational. So that was my agenda. No connection with no society. Nothing of religion at all. No politics. Someone that loves to teach, someone who loves to have this school, working, that's it. No bossing around. Nothing. And that worked. Because the first group that I was working with, they were these kind of people. And they were into, they loved to be in power. They had a political texture. I don't.

Through talking with those who had gone before him, Ford realized before he even began the school the level of commitment and passion it would take. He

states:

Yes, I mean the first thing that you think of is to have that school, just to start the school, just to put some teachers or instructors in there, get some students, and let's do it! That's me as the founder, director of the school thinks. I was thinking of this with my team. But then the challenge starts. Like any combination. You get married. All of the things that you think, just to get that done. But then you go to the same house and you start having problems. It's hard to deal with those problems. It was the same for us. And I think what really maintained the integrity of the school was the passion of the participants. As the teachers, the persons who are in charge of the technology, copying, making, and also the director. So we had the same passions. And then we started to recruit from the volunteers. And then the other thing was "how can we develop the curriculum?"

Although Ford claimed that he is not a political person, he is definitely politically astute. Before the school even began, he started to look for those who would support him. These included politicians, the school boards, community members, university student groups, and "smaller intellectual groups". He adds that "We invited the MLA and we invited the Mennonite Center. Anybody who would

come, the mayor, they all came to the events. They would say, ‘Wow there are like 700 of them.’ [...] Then we even invited the Minister of Education.” He spent two years recruiting parents and teachers at events stating, “Do you want your children to learn [our language]? Yes? Email and contact information. I gathered all of this over seven or eight events.” He founded a society which only allowed teachers and parents as members. He began to use community events to recruit potential students because “an isolated school without a community dries out after a while.”

Being able to lead a school requires many capabilities and skills. When asked what skills were necessary to make a school leader, Ford says, “It’s a set of qualifications that qualify you for doing successful social campaign. It needs diligence, it needs resistance, consistence, it needs a good wife, it needs a supportive family, it needs vision, it is networking, it needs charisma. And it needs a very healthy lifestyle.”

Ford recognizes that the community’s children need a balance of education and community building. He explains that “students should not expect to have fun”; it is meant to be about learning. He sees his school teaching these skills of dedication to task-mastery is something that is lacking in the Canadian school system. He says:

Don't make students to expect to have fun in calculus and math, and chemistry and everything else, because finally, they have to study this stuff. And where is the fun? A very strong habit established from Kindergarten will take care of them when they are in university. That's why 32% of the students drop out of the school. Because simply they said it is no fun. Oh I hate math! Why do they hate math? Because it is no fun. And that is what we are working on with our own students. We want to teach them that not everything that they learn is learned through fun. Sometimes it is hard work only. And they learn it. When you go to the classrooms, unlike Canadian classrooms, students are sitting there and they are organized, and if they want even to walk and to put their trash in the garbage, they have to ask for permission. That's how we conduct the classes back home. So the teacher is in absolute power and the students are not treated bad, but they are treated closely.

When deciding on the curriculum Ford made the conscious choice of using his country's national textbooks which "a retired teacher for back home with 25 and 26 years of teaching experience bought them and then she brought them herself in her suitcase."

While Ford wants the students to develop academic skills, he recognizes that these need to be balanced with enjoyment explaining “See, you have to make it fun for students to come. And then they learn.” He makes sure that fun is incorporated into every class day. Each week children get at least one hour of fun activities including “clowns every month or every three weeks, we have games so that everybody can participate, we have pizza day, we have potlucks, we go and see a movie together, and we go outside and we play soccer.” He has a similar philosophy for community events and strongly believes that at least some events need to be established for the children’s community. Many of the events are for the entertainment of adults and the children are regarded as a nuisance. He describes a typical community function, “So you invite all of the comedians, that’s fine, you dance and somebody sings, and obviously none of the children understand, because they are not that good in [the language], and then you have a glass of wine and some beer, go here and there, what the hell should the children do?” To counteract this Ford has established events in which the entertainment is directed at the language level and interest of the children, they “never serve alcohol at these events”, and children are made the priority. Ford says his daughter and many other children in the community have a new attitude towards her community as a result of their

attendance.

As Hornberger (1999) states:

language maintenance / revitalisation efforts [can] be an arena for bottom up language planning, i.e. for local, indigenous, grassroots groups to exercise real decision-making power over the design and implementation of their own literacy education (p. 163)

Certain themes run through Ford's words which show that he is clearly an active agent in the development of his community's language revitalization efforts. He observed that the community's children were not able to fully participate in the community because the events were designed at the language level and the interests of the adults. He had a desire to create a welcoming space for the community's children and believed that the way to do this was to create opportunities for them to participate in meaningful and attractive ways. He sought to make the community meaningful by trying to improve the language skills of the children through the creation of a school. He made school and community events pleasurable by having parties, activities, and entertainment for the children as "an avenue for cultural expression" (Hornberger, 1999, p. 161). To cite Hornberger (1999), Ford opened "a door of opportunity for the disempowered" (p. 160), in this case, the community's

children.

Ford did not work alone. He sought out the expertise of others in both his community and in the HL learning community as well. In fact, he clearly demonstrated that he knew that “planning at the regional and national level without taking the local level into account may run into unexpected resistance” (p. 163). Some of his strategies for taking the local into account were a) asking those who had tried to create a school in his community and failed, b) understanding both school systems and trying to include elements of both in order to teach the culture and to appeal to the children, and c) consulting with the teachers and the parents about using a national textbook which may offend some with certain elements. Even if the choice of textbook had opposition because of the religious elements, he managed to convey to parents “the inevitable and necessary link between language and culture” (p. 160).

Emerged community: Victor. “The objective of the school now is the children. Those are the things we have; the children have to be happy in the school. In there, they have to learn first the language and the culture and they have to be part of the community. They have to have support within the community and they have to

support the community as well. So, the children come first, the language and the culture come second (you could say 2a & 2b) and the community comes third.”

Victor was a political refugee and came to Canada as a teenager. His community’s story is a testament to emerging groups—success and stability in one’s community are possible in due time. Multiculturalism is a principle that he holds dear to his heart since he faced racism on both fronts. He feels that Canada is his only home because he has “no other country to go home to.” To complicate his situation, he is a member of a minority group, which is why he needed to flee his country of origin to begin with. He has felt racism on many fronts, stating, “When I came to this country there were people who embraced me from outside of my community and there were people who hated me within my community, so I understand tolerance from different cultures and different values and why my father did things that I wouldn’t be proud of doing.” He feels that there are core ethical principles that all people can follow regardless of faith and political association and, apart from these (such as not harming others), beauty lies in differences.

According to Victor, the school began in 2006 “the church, but because of some logistical problems, the community was no longer able to use it”. The school was taken over by a member of the community who “formed the school and the

association”. According to Victor, “some parents were not satisfied” and the school took “a new direction”. Like Ford’s community, some need more than one attempt to create and secure a HL school. This shows that multiple obstacles prevent schools from developing and that knowledgeable leaders always need to be considering sustainability.

The students in Victor’s school are “[language] as a second language students” “whose primary language is English”. All were born in Canada and a few children are the products of intercultural marriage, with only one parent being from the language community. The children are often not able to understand the language of their parents with him stating, “there is a generational gap between what they understand and what their ancestors understand”. In Victor’s opinion this is a reflection of language abilities and cultural differences. An important aspect of the school for the children is learning how to relate to their parents and to “understand why they do what they do.” Victor says, “What we teach our students about [culture and language] may seem old to other people, but it is new to our students.” Although his school could teach history from the former country, Victor states, “And there is no point in teaching the history to the children because that does not apply to the children here.”

Victor feels that his community in Canada has different values and culture than those from his first country and repeatedly states that is why most came to Canada initially. Unfortunately the school is unable to find teaching materials that meet the school's objectives. He explains, "We get material and books from there that is non-politically motivated. We get people who go there to buy clothing. We use the country as a marketplace, not as a place of influence on us." Victor says that they have looked everywhere (on-line, in the home country, other schools) to find appropriate materials that will meet the school's goals, but have been unable to find them. While the school does have two Alberta-trained teachers "who have been in the teaching profession for a long time", but as Victor points out "they are not in the field of curriculum development". As Bilash (2002) found, multilingual teachers can compartmentalize language instruction and believe that methods which work in one language are not appropriate in another. This makes for selecting materials challenging when instructors believe that different methods need to be used.

Victor's community has been in Canada for over 30 years and, as a result of their hard work and commitment, the community is dispersed throughout the city. Victor explains "If you talk about ten or fifteen years ago, downtown was a very

close location to our community, but not now because of the upward mobility of the people.” The school is located in a university in the city centre; Victor points out that this location was chosen “because everybody has to come to the same place.” While there are many benefits of using the current location (centrally-located, available parking), it also has many drawbacks according to Victor:

Yeah, sometimes we have people complain because our children make noise, typical of the way that children do. We hold classes on a Sunday. If we operated on another day we might be kicked out. So at the moment, it’s the best facility that we have. We ideally would like to have something that is catered for us and designed for us, like an elementary school. That could be a lot nicer. We can’t use one though because they will only rent to us on a Saturday.”

Victor feels that both children and parents have experiences that they would otherwise not receive if they were not part of the HL school. Of the children, he states:

A couple of the mothers came to me and said Thank God for the school because their kids are laughing and they are not shy anymore [in reference to HL school]. And there are a lot of kids that are not communicative in the

regular school environment because of all of the other pressures of competition, because of their background or skin colour, because they are in a class where only one or two of them are the same. At school, they feel they don't belong, but here they do. They have a chance to actually express themselves and become a leader. You know that there are kids that wouldn't talk before, [and now] actually stand on a stage and sing by themselves or follow along in dances. In their regular schools, they would never have that chance or they wouldn't want to do it.

When discussing parental involvement of the school Victor states:

I think that there is a tendency for parents in this school to become more involved in our school, but also on a different level. They might be more involved here because they are needed, but also because some barriers are removed. In public school there is a language barrier. You know, some of the parents want to go on field trips or explain some kinds of math problems. They want to go, but they can't because they are not well versed in English, so they feel shy. But here, it is an easy environment. So they feel more confident, they are more involved, because there are less hang-ups. They can actually read for the kids. They don't have the barrier of accents.

When asked what some of the challenges were in organizing a school such as his, Victor had an extensive list: finding additional sources of funding (because casinos and tuition “are the only two sources of funding that we have”); having difficulty deciding on which type of language to teach because the community comes from “different backgrounds and different regions of [the home country]”; staffing language teachers who are “certified as teachers”; sourcing ready-made materials that “accomplish what we want to do”, “school equipment”, “electronics” and storage “space”, “paying salary for the teachers”, developing curriculum which “is still a work in progress”, repaying parents who “let us borrow money to rent the building”, finding cultural teachers for dance, singing, and other cultural activities), and dealing with Alberta Education which Victor “thought it would be easy, but actually it was not that easy”.

Emerged communities: Sage. “So his kids and my kids used to go to a private school. So they had no connection to our language. But the K-12 school, they had English. So we were like, how are we going to give our kids that language and our culture? So we decided to run this school because we wanted to connect them with the language.”

Through her affiliation with the Saturday school and the IHLA/SAHLA Association, Sage was supported in her efforts to become an Albertan certified teacher. She eventually started to work in a “K-12 school system”. For her Saturday program she has created her own program. Despite being the most academic program for her language in the city, she still has challenges finding appropriate materials for her school. She tells that she has to “pick and choose” what she uses in class as materials from back home that are age appropriate are often too difficult. She explains, “That’s where I just scan it for myself. I give them the part that they need to do. I don’t just give them a book. I pull out stuff that they need to learn.”

The educational system that her children experience here is different from the one she had as a child in her country of origin. This same sort of comment was brought forward by both Ford and Victor. Teachers elsewhere, according to Sage, are afforded much more respect from the students. She describes, “The culture is totally different in schools. Back home there is not any teacher that goes by where we don’t greet that teacher. Here it is the other way around. Here the teachers greet the kids.” Still, Sage believes that the educational system in Canada is superior because boundaries between teachers and students are removed. She explains:

Because the way I see it, there were a few things we were hesitant to ask

teachers because we were scared. So here, kids are so frank with the teacher.

They are so friendly with the teacher. Any question that comes into their heart, they will put their hand up. How come we are doing this? Why did they do this in the past? What does this mean in religion? Here there is no pressure; there is no fear. And so I think this is the better environment to learn.

Sage had to learn how to become a Canadian teacher. She appreciated the education she received in teaching a second language at the university as well as the extra instructional lessons she received at the IHLA/SAHLA. She says, “Wow! That is how you do it. So it is always good, and you always improve. In this profession you can never say that is it, I cannot learn more than this. Learning, learning, learning. That is what I believe. I am still learning.”

Because of her commitment to obtain her Alberta teaching credentials, she is also a teacher in the K-12 system where she teaches among other things, language classes. When she realized that “numbers were going down”, she went to great effort to advertise by going “to all of the religious institutions and put[ting] flyers up that the school was offering courses in my language”. The reaction of her administrator towards her effort was surprising. Sage explains:

Oh yes. I feel like it is my responsibility to do this for my community.

Because sometimes there was a point where in public school where numbers were going down. It is like our community made so much effort to make this program into the school system. But if you don't keep it, if you don't let parents be aware of that, then it will die. But my administrator, she doesn't want me to advertise, so it was very challenging for me. I cannot go against my administrators, right?

While the school board was willing to hire her as a teacher and employ her to offer language classes, it was not encouraging her to make the program stronger. Since the language classes already had a wait list, they discouraged students from studying, rather than offer more classes. "So, she told me not to advertise. I am still shocked at that. But you feel like, really? So it depends which school and which administrator that you are with. You face so many challenges." This comment shows the disempowerment that the school board can place on language teachers. In terms of language planning, however, decisions that are made at the lower levels of school have future consequences. Students who cannot take classes in younger years might lose confidence or interest in taking classes later on or might not have sufficient time to ameliorate their language skills before they become parents

themselves. Not being able to develop long-term strategic plans impacts the sustainability of programs.

Sage sympathizes with the HL teachers because they are not “paid well” and many of them struggle to get their credentials recognized. She knows that there also has to be a balance between what parents are willing to pay for language classes and what teachers deserve to earn. She knows their dedication and shares:

You know the very experienced teachers, that’s what they feel like they are supposed to be doing. They feel like they are doing what they want to do, we hire those people. Rather than just anyone, because there isn’t much money in heritage schools. Sometimes we tell them it will be volunteer. But there are more experienced teachers who work at McDonald’s or Tim Horton’s. But Sunday is the one day where they feel like that’s where they belong.

In 1993, Hornberger and Micheau described a bilingual program for Spanish-English bilinguals in middle school. The researchers described the coordinator of the program with the following paragraph:

Early in our observations, the coordinator affirmed her commitment to staying with the program despite innumerable obstacles, using the phrase,

“I’ve gotten far enough; I like where I am.” Thus, she told us, was her unspoken response upon being told she wouldn’t “get very far in the school system” by an official with whom she was interceding on behalf of the program.

These comments issued by both the program coordinator and the school official are strikingly similar to the experiences and comments of Sage. Similarly, she was discouraged from promoting her HL within the school system by the administrator and from the HL community through organizational challenges. Yet despite the setbacks, she shares:

My husband told me what are you doing? Every year you don’t know how much assignment you get? He always says why? Why are you wasting your time? So, I struggle sometimes to try to convince people that is what I am going to do and that I wouldn’t be happy in another profession.

Emerged communities: Laurie & Rory. Laurie says, “You know, people are like trees. If you cut a tree and it doesn’t have any more roots, the tree dies. The same thing happens to people as well. When they come from different countries, they cut their roots, but smart people, they bring their roots with them. And heritage schools

are the roots so you can grow new trees.”

Laurie and Rory’s community has existed in Alberta for “100 years” when “70 people were coming to this church and there was a small population. Right now the population is higher than before, but fewer people come to the church.” The married couple work as part-time educators in one of the couple of schools in the province that teach their language. They have been in Canada for over 20 years and brought their very young children with them, all of whom now speak their HL well. This was not an easy feat for her children as she explains, “When we came here, our boys were only four years old and they only started talking at three years of age because they were triplets. They didn’t need to communicate with us. They had their own language, they understood each other and they didn’t need to talk with us” Rory has professional training in the sciences and Laurie works currently with one of the larger “school board[s], not only as a teacher, but also as a multicultural worker”. Before starting their current HL school, they spent seven years with “the other HL school.”

Laurie was part of a team that developed her community’s HL course. She explains the process “So, we worked together as a team with someone who was at that time the curriculum coordinator of Alberta Education. [...] And then we

decided because we have several schools [across the province], we decided to re-write it a little bit, and make one, instead of every school writing its own.” Together with Alberta Education and two other teachers in different cities, an Alberta Education approved course was designed. To design the course, those involved used the somewhat generic Alberta Education framework which “is good for all languages” and added their own “facts about the language”, “language’s syntax and grammar”, and “culturally-based topics”. In addition, Alberta Education makes no requirement about the delivery methods of the program so that “how-to-teach” can be delivered in a culturally-appropriate manner as well. She feels that the process of designing a curriculum is not too difficult if the teacher “has a very good knowledge of the language and of the culture” and “if she is a native speaker and she has this education”. Laurie describes the process as:

What I used, because I have all three grades, and I have lots of students who come just to write their challenge exams. That is why it is very important, but on the other hand we have topics as well. Every year like 15-25-35, we have different topics. And they are very culturally-based. Like let’s say we are talking about the family tree. If you are talking about what you do in Vietnam, of course you will talk about Vietnamese families: how they raise

the children, what are Vietnamese traditions, what are the customs. Or if we talk about literature, of course it will be based on Vietnamese authors, not Chinese, or French, right? In my language, we use ours. So this is very culturally-related.

Still, Laurie and Rory point out that they find it challenging to recruit appropriate teachers to expand their school or ensure that the programs continue. Rory says “For us, we are looking for good quality teachers because the school is growing and we need teachers for different levels.” While Laurie points out that this is a problem facing many HL schools in general, it is specific to her school as well. When finding specific teachers, Rory says,

And for us it is a really difficult problem for us to find a teacher for our credited school because you have to have a license to actualize the whole program. We have several HL schools here, but just one credited school because of Alberta Education requirements.

While in emerging schools Fritz, Fabian, and Fane’s communities were challenged to find any teachers, others mentioned how difficult it was to find suitable teachers. When talking about HL teachers in general, Laurie explains that some schools may have a large selection of overseas-trained teachers to choose

from, but cautions that quantity does not ensure quality. She adds, “Because you are a teacher doesn’t mean that you are a good teacher.” Furthermore, many of the potential candidates were trained to deliver content to native speakers, thus making them less than ideal candidates for the language classroom.

Laurie in particular is keenly aware of the vulnerability and fragility of the HL system because few are able to do what she does. As the sole HL teacher in the city who “has students come just to write their challenge exams” and “teaches 15-25-35” in her HL school, should she lose her health or even decide that she simply no longer wants her position, no one is in place to take over for her. Laurie tells the story of a colleague whose 80 students were left without classes “Because she was the only one. And now she is sick, she cannot do it, so the school is closed.” Rory supports her position with the following statement, “There is no one who can continue what we start.” This is the exact situation of her friend in another city who fell ill, leaving the community without its sole teacher. Rory adds that the environment is not even conducive to training new teachers to cope with the Canadian context since the teaching-time with students is so limited. He explains, “You know, sometimes you can find good teachers, but you know, we don’t give many opportunities for teachers. We have just a part-time job, it is just four hours

per week. How do you improve in that time?” Sustainability becomes an issue with few people feeling motivated to stay in the field long enough to develop professional excellence.

While it is difficult for the teachers to learn how to teach in just a few hours per week, it is even more difficult for the students to learn. With her regular day job, Laurie counsels parents about language loss and how to try to prevent it. She says that the first preventative step is to not allow children to speak English with their parents. The first step of her procedure is “don’t forget to ask them to reply to you in your language, not in English. That is how they lose it.” Yet, the way that parents can improve their children’s language skills is to supply with an adequate productive vocabulary so that they can express themselves. Laurie says, “When you want to expand and talk with your child about something beyond the table, you see that there is no vocabulary.” Ideally, she sees this as a school-parent initiative, in which schools provide the proper academic environment and parents reinforce what is learned at school. Laurie explains:

Oh yes, because in the school we read stories and we talk about some topics that are not only related to your house. And of course, it builds your vocabulary. It is a slow process, especially if you think about HLs only being

offered once a week. If the parents don't continue working with the children, if they don't reinforce what was learned throughout the week, nothing will happen. I tell you. And I tell parents, we will give you homework, please spend 10 minutes every day doing extension in the language, reading a fairy tale, watching a cartoon, memorizing a poem, so when they come back next week, they will be able to recite it.

Despite asking parents to make a small daily commitment to their children's language education, both Rory and Laurie acknowledge that some parents are unable to keep it. Rory indicates "For kids, teachers are very important people, but also for kids are parents." According to him one of the jobs of the teachers is to help parents understand their role in providing language education. He explains, "So we have to work hard to organize all of these relationships and systems. After a whole year, the kids have a better idea what to do. This is very important."

Laurie and Rory have demonstrated that they understand the complex relationships between the speakers of the language community, the Canadian context where they are trying to keep their language, and the educational policies which govern language education in the province. According to Hornberger and

Hult (2008), an ecological approach to language planning and policy requires study of multiple elements in tandem. In this view, analytical emphasis is fourfold: on relationships among languages, on relationships among social contexts of language, on relationships among individual speakers and their languages, and on inter-relationships among these three dimensions. “(p. 282):

Rory explained that an increase in the number of speakers did not necessarily transfer into an increase of speakers in the language community. Whereas in previous generations speakers tended to belong to religious communities, today, Rory reports, this is changing. Furthermore, he brought the children into the language community through an international sojourn.

Hornberger and Hult (2008) educated, “It becomes clear, then, that in an ecological approach, properties of societal multilingualism are viewed in tandem with individual behaviors” (p. 281-282). Laurie explains how English becomes the dominant language of the family through limited interaction between parent and child which in turn reduces the amount of vocabulary to which the child is exposed. She describes the processes which parents must follow to ensure that the home becomes a language learning environment. She acknowledges that the school is limited in making this happen because students only meet with teachers for a few

hours each week and because teachers are given the responsibility of teaching only language and not other curricular subjects. Again, this is similar to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in which the individual is shaped by multiple forces in society. In this case, the home, the school, and the instructors all work to shape the child's language proficiency.

Hornberger and Hult (2008) ask the question, "How do language policies at multiple levels of social organization interact?" (p. 285). In this particular case Laurie and Rory are impacted by governmental policies in at least four areas which span from the provincial to the federal to the international: curriculum approval, teacher accreditation, immigration, and international language policy in the United States. Each of these policies constrains who is permitted to be a part of the educational and language learning community and what is allowed to be taught within it.

Emerged communities: Lydia. "There needs to be a level of professionalism when working with children."

Lydia is the embodiment of what many parents hope their children achieve after their participation in HL education—a modern, young professional with a

dedication to multiculturalism, a passion for language, and a commitment to community building. Her parents were “both immigrants” and she is “a first generation Canadian”. She attended the same school where she is the leader now. In addition to being a teacher and a principal of a HL school, she also works as a vice-principal in a K-12 school and is completing further education in the field. Like many children who initially “grumbled” as a child that she was required to participate in HL education, she later found that it provided her with personal and professional advantages. Personally, she shares how she developed an interest in language learning (“knowing my language actually helped me with French”) as well she learned how to be more respectful of the differences in others (“there were kids of every race and it makes you really aware of other things that you maybe wouldn’t have been exposed to if it was otherwise”), and to look past these differences in order to see similarities (“had a lot in common with these other kids”). Professionally, she received work experience and leadership opportunities that she otherwise might not have had, stating “I had friends not get teaching jobs within two years and they got other careers”.

During her interview, Lydia was asked to provide her job description as an

educational leader in addition to her job as a high school teacher in her HL school. She listed the following tasks: submitting documents for “teacher certification” (both in Canada and overseas), creating a “Notice of Intent” for Alberta Education so that the school could continue to offer Alberta Education approved accredited programs, “paying rent” and keeping a positive relationship with the school, creating a “school calendar” in alignment with one of the school boards, “deal[ing] with Alberta Education”, “coming to the IHLA/SAHLA meetings” so that her teachers learn about professional development opportunities, maintaining records for “FOIP”, writing “the contracts for teachers”, writing “all the emails that go out to parents”, “plan[ning] field-trips”, “print[ing] off all of the certificates for the kids at the end of the year”, promoting the school, and maintaining positive community relationships by “advertise and invite other people”. She maintains that this list is not exhaustive, stating “I could go on and on and on.”

Lydia’s school has experienced many changes since her time as a student. As the current leader of this educational institution, she has worked towards making her HL school appear more “school-like”. Some of these elements that she listed during her interview were “writing our entire curriculum” based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), development of a new “program of

studies, because the programs of studies that we had were based on teaching students that were native to the language”, new student reporting procedures which include “turning them into I can statements”, materials sourcing, “vertical planning”, regular “half-hour staff meeting[s]”, teacher evaluations, “budget and finance” procedures, “monthly board meetings” and annual “AGM”, creation of early childhood programs (“a pre-k at age four, a pre-k at five, and kindergarten at six”), “supervision” during recess, minimum age-requirement policies, and school events that resemble K-12 schools (“games day”, “parish” involvements, “reading month”, and “field-trips”).

In addition to her time-management skills and professional expertise, Lydia is a leader. Even to this day she is the principal to some of those that taught her (“I am telling teachers who taught me what to do”) and she is friends with work colleagues from her HL school (“we are friends outside of school”). When speaking of school leadership she says:

And in reality, you really need someone up front who is willing to make those hard decisions. And you can talk to the teachers in my school. Sometimes I will make decisions that they don’t like or that they may not agree with, but I am like, it is for the betterment of the school. We are

changing our report cards and we are turning them into I can statements.

Let's go. We are changing our program of studies. Let's go. And they can't have the option of what they want to do. The minute you give people options, it is all of the hemming and hawing. Nope. This is what we are doing. Here is what we are working with and we need these results by this time. And it needs to be very structured along the way. It is the only way a school can function without falling apart. And yeah, there are always bumps in the road. And you learn. And sometimes it is hard for me because I am friends with a lot of these people outside of school. And I have to wear a completely different hat when I am at school to make those decisions.

Lydia speaks highly of the teachers in her school and she feels that she has assembled a good team of educators. Teachers have formal "interviews" for their jobs and sign "contracts". In addition to doing their normal professional responsibilities, Lydia is sometimes unable to "find those volunteers to the point where I have teachers sometimes filling in to do those roles". Those who work in her school are rewarded with a salary which she describes as "more than minimum wage, but less than a teacher's salary" and with multiple "professional development" opportunities offered by both IHLA and the school where they "come away from

those PD sessions with new ideas, new games, new activities.” When she talks about their credentials, she explains that only one is a parent in the school, and that this particular teacher does not instruct her own child and “Everybody has a degree, except for two out of ten. They have a degree but they don’t necessarily have a degree in education. In education, I have 5. And one in linguistics.”

According to Hornberger’s (2005) Language policy and planning chart (p. 29), Lydia’s school is in the process of reacquisition. Many of the students are no longer using this language as a first language. Lydia makes this explicit when she states that her school is now based on the CEFR which is a system devised by the European Union for second language speakers since the former program of studies was for those students who “were native to the language”. As demonstrated through her comments, major goals of Lydia have been to re-introduce the language through a developed curriculum and through community involvement. These are key components in Hornberger’s language planning policy.

What is most striking about Lydia’s narrative is how her professional identity as an educational leader has been shaped by opportunities experienced as a result of being a HL speaker with a teaching license, and reciprocally how her HL school has been shaped by her professionalization from the K-12 system. In her

narrative she shared that she gained access to the Canadian teaching profession through her skills acquired from experience with the HL community since “they needed a certified teacher to maintain their credit courses”. In Lydia’s case, being a teacher in a HL school helped her gain access to the teaching profession in Alberta. It helped her to nurture and cultivate leadership and school management skills.

Lydia could have chosen to leave her community once she gained employment in the K-12 system, yet she carries on as a dedicated leader in her community at a personal cost (a heavy time commitment, extra duties, a challenging role in which she navigates between friendship and leadership). Yet, it was in taking on her role as an educator that she saw the opportunities afforded to her by her bilingualism. Through these leadership experiences she came to understand Canadian multiculturalism, and tolerance and respect for others. Hornberger and Swinehart (2012) investigated community leaders in indigenous communities. In particular, they wanted to examine why some leaders became outspoken advocates for minority language learning in their communities. Their participants spoke of key instances in their lives when they came to understand the importance of speaking a non-official language. They cited:

In addition, these informants’ reorientation to their own linguistic practices

coincided not with “adulthood” generally, but with particular junctions and specific moments such as university study, a romantic relationship, a change in profession, or parenthood (Wollard, 2011, p. 36).

Emerged community: Violet. “My father immigrated here and it was that community of, “We need to provide language for our children, so we're going to do it in Saturday schools.” At that time, in the early 50's and 60's, every parish had a language school, but ours is the only one that survived, because when the numbers dwindled to 30, they never closed the school. They kept it functioning. That’s when I came along.”

Violet was born in Canada to immigrant parents. She attended the very school that she now manages stating, “I grew up in that school, because there was no bilingual program.” At the request of the church’s leaders in the 1980s, Violet took on the responsibility of the educational portion of the school. After teaching the program for nearly a decade, the religious leader “was just too old and had passed away.” She said to his replacement, “I just finally said to him, ‘You can come and teach religion, but assign me the principalship. Give me the authority to take over this school.’ When he said yes, enrollment shot from 40 to 100 in a few years.” Violet has shown that if you build a quality program, the parents and students will

come.

Like Alice, Laurie & Rory, Lydia, Violet is aware that communities and their needs change over time. Today who the students in the program are is different because the “community has changed”. Parents have the option of sending their children to a full-time bilingual program which “has taken students away.” Still, she believes that in many ways this is positive since it keeps people engaged with learning the language claiming “they're wanting to stay to learn” the language, albeit not in her school.

In addition to her job of managing the HL school, Violet “was teaching in the bilingual program” and she was also keenly aware of how K-12 schools operated. During her time as principal, she made many changes to the school’s physical operation so that it took on the appearance of a K-12 school. She started small and questioned the status quo, “But then my questions, because I was new, ‘How come there are no stickers? How come there's not a stapler here?’” Later she explains, “I changed the school building. I put color up, I put borders up, and I started a little library.” Eventually, this lead to Violet requesting other school equipment:

Yes, and that's the only way I ordered. And then money. If we want this, we

need money. So, I started calling our different community's organizations, but I always had a goal in mind. We need to outfit each classroom with a pull down screen and an overhead projector, or at least one overhead projector and a TV, whatever. I had my technology and they were all helpful. Of course, yes we could help you with this; that's part of our mandate here, but you have to write a proposal. Tell me what I have to write. I'll write it. So proposal writing for money.

Violet "created a kindergarten class" because the parents "saw a need" so she "created an opportunity". Early on in her time as leader of the school, she knew that the school needed to advertise. She met with some opposition because the religious leaders felt it was "unnecessary". She stated that the priest in charge said, "Everybody knows about this school, why advertise?" She responded to their gentle criticisms with "Generations have changed. Intermarriage, people moving in from other provinces. You can't assume that." She advertised not only in language/community newspapers, but in the English media, too.

Violet's program also continued to mature and became more focused over time. Her motivation is easy to understand. She explains "These kids that come on Saturdays don't deserve this. They're here on Saturdays. They deserve what public

education is offering them, so I'm bringing the standard up.” She adds that “They're coming here because their parents want them here, and their parents are valuing education.” However, having teachers recognize that parents and children make choices to participate in HL education since it is an “add-on and not a requirement” was not sufficient in making sure that the teachers let children have “fun”. She worked with her teachers in this way:

We're in Canada, and because they don't have to do this, I don't want to say we just want to play and have fun, because that word 'fun' does not translate into my language community, whatsoever. We don't want to show them, "Oh good time, oh you're doing well, oh good." We do want to teach them something, but we can't be harsh on them. I said also, "I want them to enjoy their time here. I want them to enjoy being immersed in the language." And I said, "How do you enjoy the language?" So, they had to give me the answers about how learning about a certain person, or whatever you want to teach, how that can be enjoyable to a child.

Managing diverse student language levels can be a great challenge in the classroom. However, her expectation for the teachers is to follow what is expected in the public school system. She explains, “You are looking at an average of ten to

12. Give me a break. If you cannot stimulate ten to 12 students, when I have 30 plus [in regular school] and I can do that and differentiate, you can do a little bit with a smaller class, too.” Again, Violet points out that in the K-12 system teachers are expected to deal with many types of student needs, and that these teaching skills are also essential to HL instruction. She states,

In public education-- and being an existing teacher now in the public education system, you hear the word 'diversity', but you also hear differentiation within your class. There are students of different levels in math, reading, writing, and everywhere. How do you work with them? What do they need? So differentiating things, and I can see how that can work in a HL school.

Violet is aware that students differ in their language skills. For her, a second practical implication of making a classroom fun for students is that oral language skills come first. Reading and writing skills are to be built on what the students can already say and understand. She describes her methods with, “What are the main things we want? We want them to be able to number one, speak. Do a lot of speaking. And then support it with the reading and the writing. So number one is speaking.” Part of this challenge was that, while many grammar and content materials were

easily accessible in her language, no speaking textbook was available for teachers to use.

For some teachers who are not educated in the Canadian system (and also including many who were), this is a very complicated concept. Violet believes that grammar needs to be taught in context. Violet's examples are "Well you know what, in this lesson you are going to write an invitation to a christening that's going to happen. Even a specific topic, how to deal with that. You're going to invite your friend from Toronto to come and visit. How would you form that?" Because she had Canadian training, she was able to guide internationally-trained teachers stating, "Because they recognized me as being a teacher in the public system in Alberta, they looked to me for ideas and my ideas stimulated them; and they went, "That's neat. It's neat. Well, that's a good way to do it. Oh, they'd like that." They at least were willing to accept some ideas." One way she coached her staff to use an approach led by oral skills was to have teachers to implement language games before beginning writing activities. She says:

Well, we can do this game, like teaching grammar, a grammatical rule, we can do it as a game. Sure. And then can you write, too? Because everybody wants to have a paper and pencil. Then do you want to give them some kind

of a written assignment to apply that? Because then they are comfortable with that. But then adding the game is something new and they are willing to do, because they can pair it up with reading or writing.

In Violet's community, there are "a lot [of immigrants] are coming here."

This gives her choices when selecting teachers for her school. However, most of the teachers trained from the host country bring with them an educational philosophy that is very different from the one in Canada—one which is driven by the mastery of facts, rather than concepts.

But it's what is within those components that has to be looked at, of importance, so that you're not saturating the child with facts, and facts, and things where they could care less. But would they care about the history of the country? What would entice them? We don't need to give them a university course on it. And I even say to people, "When I took Canadian history in university, it was only a certain time period."

Creating curriculum is a continuous cycle that shifts with each generation of students. Issues of finding people who are capable of writing and developing curriculum are essential to a school's sustainability. Violet links curriculum creation with student retention, stating "You've got to support it with a good, solid 'to date'

curriculum.” Currently, a certain section of the program is going through a major revision, and this revision is reflected by the changing student body. She recognizes that currently many of the students are born to first generation parents “new immigrants that have come into the school” as well as students for whom “mom or dad attended this school when they grew up”. She feels that many of the parents may be shifting from wanting language instruction to wanting geography and history courses, stating “and they found this and they like the content history, geography. That's the reason too, why I'm sending my child there; to get that added bonus, not just language.” According to Violet, parent desires are important since they guide the direction of the program. Balancing the vision of the program is not simply breaking groups apart; she says, “And then, it becomes clear, so if we don't want to segregate, we want to keep it as it is now, then our philosophy has to guide the program.” She encourages dialogue with parents and is surprised that many do not realize how much power they have in shaping the school curriculum explaining, “Whereas here, you have got the parents who don't realize they have the ultimate power and need to move this school. And maybe demand things from the principal, re-look the roles and responsibilities.”

Violet has shown considerable dedication and commitment to HL education

while raising her children, teaching, and taking care of “a husband who was ill.” Still, she has benefited enormously from her participation and recognizes some of the many skills that she has learned about operating a school that she would have never experienced in a classroom. Like Lydia and Alice in particular, she mentions what she has learned: “conducting official interviews”, creating “teacher contracts”, leading teachers (especially in “professional development”), “facilitat[ing] writing curriculum”, “advertising” the school, creating “a vision” for the program, “ask[ing] the community” for needed supplies, “organizing volunteers”, “applying for funding”, “making a newsletter”, “setting up a school calendar”, teaching overseas teachers how to adapt to a Canadian educational system, and most importantly, “grooming on of the teachers to take my [sic-her] place”. Finding a way to keep HL schools sustainable is of the utmost importance as Laurie told previously.

Like all of the other school leaders in this chapter, Violet has had to manage multiple tasks to keep her school operational over decades. Her perspective is unique, however, because not only has she been a part of HL education for almost fifty years, but she has been involved in almost every way possible: student, bilingual K-12 teacher, HL teacher in a community school, HL school principal, and now, parent. She has seen changes in the HL community occur over time and

recognizes that schools have to be responsive to them.

Hornberger (2002) uses “the metaphor of ecology language to explore the ideologies underlying multilingual language policies, and the continua of biliteracy framework as a heuristic for situating the challenges faced in implementing them” (p. 27). Hornberger defines her chart of “power relations in the continua of biliteracy” as “a way to situate research, teaching, and language planning in multilingual settings” (p. 36).

The majority of teachers in Violet’s school are newcomers to Canada; they come from a country where their language is the national language. In other words, in their home country their language is the language of power. Violet describes the teachers who immigrated to Canada as prioritizing more typical “academic” tasks, looking for grammatical and spelling accuracy, and wanting to transmit academic skills and facts to the students through history and geography. These teachers were trying to use teaching methods for languages that were as Hornberger’s chart describes as “traditionally more powerful”. The teachers in her school have been accustomed to working in an environment that develops literacy in children who are fluent speakers of an official language in a majority context. They have an expectation that children focus on learning how to complete written tasks, often

using decontextualized, literary language which is not accessible to Canadian children. This is in opposition to the students who have been raised in a minority language environment. They often have limited vocabularies and need to develop oral language skills in order to complete daily tasks in their everyday lives.

Violet prizes oral language knowing that students make grammatical errors and lack vocabulary and over pencil and paper tasks. She wants students to experience enjoyment and desire to learn the language over grammatical accuracy or literary knowledge. She feels that language activities needed to be contextualized which is why she insisted on tasks in the classroom such as creating a map with plasticine or writing an invitation to an event. Understanding the divergent goals of Violet and her teachers are perhaps not surprising in light of Hornberger's statement (p.40):

The challenge of popular demand for the societal language of power is a very real one in contexts all over the world, one not to be lightly dismissed.

In terms of the continua model, case after case shows that societal power relationships tend to favor macro, literate, and monolingual ends of the context continua; and national policy and school curricula tend to focus primarily on second language and productive skills in biliterate

development.

Emerged communities: Alice. “So we teach a lot, more than just books. Those are my goals because I don’t just want them to be academically good, I want them to be well-rounded people and good citizens.”

Alice’s school started “about 30 years ago by a group of parents”. It was founded by a refugee community who were a minority group in their home country who were expelled because of their race and language. According to Alice, the parents felt “There was a need to start a school so that the kids could learn how to speak [the language] together”. Although Alice was not a member of the school at that time, she re-tells the school’s history:

They had a board, it’s like an association, a committee. They sat together and they formed a board, and then they ran a school. At that time they had dancing and all of that. They were a sub-community of the association. How has it changed from the early days until now? The association and the school are still not changed, the change is the parents and the board. The board, they wanted something for their kids, so they were putting all their effort into making sure that the school was run and the board ran properly and everyone did all of their jobs. They weren’t only on the board, but they were

teaching as well. There were problems because the people were on the board and they were teaching, so there was a conflict of interest. Because the board was not supposed to be teaching, right? And they were teaching, and they received pay, they didn't keep proper accounts. But now, it is all clear, the board is the board. The administration of the school is the administration.

Her story elucidates how, over time, many of the challenges faced by emerging schools can be overcome with assistance and desire to create a sustainable system. Her story also shows the importance of teaching emerging schools how to divide and define of roles in a HL school how to budget and show financial transparency in the community.

Alice came to Canada as an exchange student to learn English. She enjoyed her early years in Canada explaining, "When I went to the ESL school, because we were all immigrants, we were all here in the same boat, so it was so beautiful that we could learn from each other". Her country of origin was different than the people who initially formed the school as well as the country in which it is used a sole national language. Although she shares the same mother tongue as the two previously mentioned groups, it is but one of three major languages in her country of origin. She appreciates cultural and linguistic diversity and is passionate about

language conservation, stating:

Well, I think that we need to preserve all of these languages, even the aboriginals, they have all of these languages that die. It's sad. Because it's part of being human. We should have something that preserves how beautiful they are. Languages are very beautiful to me. It doesn't matter what languages.

Alice has been involved with the school for over ten years. She responded to an advertisement in a local newspaper of which recanting the story she said, "It was over 10 years ago, 14 years ago or so? They posted an advertisement which read, 'It would be a good way to get involved in the community.' So I answered it, and that was it." She decided to become involved for personal reasons. She was taking English as a second language classes when she met and fell in love with her husband. She did not connect with her mother-in-law due to issues of race.

My husband complains all the time because "I don't see you on Saturday."

He wants me to spend time with him. Right? So at that time, during that time, when my mother-in-law was still alive she didn't like to see me, so I told him, "Saturday you go and spend time with your mother and take her out". So I would go to school. It was all fine over the last ten years. Now,

my mother-in-law has passed away.

According to Alice, issues with her parents-in-law are steeped in racism and ethnic power relations. She tells her experiences with them:

They think we are the superiors, we come here to save you. So they are more superior, so when we come here, they say you are taking my job and you are taking my land. But they were here to take the aboriginal/ first nations' land, too. But they think differently. Sorry, but that's how I felt when I met the parents. I was not accepted at first by one of the parents.

In her time as leader, Alice has made numerous beneficial changes to the school which included adopting a more standardized writing system, sourcing textbooks “that are from the [country's] embassy that are designed for overseas students”, starting a high school program with Alberta Education (“when I started, it was only kindergarten until grade eight. That was it. So now it is Kindergarten until grade 12.”), and locating appropriate teachers (“when I hire people, I don't care what color, if you have the skill, I hire you”). She has numerous tasks which include budgeting, developing a curriculum, keeping a positive relationship where they rent space, managing and keeping student records, writing school policy, and communicating with parents. She also imposes limits on what her school can

provide stating “That’s too much for us to organize that. I just don’t have time”.

Although her school cannot offer everything, Alice is willing to advertise for others, stating, “I am open to all kinds of activities, like brochures for the students who want dance, like they want to advertise dancing classes, I will put out there, adult classes, I will put it out there for the parents as well”. She feels “We have a different focus. So if other people are already doing it, why do it again?” When parents ask for these kinds of classes, without hesitation she directs them elsewhere in the community. She allows other groups to advertise their services and distribute promotional materials.

Alice’s school receives casino funding and without it, would cease to operate. She describes the process used to finance her school,

So, this is how we do it. So the tuition pays for the school’s operating costs for one year and then the casino pays for the next. If we didn’t have the casino, the school could not run because we would be short of funds.

Because the tuition we get about \$80,000, but the tuition we get about seventy some thousand dollars. So all of the administration, we pay for the whole year. It’s less than one person’s salary, for the whole year I would say.

Alice recognizes that there is a serious need in the community to build

school-parent relationships, but recognizes that the school staff “have no relationship with them because it is a lot of work”. She would like to have a gathering place for parents to connect with each other and build the community, but physical space is a concern: “There about three or four parents, they sit in the hallway and wait for their kids because we don’t have any extra room at all for them to sit in”. For her, understanding what kind of education parents want for their children is essential, but it is difficult to extract from them what they want. Alice explains, “Parents just want their kids to learn the language, they don’t know what the differences are between the other country and the kids here. And our parents, a lot of them don’t even come from the former country”. She adds, “They are here, they have never even been there. They don’t know what the differences are between the two systems. So they cannot understand”. However, Alice feels that a school-parent relationship is fundamental to the language learning success of the child. She says, “The kids’ success depends a lot on the parents because the teachers can only do so much. The kids are only here for two and a half hours and then they are gone. The whole week they don’t see each other. It’s very different from the regular school”.

Most of the teachers in Alice’s school come from overseas. The teachers

have found that while the children have literacy in the language (many attend a bilingual program), she was told by “their writing is quite good, but their speaking and listening is very, very poor.” According to Alice, teachers who have recently arrived “don’t understand the target population. The kids here are very different from the kids in the other country as well. The audience is different.”

Similar to Violet’s school, Alice’s school also has many internationally-trained teachers who have been trained to teach in a “traditionally more powerful” context. Alice considers herself fortunate to be able to have so many teachers from whom to choose and to have a curriculum and textbook series designed specifically for HL learners. Again, she faces many of the same challenges as Violet: students who can read and write, but not speak and listen; instructors who do not understand the vocabulary and the culture of the students; and students who need real-world activities that they will encounter in their daily lives like purchasing a snack from a snack sale.

In Summary

All of the HL school leaders of emerged schools in this study worked in schools which had been operational for long periods of time and showed no signs of closing in the immediate future. While the seven stories may appear diverse at

first glance, these schools share many common traits and common concerns. These similarities are shown in *Table 4.2*.

Table 4.2. Characteristics of Emerged HL School Leaders' Schools.

	Ford	Victor	Sage	& Laurie	Lydia	Violet	Alice
Finances							
- Stable source of income	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Salary to teachers	yes	yes	no/yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Students pay fees	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Business leaders in community	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Curriculum							

- Work with Alberta Education	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Access to L1 books	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Curriculum designed for HL/L2/NS students	NS	yes	HL	HL	L2	HL/L 2	HL
Day-to-day							
- AE certified teachers	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Internationally-trained teachers	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

- Rented space	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Community-wide issues							
- Use English at home	no	some	no	some	yes	yes	some
- Parents speak the HL well	yes	some	yes	yes	some	some	some

All of the emerged schools had secured some kind of funding from either their parents in the form of school fees, from their communities and business leaders, or from the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (discussed in detail in Chapter VIII). Each school with the exception of Ford worked with Alberta Education. One of the requirements for working with Alberta Education was that each school have on its staff at least one Alberta-certified teacher. Unfortunately in some

communities, language loss was a serious concern and schools needed to resort to teaching children (and also in some instances the parents) as second language speakers.

Although each of the seven principals had a nuanced and personal understanding; each discussed how his or her school was created or organized to meet the needs of the students. Violet and Sage described their school as a way to give language and culture to students. Alice, Laurie, and Rory designated schools as places where values could be shared with children. Victor and Ford wanted to create an environment and a community that was tailored to the needs of the children. And finally, Lydia wanted a professional language learning environment for her community's children.

Conclusion

In addition to formal language policy and planning analysis at the document and legal level, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) advocate for interpretation of policy and planning from the ground level where it is implemented through the perspectives of leaders, teachers and learners. They say:

Although not typically considered ethnographies of language policy, many

ethnographies or qualitative studies illuminate the complexity of language planning and policy processes and the ways in which they create or restrict ideological and implementational space for multilingual pedagogy” (p. 510-511).

In this chapter, understanding the narratives of the school leaders opens a window for understanding the complexity of HL learning from the perspectives of HL school leaders. The eleven stories shared by HL school leaders are varied and complex and demonstrate how a “one-size-fits-all” approach cannot be used to measure a HL school’s efficacy or create a better program. Equally unfair is comparing and judging one school against another. All of the eleven participants’ stories describe how HL schools work to increase not only language education, but also literacy, culture, and values to include children through the expansion of a community. Still, despite their many differences, many HL schools share similar issues such as finding a cost-effective space, creating a curriculum tailored to meet the students’ needs, organizational challenges, and most importantly, language loss in the community’s children. While these issues change over time, they continue to manifest in increasingly complex ways. If emerging schools are struggling to find teachers, then emerged schools are struggling to hire teachers with Alberta

Education credentials and specialization in HL or second language. If emerging schools are seeking a free space because they have no budget, then emerged schools are seeking a rental space that will house all of their students and not take *all* of their budget. These problems simply do not go away over time, they just change in complexity.

According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, each student's development needs to be considered in the context in which he or she is being raised. In the communities of all eleven leaders in this study, students faced some kind of language loss (at minimum) or intergenerational communication disruption between parent and child (at worst). While the communities saw the development of a HL school as a possible antidote to language loss, HL school leaders felt that they faced many issues which prevented the children from fully developing.

CHAPTER V- CONTEXT: DESCRIBING COMMUNITY ELDERS WHO HAVE BEEN A PART OF IHLA/SAHLA

HL teaching in the province has a long and vibrant history. This chapter describes the context of provincial expertise from those who are recognized as experts by their affiliation with professional organizations. The International and Heritages Language Association (IHLA) and The Southern Alberta Heritage Language Associations (SAHLA) are organizations which have operated in Alberta, albeit by other names, since 1978. They act as an umbrella organization for heritage language schools in the province of Alberta—IHLA for schools in the north and SAHLA for schools in the south. The organizations began with a multiculturalism grant to hold workshops for teachers in heritage language schools. Both organizations continue to this day to support schools and to advocate on their behalf (See Bilash & Aberdeen for a detailed history of the organization).

The Language Planning and Policy Theoretical Lens

Hornberger and Johnson (2007) use the metaphor of an onion to describe the layers between the language planning policy at a national level and the individual actors who carry out the policy at a local level. They argue that rather than examining language planning and policy on a textual level, policy needs to be

examined in ways in which one can see how it is implemented by those working on the ground. They suggest ethnographies as a way to uncover how planning and policy are interpreted for local actors. They share:

An ethnography of language policy can include textual and historical analyses of policy texts but must be based on ethnographic understanding of some local context. The texts are nothing without human agents who act as interpretive conduits between the language policy levels (or layers of the LPP onion). (p. 528)

As an example in their research, they describe how policies implemented in Pennsylvania and Bolivia were interpreted in ways which might be somewhat unexpected to how the policy was originally envisioned. In Pennsylvania, individual schools made allowances for language support and heritage language education despite the American “No Child Left Behind” policy which pushes for monolingualism. Whereas in Bolivia, language policy allowed for the creation of an indigenous master’s program. While it may not have been the program’s intention, during their studies, master’s students reflected on their indigenous identities and strengthened their commitment to their language and their communities. Hornberger and Johnson (2007) state:

Ethnographies of language policy offer unique insights into LPP processes through thick descriptions of policy interpretation and implementation at the local level. Historical and intertextual analyses of policy texts can capture the confluence of histories, attitudes, and ideologies that engender a language policy but, alone, cannot account for how the creation is interpreted and implemented in the various contextual layers through which a language policy must pass. In this article, we take up the call for more multilayered and ethnographic approaches to LPP research by sharing two examples of how ethnographic data collection can illuminate local interpretation and implementation. (p. 511)

The remainder of this chapter examines how language planning and policy has been interpreted and analyzed in Alberta through the eyes of IHLA and SAHLA.

Interviews with IHLA/SAHLA Elders

In this Chapter I will analyze the comments of three interviewees who are currently working on either the IHLA or SAHLA executive or have worked with them in the past (Linda, George, & Inga) and one focus group meeting with IHLA/SAHLA community elders (Linda, Imogene, & Iola).

As Hornberger and Johnson (2007) explained, “An ethnography of language

policy can include textual and historical analyses of policy texts but must be based in an ethnographic understanding of some local context. The texts are nothing without the human agents who act as interpretive conduits between the language policy levels (or layers of the LPP onion)". (p. 528). Understanding how IHLA and SAHLA function in Alberta is important from a theoretical level since none of the four emerging schools' principals (Fane, Fritz, Fabian, and Monique) are associated with IHLA or SAHLA, yet non-coincidentally, all of the emerged schools' seven remaining principals interviewed in Chapter IV are. Understanding the two organizations' shared history will allow the reader to see heritage language schools through the eyes of those who can conceptualize the role of individual schools in the bigger picture of Albertan and Canadian language and multicultural policy.

IHLA/SAHLA Executive: George. "There's still a tremendous amount of community will, goodwill. That's the reason these schools are in existence and SAHLA and IHLA are still in existence, too. But who are all the partners that we need together to keep these things sustainable and keep them growing strong and active? I think that it's getting beyond this perception that community language schools are just for kids of that specific culture or linguistic background at the schools."

George began working in the field of international and heritage language education over 25 years ago. He describes his situation as “I started in 1990, so I would've started five years after NAHLA/SAHLA was created.” He was one of those in charge of writing an organizational timeline that is listed on the website. It chronicles the organization’s history from 1985-2003. His work has included “advocacy throughout those years, because we're trying to get funding to build these programs.” He explains, “We worked really hard with Alberta Education and with our local school boards [names removed] to introduce bilingual programs in the Public and Catholic systems here.” George’s organization works, not only to act as an advocate for schools at the governmental level, but also to support the individual schools to the best of its ability.

Basically we—every year we would put out a form to our schools and ask if your school is in need of teaching resource support to purchase textbooks. If so, we're able to give you a grant. It used to be \$5000 per school. With our funding cuts, we've reduced that to about \$3,500 per school. It's the honor system essentially, they provide us with what their need is, and then obviously they would need to either pre-purchase those materials and give us receipts, or give us a purchasing order, and we give them money, and

they in turn give us the receipts afterwards. There's accountability there for sure. That's important for us, even though it's a modest amount of money, we still give that little bit of money to our schools to help them purchase textbooks, teaching resources.

Another form of support that George's organization has provided for its teachers is offering professional development opportunities for schools through annual workshops held in the fall. He also mentioned that an on-line teacher training program is offered through a university whose original funding came via lobbying from IHLA/SAHLA. George shares:

So we were focusing a lot on advocacy and trying to get recognized by Alberta Education. So in the early 2000's, we were finally getting recognized by Alberta Education, so we got our first grant in, I guess, early in 2004.

George's experience shows that often schools are not able to advocate for themselves alone. He gives multiple examples such as "offering workshops and conferences", "offering on-line university courses", "fighting to get languages into universities", working with ministers and deputy ministers", and "advocating for all students in Alberta to learn another language". Often one group's triumph paves

the way for the future success of others. George explained the role of Mary Thotis, the inaugural president of AELTA-Southern branch. Of her George explains,

So, Mary Thotis, that name that I-- She'd be one that I would be familiar with, so she would have started getting—[...], to get the Greek language accredited by Alberta Education, a locally-developed program. So that was my understanding, but I could be wrong. But that's what I heard that Mary Thotis would have also been there, at the beginning, to get the high school credit courses for a community program approved by Alberta Education.

Even though many such as Mary Thotis worked diligently to have their languages accepted for instructional purposes within the province at the high school level, this recognition never transferred directly to the university. Currently according to the websites of both the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, second languages can be used to enter university; however they are not required for admission (University of Alberta, 2015; University of Calgary, 2015).

According to George's knowledge there has never been a university-wide language requirement for admission into university stating, "It's optional." George, similarly to Linda, explains that there was once an initiative to make mandatory language education into elementary and Jr. High schools, but ultimately it was

unsuccessful. This legislation was introduced under the educational reforms of the provincial Minister of Education, Dr. Lyle Oberg in 2003/2004, the same year when funding was available for IHLA/SAHLA to begin a language instructors' program through the university. According to Lyle Oberg's Wikipedia page, "He began the second languages initiative to give students an edge in the world marketplace."

So the Minister, Lyle Oberg who I think would've championed that. He was the education minister. Then Gene Zwozdesky would've come in. I think he was actually the minister when that came into effect, but it would've been Lyle Oberg who had been the education minister that pushed for language education to be a requirement. It was originally a motion for it to become mandatory, but they backed away from it—the provincial government.

As stated by George, ultimately, the language initiative proved unsuccessful when several small school boards felt that they could not actualize the legislation although he "can't remember which exact school boards they were" but he believes "it would've been real boards. It would have been open boards, small real boards." In fact, ten school boards felt they would not have been able to comply with the legislation and refused to do so (Nedashkivska & Bilash, 2015). When asked if George believes this is the true reason why the legislation was not pushed through,

he answered:

I suppose so. I think political will has a lot to do with these things as well.

If there's leadership within - I think primarily within the upper hand governance, specifically with upper education. If there's a real emphasis with leadership that language education is important. Starting from the minister and the deputy ministers. In past we've seen stronger support for languages than with other minister's less awareness, or less understanding, and less appreciation of International Languages. In more recent years we've seen our funding go down. Our community based language goes in the same direction as with the public schools.

George's words point out that heritage language schools that operate within a larger organization such as IHLA or SAHLA benefit from supports that individual schools do not have if they operate on their own. Some of the benefits from belonging to IHLA/SAHLA that George mentioned have been "to introduce bilingual programs in the Public and Catholic systems", professional development including "introduc[ing] this professional development program at the University", pushing for language requirements because "there's never been a second language requirement; it's always been optional", and knowledgeable peers who can lead the

way. He also hints at the erratic nature of language policy in the province by pointing out that on one hand there is a desire to make language instruction stronger, yet on the other hand a vocal minority can eliminate the hard-fought battles of others. This happened when smaller school boards challenged Dr. Olberg's desire to increase language education in the province.

Hornberger and Johnson (2007) also state, "Although not typically considered ethnographies of language policy, many ethnographies or qualitative studies illuminate the complexity of language planning and policy processes and the ways in which they create or restrict ideological and implementational space for multilingual pedagogy" (p. 510-511). In George's, interview there are at least four places where governmental education or language policy impact the individual school and where the individual school has little or no opportunity to influence the educational or language policy in return: school funding, teacher preparation at a Canadian university, a university-entrance language requirement, and a requirement for K-12 instruction in the school system.

As George described in his example of the policy enacted to make language education in K-12 schools, even policy on its own appears insufficient to advocate for schools since school boards threatening non-compliance could negate provincial

legislation.

What else can I tell you? Ultimately, we need a strong political will.

Especially provincially with Alberta Education and federally, I would say,

to recognize the importance that cultural linguistic community based

language schools play.

IHLA/SAHLA Executive: Inga. “From the principal’s point of view, like if you are the principal of a school, sometimes they get so caught up within the curriculum and raising awareness within the community that they forget themselves that their school has to be part of something bigger, like a structure or part of an association, or collaborating with other schools.”

Joyce was an immigrant to Canada. She originally was in another province where she completed her Master’s degree. She “was teaching [a widely spoken minority language in her country of origin], that was part of a TA [teacher assistantship] program”. She later decided to complete a PhD in Alberta where she could major in culture and language studies of her country’s official language since the province is well-known for having a large population of speakers of this language. As part of her studies, she instructed adult second language courses and immediately felt the need to promote language instruction. As an example of her

dedication, she once brought “over 100 copies of those [advertising pamphlets] and we had a little table display” to a cultural festival where she tried to promote her language classes and she found that there was “no interest at all”.

I think my conception of communities changed a little with my PhD at the [university] right. I was in the languages and cultures department and there you learn everything like theory and approaches to how cultures and literature are communicated at the community level. And you see that language is not a priority per se. You see that language is not a priority in the spirit of the people. I think teaching at my school and being with IHLA/SAHLA kind of puts everything in perspective, because you kind of have to fight to teach language and to make it important. And at the same time, like why should you? Because language is an important part of culture.

Joyce points out that in the heritage language teaching sphere there are multiple stakeholders (“Alberta Education”, “the funder” which is also generically referred to as “the government”, and “the principals and their schools”). Each of these groups has its own perspectives on how schools should operate and be held accountable. In her interview, Joyce explains three areas of conflict for schools: finances with “the funder”, curriculum design with Alberta Education, and teacher

training and certification.

When discussing finances, Joyce explains that issues of credibility prevent schools from securing a more stable financial situation. She asks, “How do [schools] build credibility with the funder, with the government?” Joyce probes how to build a case for prioritizing heritage language education with the government, a question for which she has no clear answer. She says, “I don’t think that Alberta Education is taking Heritage Language Schools seriously in the sense that this is important, but not a priority. How do we twist this understanding around? What do schools need to do to earn this credibility?”

If schools wish to initiate change and advocate for a better position, then Joyce argues that it is essential to see things from the government’s perspective and to “put yourself in the funders’ shoes”. She explains that many of the funders “don’t even have heritage language teaching background or they have never even been involved in schools.” According to Joyce, finding a way to communicate the importance of heritage language education when working with “those guys have nothing to do with heritage” is a challenge because “they have no understanding of the importance of that.” She asks, “So how do we convince them that this is very important? What do you show? Do you show that in practice somehow? Is it

numbers? Enrollment?”

While schools may not receive direct funding through Alberta Education, both IHLA and SAHLA do receive some money for funding professional development opportunities for heritage language school teachers through two departments of Alberta Education called “Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC) and the Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC)”. From Joyce’s comments below, one can interpret professional development at the IHLA/SAHLA level as being shaped by the will of “Alberta Education”, not by the concerns or wants of the individual teachers in heritage language schools. While “entrepreneurial spirit” (the goal of the government) and personal identity development (the goal of many involved in heritage language schools) are not necessarily at odds with one another, they are also not synonymous goals either. It seems that while the province is interested in funding programs that will eventually make money for their province or lead students towards careers, parents who enroll their students in classes are hoping to have students learn language so that they can stay connected with their families. As was shown in Chapter IV, the majority of the school leaders spoke of how they wanted their children to be affiliated with their cultural ties. While parents hoped that their children would have a financial

advantage in the future, this did not seem their primary goal.

Curriculum development is an issue for many heritage language schools. Joyce explains that for schools, designing a curriculum “is trying to ensure [the heritage language school] resembles a school and not a club”. For her, “curriculum is a big word, just like culture.” However, she does have a definition:

Because when you say curriculum it means that you can tell a parent that this is what you are going to teach your child this year, this is how it is going to change next year. So a parent should have a good understanding over four years that the child will know exactly this is what my child will learn.

Yet, according to Joyce very few schools, if any, are in a position to provide a consistent curriculum to parents or to funders. She believes that this is because schools “know what they want their students to learn, but then that framework is missing”. Alternatively, “AE [Alberta Education] has a framework, but then again, not necessarily something that is objective or usable.” She recaps her point of view of schools’ goals being at odds with Alberta Education with the following statements, “So the framework is there but the content is debatable. But for heritage language schools the content is there, we can pull lots from culture, and from language, but the framework is missing. This is what’s in my mind.”

Heritage language schools and their principals are often in a weak position to advocate for curriculum design because few schools have “just a handful of people who are certified” in the province. Schools often employ “teachers by profession in their country of origin”. These teachers “are taught the basics and the main fundamentals of a main teaching profession”, but not necessarily in Alberta. This leads Joyce to ask, “Do you really need to be [Alberta] credentialed to be a successful and qualified [heritage language school] teacher?”

While one may not need certification to be successful in the classroom, certification serves other functions such as “having standards”, defining “the basics and the main fundamentals of the teaching profession” and providing “a body that regulates their field”. Joyce points out that “the teaching profession is heavily regulated in Alberta, just like social workers are, or HR professionals”. While she supports the concept of professional standards, she questions if Alberta standards for K-12 teachers in heritage language are the most appropriate stating, “But when we talk about standards, not necessarily for Adult Education, but heritage language teaching in general, you cannot really apply those standards there...because HL teaching is different from whatever we are trying to teach here [in K-12]”.

Despite having a well-known community of language speakers in Alberta,

Joyce previously pointed out that “language is not a priority in the spirit of the people”. This is perhaps not surprising as Hornberger (1998) shared “After all it is not the number of speakers of a language, but their positioning in society that determines their use” (p. 452). In this province, while people may be free to use and study whichever language they choose, they are not empowered to do so. Even with the rights of the francophones hors de Québec, there is a “drift to the English language” (Lafontant & Martin, 2000; Landry & Allard, 1988; Moulun-Passek, 2000; Gaudet & Clément, 2009; Clément, Noels, & Gauthier, 1993)” (Bilash, 2011, p. 19), especially in public places.

Joyce also explains that while there are government funders who offer some financial support to schools, albeit typically in the form of teacher training or curriculum design, schools are always looking for ways to “build credibility with the funder, with the government.” One of the major challenges in building credibility comes from the fact that funders who oversee programs often might not have language education or they “don’t even have heritage language teaching background or they have never even been involved in schools.” Alberta has created a complex situation, one where schools appear somewhat entitled to receive professional development supports, but only if they continually prove their worth

as institutions to non-heritage language professionals. Hornberger (1998) states “There is increasing recognition in our field of the role of language education professionals as language policy makers” (p. 453), yet in our province language policy decisions and funding are not necessarily made by language education professionals. Hornberger shares (p. 453):

Furthermore, it is not only members of language minority communities but also language education professionals who can be active contributors to negotiative, transformative processes of language revitalization, language maintenance, or indeed language shift. There is increasing recognition in our field of the role of language education professionals as language policy makers, whether they are classroom practitioners, program developers, materials and textbook writers, administrators, consultants, or academics.

Hornberger’s work shows that language education professionals are often able to advocate for policies that benefit language education. However, as Joyce explains, cultivating recognition as language education professionals in this province is fraught with challenges. Joyce describes teaching (not specifically heritage language teaching) as a “regulated profession” with very few of the teachers in the heritage language environment able to meet the provincial demands

despite having met these professional demands elsewhere. Even when internationally-trained teachers are able to obtain Alberta teaching certificates, their expertise is in language teaching in an official language environment. The province offers little recognition of those in the field of heritage language education as experts in what Hornberger defined as “classroom practitioners, program developers, materials and textbook writers, administrators, consultants, or academics” (p. 453).

IHLA/SAHLA Executive: Linda. “When we do MLD [Mother Language Day] we have 13, 15, sometimes 20 schools all together. The government comes in and the media comes in and they are seen. It is right in their face and it’s like, “You know what, Albertans? Saturdays aren’t just for sports! There are people that spend Saturdays doing these other things. And they are at minimum as important as sports. Mental health, identity and everything at the same level as physical health.” It is a tougher battle to sell of course, but you have seen that there are a lot of people who do it. And they do it quietly regardless. These organizations are here to really help and enhance that.”

Prior to her work with the umbrella organization, Linda worked in the field of education in Alberta for four and a half years. When discussing her time with

IHLA/SAHLA, she “come[s] into the picture only ten years” and worked as a member of the executive. She describes her time with the organization as the following, “In that case I do have to say there was a serendipity moment because I happened to be with IHLA/SAHLA, there happened to be this money [available and I had the skills] and that was my passion.” During her time, she worked on curriculum development (“We ended up writing the Korean Language Studies 15-25-35, which doesn’t exist in the regular schools”), conference projects and presentations (“The first national language conference that we never used to do before, Languages Without Borders it is called”), and with individual schools (“And we would have those networking sessions where we would have this whole discovery. Oh! I have got to have the two million or three million dollar liability insurance.”). She is no longer working with the organization and runs a program with the municipal government which deals with multicultural issues.

Linda is aware of the history of the organization. Sadly she explains that “most of the [organizations’ founders] are dead.” She tells that those who are looking for history now have to search through old documents, stating “There is something about heritage language in the provincial archives as well because it has always been under the umbrella of the provincial government.” Although the

organizations [AELTA/NAHLA/SAHLA/IHLA] are separated today, they were originally one. “Because at the beginning it was one, right. It was called AELTA [Alberta Ethnic Language Teachers Association] and then NAHLA [Northern Alberta Heritage Languages Association] and SAHLA [Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association] and then NAHLA changed into IHLA [International Heritage Languages Association].” Linda also acknowledges that the history of the organization is at present, not easily accessible. She explains, “There was an attempt by [Iola] quite a few years ago before we moved, the first time we moved offices, to recuperate archival stuff and the minutes were scattered, some documents were there, it was really hard. I think there is something about heritage language in the provincial archives as well because it has always been under the umbrella of the provincial government.”

The umbrella organization was designed for schools to offer mutual support to one another. Linda describes the organizations’ early days as a collective of people “saying we need to teach our kids language to continue to speak to the grandparents”. Shortly after the creation of the first organization, AELTA, schools were given a small operating grant from the federal and provincial governments and the money “would go directly into the school’s pockets as long as

AELTA/NAHLA/SAHLA would go on record and say this school exists, these are the students, the teachers, and the principal, These are the amount of kids that they have.” Despite being given this policing job on behalf of the governments, AELTA’s mandate was to help schools offer mutual support to one another. Linda explains:

So with that little penny came all of this responsibility to then maintain things. And it is not the government to the school, it is the government through the umbrella organization to the school. Well the mandate of IHLA, NAHLA and SAHLA was never to monitor directly and be responsible on behalf of the schools of how they arrange and do their schooling.

The funding designated to individual schools ended in 1994 and with the stoppage of funding came what Linda called “higher accountability”. She described this time as “The moment you receive a penny, there is a right from the person who gives you the penny to ask questions about how you spend your penny. And the schools get on the borderline of losing their autonomy.” She points out that while schools were looked at with increasingly more financial scrutiny, they lacked the internal infrastructure to meet the government’s goals. She explains this complexity:

Because these are not school districts, they are not totally funded by the government, so the Alberta government has the right to ask any school

district how they manage grants that they receive because 99% of what they do comes from the operation of the government. Well the schools will be getting this little money or the rest is either donation or their own little tuition fees that they can ask. But again, these are things for which they don't have this kind of organization structure.

With this period of stoppage of the individual grants to schools and “higher accountability” came a shift in the government’s funding priorities. She states, “1999-2000, the government here, the provincial government, starts looking into the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)” because “they feel that because all of the European countries are able to get together and create some sort of a reference for any language teaching at any level that Canada, you know, needs to follow suit.” This led to “a mini little fund to write a basis curriculum for heritage languages as a framework. That very much reflects what the work was being done for regular schools, public schools.” The curricula designed for “Russian”, “Filipino” and “Korean Language Studies 15-25-35” by the umbrella organization were “eventually adopted to teach in the regular schools”. Language education was boosted by some school boards in the province who adopted the mandate even though they were no longer obliged to do so. Still, other unintended positive

outcomes for IHLA and SAHLA were 1. “in the bigger picture of the province who wanted to adopt this framework, IHLA and SAHLA were invited as stakeholders of those big conversations” and 2. “very substantial grants from the government”.

Linda shares:

So we then started applying for grants and for ten years we received very substantial grants from the government. To the point where we got to pass the benchmark of a million dollars within ten years’ time. So that is a lot of money for a tiny little organization. That is a lot of money.

There was also an initiative for all students in the province to have to “take a language from 4-9” which Linda described as “So those were really good times, like four or five months before the adoption”. She explains:

So the province at the time did something really good because they said we in five years want to implement this, and make it mandatory for schools, who are all of the people that are going to be involved. And so the principals were all involved. We were involved, of course, all of the different districts and stuff. So everything was going super good at the time, with the way we even had, you are probably aware, the first national language conference that we never used to do before, “Languages without borders” it is called.

Eventually the province-wide mandatory language education failed because “Two school districts said, ‘You mandate this to us, we will refuse to do it because we don’t have anything’ and then the whole thing crumbled.”

However, the money that IHLA/SAHLA was receiving was considered somewhat of a mixed-blessing since it was offered to complete government-designed projects, not IHLA/SAHLA-designed projects. Linda describes some of the negative aspects which are difficulty “to spend all of that money”, lack of “accounting skills”, reliance on “volunteers”, “need [of] some technical specialties”. This left the organizations without the ability to sustain its projects. The organization needed to build capacity in order to meet the government’s goals.

Okay, and again, this starts going into the political territory. I worked with the board for a long enough time that I could make everybody understand that yes, you cry for money, but when you get money you have the responsibility of that amount of money. And when it is a small board and a non-profit organization, with limited resources, the more money you get the more responsibility you get, it is really hard to spend all of that money. Really hard. Because you have to account for every penny. You have to make sure that every move you make has been approved. So there are a

whole bunch of bureaucratic steps that really make it, you know, you almost get submersed under the water, you feel your neck is under the water, and then the government comes back to you and starts pressing, how did you use this, how did you use that. These people don't have accountant skills.

It is a board that meets once a month. They are all volunteers. They are for the majority, older people who are retired, so all of the good intentions are there, but you need some technical specialties, but it is really hard to find.

And by the way, with that money you cannot pay the support on the technical side.

Because of her role with the organization she was able to see more than the name changing from AELTA to NAHLA/SAHLA to IHLA/SAHLA. The first changes Linda has noticed are within the student body. She says, "Because the heritage students, yeah if you are talking about ten years ago these waves are changing now. You have got more interest from people who are not necessarily native families of heritage speakers." The second changes are related to bureaucracy. Some of these are related to funding, as stated previously, but others are related to the direct operation of schools themselves. These include things like "liability insurance" and rental space. She explains "that is what AELTA and NAHLA and

SAHLA was, for the longest time, in people's basements. But nowadays you can't do it in people's basements because of health regulations and insurance policies and everything else." And third, schools have also changed over the history of the organizations due to curriculum design due to the CEFR ("Common European Framework of Reference"), the framework developed by the umbrella organizations, the "build[ing] some professional standards for schools", "technology" such as "computers" and "Skype", "professional development courses" and "articles in our newspapers and everything else" and "conferences here at the university".

Despite all of the current challenges, Linda is still optimistic about the future of heritage language education in the province. She offers these words about the future of the field in the province:

And I am really believing that everything goes in waves, cycles, you have those moments when all of the stars align and everything and then for a while there are stumbling blocks, it is just important that you try to start from the highest point you had last time, not from the very bottom again.

Whereas George and Joyce spoke of their organization's position as acting as an intermediary between the individual school and the government, many of

Linda's comments speak to the history of AELTA/NAHLA/SAHLA/IHLA, to the history of heritage language in the province, and to the changing heritage language field which has been impacted by demographics, technology, fiscal accountability, and increased professionalism. As Hornberger (2005) has explained:

I have suggested that it is essential for language educators and language users to fill up implementational spaces with multilingual educational practices, whether with the intent to occupy ideological spaces opened up by policies or to prod actively toward more favorable ideological spaces in the face of restrictive policies. (p. 606)

Linda has demonstrated how schools, with the assistance of the umbrella organizations in Edmonton and Calgary have worked both with favorable policy (the creation of Saturday school curriculums which transfer to the K-12 system, development of workshops and professional development programs, creation of a more modern, professional environment with adherence to governmental/legal regulations) and more restrictive governmental policy (loss of funding, increased scrutiny, and difficulty to access professional channels).

Focus Group Meeting With IHLA/SAHLA Elders

IHLA/SAHLA Elders: Linda says, "As soon as a person starts speaking, in

our mind, we start putting together, oh you come from this country and you do this.

The antidote to that was being in contact with many cultures as often as you can.

Because then it just becomes part of the fabric of your being. It is something really

valuable. So through IHLA, NAHLA, SAHLA, AELTA, all the way back, this was

one of the principles. It is just understood that everybody at the table is, I know you

are Portuguese, Filipino, Italian, and let's be happy about that because we work

together."

Imogene says, "Now if you are just going to say that we leave it to the

community, it will survive, but it will not be as much as when you have professional

people helping you."

Iola says, "That is the missing point. When you are gone people begin to

notice, when you are there people take you for granted. But even then, when you

talk to people they don't get why it is necessary to work together to collaborate, I

think this is unfortunate. And not just for what you can provide them, but for the

long term thinking. Like multiculturalism, politically, would have never come about

if the ethnic groups together did not form the third block. That is the point. It is not

just one group. It took everybody to form at that time a representation of one third

of the Canadian people."

This focus group meeting took place with three elders in the heritage language community: Linda, Imogene, and Iola. While Iola was born into a heritage language community in Canada, Linda immigrated “20 years ago” and Imogene “moved here 50 years ago”. At the time of her arrival Imogene was “back in 1976” and a student at the University. In the early days of AELTA, she pointed out “they were starting to have international students in droves” (Imogene) “but not as much as you see now” (Imogene). According to Imogene, part of the reason that the organization was created was for the comfort of International students. She explains:

Because of that new group of immigrants coming in and were all graduate students or international students, Dr. Peter Savaryn (Edmonton) and a few others from the University of Calgary had the same idea, too. So they said why we don’t start a group. Maybe just so that we can make these people more at ease while they were in the country. So they created AELTA-Alberta Ethnic Language Teachers’ Association.

As Imogene notes the earliest members were from mostly European countries “Germany, France, Italy, and Ukraine”. While the French were originally part of AELTA, they did not remain with the organization for long. Linda explains, “But then by the time you had NAHLA, the French were no longer a part of it. They

were never part of the equation while I was there. Because they have bilingual status, so that is another thing” (Linda). At certain points there were attempts to encourage aboriginal language communities to join, but again this was not successful because “their political status is different overall from the federal and provincial governments” (Linda).

Imogene described the founders of AELTA as “very high caliber people”. She described the split from AELTA into NAHLA and SAHLA as a pragmatic one:

It was very difficult for Sab, Fiona, and others to always to go to Calgary or to have the people from Calgary coming here, so for how many years before, '81 was when we separated from them as NAHLA and SAHLA.

Then we said, “Why don’t we take it into some kind of regional division?”

[...] So then we became NAHLA and SAHLA.

The decision for NAHLA to become IHLA was also pragmatic. The organization changed its name in order to “be more accepted if you use the term international and it is true. Because most of the languages that we have are international languages, or official languages of different places” (Imogene).

In the early days of AELTA, registered schools were able to obtain a small per student operating grant. Eventually, “We also lost all of the grants per student”

(Imogene). The grants per student were once offered by “Alberta Culture” (Linda) and “they said we are stopping the funding in 1996” (Imogene). According to Imogene:

They said this is culture? No, this is education; you had better go to education. ‘Cause we will only support you when it is about culture. So then they cut the dollar for every student and said, so go to education. It took us quite a while before we could really get a big amount of money from Alberta Education.

According to Linda, securing funding has always been a “big dance for organizations like us, who are bigger than the school, but they are still small entities” (Linda). In order to achieve the goals set forth by IHLA and SAHLA, Imogene says, “You have to build with them [governmental departments/ governmental ministries]. You have to go and meet with them personally. You don’t wait for them to come to you and say we have made a change.” Going and meeting specific people to ensure that programs operate has been challenging since “departments change because ministries change. Even the ministries make-up, whatever, before culture was separate and now education is like that” (Linda). While there have been multiple projects designed by IHLA and SAHLA over the organization’s 35 year history, the

programs are often subject to rapid change and lack consistency because of changes in government regulations.

Imogene explains that while the government offers some sort of funding, it is conditionally offered and expected to be used as the government wants it spent. This is problematic for an organization whose goals might not be perfectly aligned with the funder:

So we would say even when we go and meet with them, that is always what we say. That is really our money, you should really give it to us and make us use it according to our need. And they say no. no. no. These are our regulations. Every two years they change. What they approved two or three years ago they will say is no longer okay.

Unfortunately, as Iola explains, “But I guess then that one of the problems is then that IHLA and SAHLA have not yet managed to find a permanent home in the ministry. Because the money has been available, but you have to chase it all the time. It is hard work.”

When the sister umbrella organizations have been able to secure steady funding, it appears to always have been attached to a particular person. Iola describes the situation as such. “When I look at how the other things have come

about, I always see some form of lobbying, always some political payback, you might say: Who is there that owes someone something to see political support for Heritage Languages?” This sentiment was seconded by Linda who tells:

So, again a lot of these things on paper that look really official, in the background is always A DIRECT personal connection to somebody. And there is a possibility through that connection to make things happen. ... IHLA and SAHLA having the opportunity to maintain those relationships and use those connections to make those things happen.

In addition to attempting to secure “\$1,000” for individual schools through funding from a “one time exceptional grant” in which they “kept on going for 12 years” (Linda), other IHLA/SAHLA attempts have been “teaching TESL courses because one of the requirements here is that you need to demonstrate that speak English” (Linda), helping teachers “get a certificate” (Imogene) by assisting them with “go[ing] back to university” (Linda), and advocating for professional development opportunities through IHLA/SAHLA developed opportunities, Alberta Education (AE) and its Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium(ERLC)/Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC) (Imogene), and the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) and its Second Languages Intercultural

Council (SLIC) (Linda), the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) (Linda), and international conferences offered through the Intercultural Research Network (Linda). Of these mentioned only IHLA/SAHLA and ERLC/CRC opportunities remain. IHLA/SAHLA still have a relationship with CASLT, but the organization is heavily dominated by English and French second language teachers, much to the exclusion of others. Beginning the program is not nearly as challenging as ensuring its continuation and continuity.

Much of Linda, Imogene, and Iola's testimonies speak to the difficulty of acting as an intermediary between the individual school and the much larger world of government and its institutions. Even within Canada, a country which supports bilingualism in a multicultural framework, finding a proper avenue to advocate for languages is a constant challenge.

Hornberger (2005) published the results of a "bilateral USA-Australia dialogue meeting of nearly two dozen scholars" (p. 101) in which they discussed "developing, implementing, and evaluating HCLE [heritage/community language education]" (p. 102). When specifically targeting how policy is linked with teacher education, the group which consisted of Baldauf, Hornberger, LoBianco, Nicholls, and Chen called for an:

analysis [which] would address what constitutes policy and what counts as language planning at local, state and national levels. It is envisaged that such a policy analysis will include policy texts (legislation and public reports), institutional practices and public attitudes as forms of language planning and will examine how community-heritage languages are positioned in these policy processes. The study will also examine factors that influence resource allocation. (p. 105)

Throughout the focus group with Linda, Imogene, and Iola, many of the factors which influence language policy within the province were documented. What becomes evident through their words is what Iola described as “the general atmosphere in Alberta is not in favour of learning other languages. I don’t want to say against, I just want to say not in favor.” As Bilash (2012) calls, “It is time to bring language use and language rights onto the social justice agenda.” (p. 71) In particular the three speak of the challenges that the umbrella organizations have faced in light of funding. While they were able to secure funding, it was never secure. A further complication is that funding always appeared to be driven not by the organization, but rather by the goals of the giver of the money. As Linda shared, “It is their money, not ours.”

In closing

Both the theories of Hornberger and Bronfenbrenner stress that an individual does not live and develop in isolation, but rather develops in relation to both his or her immediate environment and the greater societal forces which influence that immediate environment. The elders in this study describe some of these forces, both negative and positive, which demonstrate how these forces impact schools. Most clearly they show that these schools do not operate in isolation, but are influenced and have been influenced historically by multiple governmental policies and systems over which the individual school has little or no control.

CHAPTER VI- THE MICROSYSTEM

Research Question #1: What characteristics do HL school leaders and HL elders believe HL students and HL teachers have?

Chapter VI is divided into three sections: a definition of the microsystem as it applies to this study, an examination of what HL leaders and HL elders believe are the characteristics of HL students, and the characteristics of teachers. When describing students, HL leaders and elders present two main themes: oral language development and positive experiences. When discussing teachers, HL leaders and HL elders describe multiple kinds of teachers working in HL schools as theme 3. For those who teach in HL schools with international qualifications or as volunteers, they list the development of Canadian workplace skills as theme four and a decision to leave for paid work as theme five.

The Definition of the Microsystem

Understanding how children learn a heritage language and are impacted by this instruction both socially and psychologically requires that one examine, not only the child, but also those involved directly in the language instruction of the child and the development of the community. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) theory, an individual develops in relation to those interacting with him or her.

Bronfenbrenner considers those individuals who have close contact with the student as members of the individual's microsystem which he defines as the following:

A micro-system is an immediate setting containing the learner (e.g., home, daycare center, classroom, etc.) A *setting* is defined as a *place* in which the occupants engage in particular activities in particular roles (e.g., parent, teacher, pupil etc.) for particular periods of time. The factors of place, time, activity, and role constitute the *elements* of a setting.

What characteristics do HL leaders and HL elders believe that HL students have?

HL leaders and HL elders are cognizant of the fact that HL language acquisition differs from both first language acquisition and from second language acquisition. HL leaders and elders comments in Themes One and Two describe HL learners as needing instruction in speaking skills and literacy. They also believe that children are positively influenced by their participation in HL schools and that they enjoy attending them.

Theme One: HL students have poor language proficiency. HL students need to experience a pedagogy that stresses oral language development prior to reading and writing.

In Carreira & Kagan's (2011) survey they reported results which stated that HL children are strong in oral skills and need to acquire literacy. Yet, many HL school leaders and HL elders in this study explain that children are often very weak in multiple areas of language when they enter HL school. In fact, many HL leaders report that parents and teachers request that their children learn how to speak the language and consider oral skills most important. Even in Alice's school where many children attend bilingual programs in addition to her school, she describes the HL teachers' concerns: "We are going to add conversation classes. Because after meeting with the teachers, they said the students they can write, their writing is quite good, but their speaking and listening is very, very poor." Monique describes the language issues that her children face, "My kids for example, although they have a hard time speaking, they understand." Sage explains parental requests, "That's why some parents they ask us, 'We want them only to learn speaking.'" Similarly, Violet describes many new parents who approached her school, "I never looked at seeking out other families that didn't speak it. They just came to me with the interest. When someone is interested, and really wants it for their child, I'm going to see what I can do." This comment demonstrates that HL school leaders are aware of and empathetic to the challenges put before parents and work to provide

them with educational supports for their children.

Laurie explains that the loss of speaking skills is often equated with the loss of the language. She describes the process in children and explains that it often occurs unrecognized. She states:

I tell them don't worry about English, they are in school, they will learn English very fast. Even if they are high school students, they will pick it up. But worry about your language. If you want to keep this language, you need to start thinking about this right now. If you don't want to send your children to Saturday school because they don't have time or they don't have money, of course when they come they don't have any money, but at least continue to read with them at home, watching movies, talking to them. And don't forget to ask them to reply to you in your language, not in English. That is how they lose it. Children come home from school and the parents ask them in their language and the kids respond in English. And Parents don't worry, they don't stop them and they don't say now I don't understand English. Please repeat in our language. Because this is a very hard job for the parents. They lose their language because they stop talking. Yes, they continue to understand, and that is it. And the parents don't realize until they really want

them to say something in the language and the children can't. They see it is only six months that they are here and my child is not able to say a word in their language.

The process of language loss that Laurie describes is similar to what Fritz explained happened with his children:

So when they came here, they were perfectly speaking my language. Also they spoke the language of the neighboring country. So I said they could not have three languages, it was too difficult. I told them to have two: English and my language. And yet, this one was losing, and losing, and losing. My wife never talked to them in English, never. Always until now, she talks in our language. They understand her, but they don't answer. They don't reply. The oldest, sometimes she does. They can understand but they don't speak.

Students not using the HL outside of class creates challenges for teachers.

Lydia explains that "the most difficult aspect of it [HL teaching] is not having the continuation of it at home." While some leaders explained that parents wanted to teach their children at home, but their children responded in English, others reported that some parents could not speak the language, either. Although Joyce knows a great deal about the HL community for children, she was introduced to HL teaching

for parents, “It was my first year here and I was teaching classes for adults.”

Imogene explains, “There are other schools that I know of that even teach adult classes in the language. So when the kids go, the parents do, too. So it is a family affair.” Further, Sage explains some of the parents in her school:

So, we encourage parents even to speak with them at home, but sometimes, they can't. I have a few parents, they were born here, they don't speak the language at home, but they want their kids to learn that language. They said, “When we were kids we didn't have any schools to learn.”

Having HL students be able to use the language was essential; however, four participants in particular expressed the need for language education to be linked with cultural knowledge. Imogene, a HL elder, describes the importance of HL education with the following statement, “So they are not just supporting the child with language, they are also supporting the child with cultural aspects of the community. So it is not just the language, there is also a cultural aspect.” Similarly, Victor explains “You have to remember, our students are not HL-speaking students. They are HL students whose primary language is English. So it's a second language and there is a generational gap between what they understand and what their ancestors understand.” This comment echoed by member 5 of Fane's group who

shares:

And the culture. It is very important for the kids here. It is very difficult life here in Canada. It is very easy to forget the culture. Even when the mother talks with them and says “Do it this the way because that is how we do it in my culture”, they refuse it and say, “Mommy, I don’t know”. The language, too, is very difficult.

This member of Fane’s group demonstrates that families want to disseminate their values and traditions to their children in much the same way that their parents did for them. However, this is complicated due to a lack of language. To teach children both language and cultural values requires the development of a special pedagogy in which they learn to scaffold language instruction. In Bronfenbrenian terms, parents wish to proffer their children a similar microsystem to the one they experienced as a child. These parents face two major challenges in making this happen. First, parents do not have the tools for necessary for transmission: language and community. Second, parents are operating in a different macrosystem, one which does not appear to readily support alternative microsystems.

For one participant in particular, this lack of both language and cultural

transmission was devastating for family unity. Fabian adds another complicating factor, familial poverty. He argues that his children learn to avoid the language and the culture because they link them with the poverty of being a refugee and the pressure to associate with mainstream Canadian language and values. Fabian explains:

Even our kids who are born here, you have difficulties really. We are not connected. Because those kids, those who were born here even or our kids who were born there, six years ago or something like that, they start forgetting about us. Like we are step-parents. They say we are Canadian, they don't even want to use our language. Even they don't want to listen to us because they think the language we speak, because we are poor, it is nothing.

Theme Two: HL leaders work to create positive experiences and increase motivation in HL students.

Literature exists which claims that HL students do not enjoy attending HL schools (Tse, 2001). A cultural gap may exist in which Canadian students, but perhaps not students in other countries, are content attending schools since the leaders and teachers may have supports that do not exist elsewhere and this is not

yet clearly represented in the literature. However, this is contrary to reports of the HL leaders or the HL elders in this study. HL leaders explain that they go to great lengths to make HL school meaningful and/or enjoyable for the young learners. As an example to the testament of these schools, Fabian describes the community loss when his school stopped, “The kids still want to come here. They look at the building and they say language class! They think this building is the language class! Now they are asking when the classes start because for them it’s sad.” Likewise, Victor explains that the actions of the children demonstrate that they enjoy attending:

One thing I am proud of is when I ask the parents of the kids, “Did you have to force your kids to go to school?” and most of them say no. The first two or three weeks, but after that, they tell us to take them to school. This is one of the proudest things that I have. If you don’t have to force your children to go somewhere, you do something good for them.

Monique shares that children seem to enjoy the school, however, she is cognizant that the material they have to learn is challenging.

Yes, I think they are happy, because we don’t get any negative reaction from the children. We haven’t heard any complaints so I assume they are happy to come. But some of them, including my kids, sometimes they don’t want

to come to this school, not because they don't feel comfortable in it, but they find it is sometimes difficult to learn the language.

Similarly Alice points out "They build a lot of friendships. They have their community, too, after HL school. You know they look forward to coming to school, and even after they graduate they still connect with their former teachers". She also knows that younger children love attending school, but older children start "hav[ing] their own opinions." She says:

And the students, they love to learn when they are Kindergarten to Grade two, when they are up to Grade three and four they have their own opinions.

Why do I have to go to Saturday school? None of my other classmates do.

Why do I have to learn the language? They start asking all these questions.

I would love to stay home and sleep in. I don't want to get up early. I want to go to a birthday party or I want to play hockey instead of coming. I want to do something more fun than coming to school. I already go to school five days a week.

Lydia, a former HL school attendee, offers a similar comment to Alice. As a child, she wished she could do different activities. Still she describes how she developed her personality as a result of attending a HL school. She says, "As a kid

I used to be ‘Oh grumble, grumble. I can’t play soccer and I can’t dance or whatever, I have to go to HL school’. Slowly over time it became a place where I had a lot in common with these other kids.” For her, language learning became linked with friendship.

Other HL leaders also spoke of the importance of introducing children to one another to assist the children in creating friendships within their communities. Member 3 of Fane’s community says, “[we can get] community kids together, we can bring them to a national park two hours from here. They can play with the kids, so they know they are from the same community. We are in a very big [city]”. Friendships were also important for Fritz’s school. He shares, “Well one thing is that they know each other. They know each other as the same ethnic group. Then they will be in the same community.” Ford describes an important part of his job as, “Me as a principal, I am very eager to make sure that all of the students have a friend.” He points out that friendships are key for positive attitudes towards school in general:

We wanted to go to school to see our friends. It was our community. It was our space of living. Like a fish in a fish tank. We wanted to go there. Not, “Oh, let’s see what Einstein says. Today I am going to school to see what

Newton said about motion.” Nobody went there for that reason. You had a good friend. And you would change your school because your friend was in that school. So this is honestly the main reason of going to school. So that’s when we found out that having a friendship network is more important than having a good curriculum

Maintaining enthusiasm for the learners appears to be a prime concern for HL leaders. Joyce explains that HL learning for children is different than that for adults. She explains, “I think the main challenge is keeping the kids interested and motivated. There is only so much the parents can do. They can bring them once a week for a certain period of time for a certain number of years. How do you maintain it after that?” Similarly, Violet acknowledges that the children are only under her influence for a small period of time. From her point of view, attaining a positive attitude towards language learning is as important as language learning. She explains:

So, I said to the teachers when I was principal, I said, "I want the students leaving this school happy." That word 'happy' is very broad. I want them to have a positive outlook on the language. I don't care what level they succeed to, but I want them to have good memories, because what they do with that

language further on, we have no control. Remember their age group; they're so young. They still have the junior high and high school to go through, and university. I said, "I am looking for these students one day not to be afraid because of their language level to take a course at the university." I don't want these students to be afraid to start a business in [the country]. These little kids here for us may one day be our bosses somewhere down the road, and when you go to another country to do business

HL leaders have many different strategies for keeping the children engaged in learning their HL language. For some, like Ford, challenging school work needs to be carefully balanced with “having clowns”, “games” and “pizza day”; “going outside to play soccer and volleyball”; and “doing something together and being with someone your own age.” For Sage, enjoyment comes through a sense of accomplishment. She says:

The kids are thinking, “Was it worth learning this language?” Then they learned, “We are going to get 15 credits at the end of high school”. So they now they have a reason to learn language. Yeah, we had a reason before we started giving credits. They were Oh! Why do we have to learn language? Why? When are we going to use it? What’s the point? Stuff like that. But

when we started our credit course so they all were excited. They are doing much better.

Still, for Violet, choosing an appropriate methodology made learning engaging for the students. She explains:

I remember receiving positive comments about, "Oh, my daughter liked doing it this way. Oh, the way that you taught them to read and they could read together or aloud, and enunciate is something to do with that—they remembered this, and it was so simple for me to-- it wasn't even something special I considered, but it wasn't done and in the kids' minds, it was fun. It was an interesting way to learn the language, because when you're there on a Saturday you really don't want to learn, after going five days.

Joyce describes HL schools as something that offers benefits not only in language learning, but also in personal development. She describes her vision:

[You are] seeding something really small, kind of giving students' kind of little opportunities here and there. What happens is that these chances shape an individual. Then the long term goal would be advocacy for the opportunity to use these skills, and kind of acknowledge where these skills came from. That is your advocacy for a language or a culture. What we are

shaping is that we are not only shaping people and building them with skills, soft skills or communication skills, but also someone who will be a leader who will represent the community and be an advocate.

Linda's belief about the benefits of HL schools mirrors Joyce's statement and speaks to the importance of HL education for students. She demonstrates that many of the leaders or teachers in long-time operational schools are former students. She describes how there is a need to preserve "a nucleus of people that believe in the need to maintain the teaching of HLs". She shares:

And I think we have had a really nice decade of people who started as being students of the parents who taught in HLS, and now are either elders in their own communities or elders through IHLA. And that is the cycle that you have to have faith in continuing and maintaining, which is making sure that there is always a nucleus of people that believe in the need to maintain of teaching HLs that are positive and grow that experience and feel that it is important to speak another language and maintain your identity.

What characteristics do HL leaders and HL elders believe that HL teachers have?

While HL teachers can differ according to credentials and professional

experience HL leaders and HL elders report that the majority of their HL teachers in Alberta, at least in emerged schools, are internationally trained. Through participation in the HL school, these teachers gain valuable and transferable skills which include developing an awareness of how to teach in a different linguistic environment and training for the Alberta workforce.

Theme Three: Internationally-trained teachers bring much passion, language & cultural knowledge; but need to learn how to adjust to Canadian school norms.

HL leaders and elders explain that there are three overlapping categories of teachers: volunteers, Alberta Certified teachers, and internationally-trained teachers (Prokop, 2009). Each of these groups presents opportunities and limitations for both the schools and the teachers themselves. Most emerging schools were entirely volunteer, but the volunteers were among the community's most educated.

Volunteer teachers. As was shown in Chapter IV, emerging schools struggle to finance themselves and the small grants they do have are spent on rent and operating costs. As a result those who teach in emerging HL schools are often not paid and are working as volunteers. I was not able to find an Alberta certified teacher in any of the emerging schools. However, I was able to find either

internationally-trained teachers or those who were among their community's most educated. Candy explains the hiring process: "Often they would hire people who were teachers. But sometimes, they might be the science teacher from Bosnia for example, who is suddenly teaching the Bosnian language."

Like Candy's comment Monique's school has had two teachers with international training and decades of teaching experience. Monique describes the teachers' qualifications with the following statements:

From their experience, because so far I have had two instructors. One of them, the old lady, she was a teacher for 35 years back home. So that's not too hard or difficult for her to develop her own curriculum and program. She knows what to do. So, and this is for her. And the other one, she is teaching, but not kids. She is teaching older levels, because she is teaching French, right? Also, she knows, she has the capability of knowing how to teach the students.

In Fane's community, member 3 reported that "some teachers from the community have a license for it." Others who taught in the school received training in the seminary. Similarly, Fritz describes the training process in which the teachers in his school participated. He and his colleagues had higher education in their

former country and now they were “training to be teachers for the community. And we were volunteers. We spent our time for our children.”

Fane’s community’s story is particularly poignant. Of the teachers in his former school, he says, “But we have good people in our community. They have a good education and even back home they had good teachers there. But here, they are just working any job.” He shows that skills obtained in other countries are not necessarily recognized in Canada. Further, he points out the potential loss of losing expertise to minimum wage jobs. He states, “The teacher is so important because there are so few of them.”

Alberta-certified teachers. In each of the emerged schools, with the notable exception of Ford’s school, there was at least one teacher with an Alberta certified teaching certificate. George explains that having a certified teacher is a requirement from Alberta Education to which schools must adhere if they wish to offer high school credit courses. He explains, “At least one person on staff. It doesn't have to be the principal, it often is, but it doesn't have to be the principal. But one person on staff who has their Alberta teaching certificate.” Imogene explains that for some communities finding a certified teacher is a major challenge. She says, “But in some you can only find one teacher that is certificated to oversee what the program is,

that's it!"

Joyce questions if it is even appropriate to expect HL teachers to have Alberta qualifications, stating "I don't think that Alberta Certified is the answer. That's what I strongly believe. I don't believe that you have to be certified in the province to be a really good teacher." She adds to this:

Yeah, in general, the idea of having a regulated field is good because that means that there are standards that regulated professionals have to meet. But when we talk about standards, not necessarily for Adult Education, but HL teaching in general, you cannot really apply those standards there, right? I think what would work in my mind is that all teachers that are teaching in HL schools are teachers by profession in their country of origin. In the sense that they are taught the basics and the main fundamentals of a main teaching profession. Because it is the same. You name the country and it is very similar.

Internationally-trained teachers. Most emerged HL school leaders report that the majority of teachers are internationally-trained and hold certification in their country of origin. The wealthier the community and the more recent the immigration the greater likelihood of having a wide choice of internationally

trained teachers. Similar to Monique's comment earlier, Ford says that his teachers are trained in his former country, "And one of these teachers, one of these ladies, she is a retired teacher from back home for 25 and 26 years of teaching experience."

Correspondingly, Sage describes the teachers in her school:

We have teachers who have come from the former country, they were teachers there. They have very good degrees like masters in the language.

Those are the teachers we hire, because they are not certified here. So one teacher had 35 years of experience. So one teacher had not much experience, but she was well educated from back home.

An advantage for some internationally-trained teachers is that they are able to maintain their overseas credentials because of the teaching work that they do in Canada. Lydia explains:

And she taught elementary back home, but even here because of immigration right? They need to have all of this paperwork knowing that they are working or whatever. And after you, I have an interview with another new potential teacher. The one who has been teaching at our school for about 20 years, actually every year she actually submits to the board of education there and gets approval that she is teaching here. There is one who

just came about a year ago and I had to write a letter that says yeah, she is working here at a school. Like she is an actual teacher who just immigrated this year. It's more of a paperwork hassle than anything else.

Some groups report that they can only find teachers who are “overqualified”.

For example, Alice describes her HL school's “teachers, a lot have PhDs or Master's.

They are all qualified and have training, I would say that the majority are overqualified, but they have the patience to teach the language to our children here.”

Correspondingly, Violet also shares how many very well-educated professionals apply to her school:

Whereas, before in my time, I interviewed a couple people or people who would just send me their resume. And say, "If a position opens up at your school..." I'd have a telephone conversation and it's one of these people who,

"Yes, I taught at the University." Do you realize we're in elementary school?

So how would you teach reading to a seven-year-old, eight-year-old, but they're trying to get something and it's like, "Well, I can do that." Um. No.

As both Alice and Violet have previously described, it does not follow that teachers with excellent qualifications in one context can easily transfer their training and skills to teaching in another context. As Rory furthers, “But just

because you may be trained as a teacher, it doesn't mean you are a good teacher here." Laurie explains that teachers hired with international credentials need to update their skills. She describes the differences between teaching in Alberta and teaching overseas:

And teaching language, because here we basically only teach language. We don't teach science in heritage language schools. We don't teach social science, but we might teach some topics based on the history of the country, the culture, the literature, etc. etc. So when you become a language teacher in a heritage school, you need to revise your teaching skills and a language. Even if you were, probably for teachers who were teaching language back home it is even easier, they can adapt the teaching skills of a foreign language teacher here. But for language teachers it is another challenge, because they have to revise their skills. They cannot teach HL the same way as they used to teach it there. Because back in their home countries it was not a HL language, it was the official language or one of them. That means that the people speak it every day, TV, radio, all media is using the language. On the streets you hear the same language, so it is absolutely different and kids go to school every day and they use this language as a language of

instruction. So this is absolutely different.

While Laurie explains how teaching language is different in majority and minority language contexts, others have shared that teachers also must learn how to adjust their expectations of classroom behaviour. Violet explains, “Nobody has to go to a HL school. That is an option that families have.” She furthers her point with “That’s the number one thing I want my teachers to know, those students are coming here by choice.” Sage also shared how teachers have to learn about Canadian behavioral norms. She says, “There was one time when we had to talk to a teacher because she was so strict and the kids didn’t like that.” She also tells that it is important for teachers to understand what children experience in their daily school system. She offers:

So we have to train the teachers to teach for the kids that are born here. We have to make things interesting, rather than just asking them to memorize. I need to test you on this and you are going to be punished and stuff like that.

So we have to train our teachers, yes.

For Alice there is also an issue of helping teachers to select appropriate material for the classroom. She shares her advice to her HL teachers:

I mean, even the teachers, because a lot of them are from that country, they

will teach songs and stuff. I said don't do that because the kids don't even know where those places are. They don't know how good that country is. So please have something that is more related to them like Canadian culture, or the local language community here in the city instead of using those things. Everything has to be neutral.

To gain access to the Canadian workforce, many new Canadians have to take jobs for which they are overqualified (Basran & Zong, 1998; Bilash & Shi, 2011; Bilash & Kang, 2008; Leong & Chou, 1994; Reitz, 2001; Zong, 2004). Bilash and Shi (2011) tell the story of an international graduate student who was looking to start a new life in Canada. In her former country, China, she both worked in an English department and ran language schools and bilingual daycare centers. Despite her obvious language, business, and academic capabilities, she found it difficult to enter the teaching profession in Canada due to, at least in part, her second language speaker status. Like the colleagues she mentions who also sought better employment opportunities in Canada, she found that entering the work force was complicated to a lack of proper career preparation and difficulty engaging with Canadians socially. She found that she needed to adapt to the Canadian way to join the workforce by unlearning some of what she knew from her former experience

and to relearning new ways of thinking. This lead Bilash and Shi (2011) to conclude “As they unlearn certain knowledge, competencies, and values, and then relearn new conceptualizations, they need support” (p. 74).

Theme Four: HL teachers gain confidence and workplace skills which in turn help them to succeed in the Canadian workforce.

By participating in a community HL school, teachers learn skills that aide them in entering the Canadian workforce. As Joyce explains that schools are about more than just teaching language. She says, “We are not just some schools, but we are places where we create some ways for people to come and get work experience, develop professionally and put that stuff on their résumés and apply for better jobs.”

Alice, too, explains that many HL teachers “use us as a stepping stone, because they are new here to Canada and they cannot find a job. They use our school as a way to get Canadian work experience, so they can get references for their experience here.”

Joyce says that what HL schools offer “experience [that] is priceless”. She also points out some of the opportunities that HL teachers can receive which include “show[ing] that you got hired, that you can work with a variety of stakeholders, students, parents, teachers, right? There are staff meetings that you went to, you are literally developing all of those nine essential skills” [reading, document use,

numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking, digital technology, and continuous learning (Workplace Education Manitoba)] and “show[ing] some kind of community involvement” since “there is no way that you can get any governmental job or anything like that, even a good non-profit role without being involved in the community.”

Theme Five: HL teachers, especially volunteers and internationally-trained teachers leave for better paying work which makes sustaining a school difficult.

The participants in this study list identify two main reasons why teachers in HL schools leave. First, HL teachers, especially volunteers, tire and leave for paying or better paying work. “Finding a teacher who will work for free is very challenging” was something that was learned in Fabian’s community. As member 4 of Fane’s community said, “The way the teachers did it before was just volunteers, but the volunteers must get just something to motivate him or her. And then we need them also to be trained.” Second, teachers with international teaching qualifications often find work in the K-12 system. Yet, these teachers are essential to offering a high school credit course. Alberta Education requires a certificated teacher to offer a program. (See Chapter VIII)

Summary of the answer to: What characteristics do HL school leaders and HL elders believe HL students and HL teachers have?

According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), an individual is shaped by those in his immediate environment. This is true for HL learners in Alberta who often do not get sufficient exposure to the language in order to develop speaking and literacy skills in the home. As a result, many enter HL classes. Since I did not interview any of the HL students attending these classes, I cannot say with any certainty that HL students enjoy them; however, HL leaders and HL elders believe that students both enjoy them and benefit from participating. In addition to language learning (Chapter VII), they list benefits for HL students such as friendship, development of positive attitudes towards language learning, increased self-esteem and confidence, fun activities, high school credits for motivation, and new learning methods and strategies.

HL teachers assist HL learners in acquiring these skills outside of their families. It is important to note that HL teachers also benefit personally from participating. In fact, they may join a HL school for their own personal reward. Most HL leaders and elders report that the majority of teachers are immigrants with international teaching qualifications. By participating in a HL school they can retain

their qualifications, learn about the Canadian educational system through the children, and gain employment skills which can assist them in looking for other kinds of work, not to mention feeling satisfied that they are making a contribution to Canada, to multiculturalism, and to their HL community.

Many parents send their children to a HL school to acquire what parents believe they cannot teach children at home: language skills and cultural knowledge. School leaders work to ensure that students receive positive affect and personal benefits from attending. Likewise, teachers; internationally-trained, volunteer, or Canadian-trained; also attend schools for their own personal benefits. Unfortunately, many volunteer- and internationally-trained teachers leave once their personal needs are met. For international teachers, this usually takes place once he or she has established a Canadian work history. In response to the second half one the Chapter VI research question, how do students and teachers impact each other, it seems that they both enter schools to meet their own personal needs. Teachers seem to meet their needs more quickly. Once they leave the school, students are left behind to work with new teachers need to figure out how to work with HL-learning children in a Canadian context. This impacts the long-term sustainability of the school.

CHAPTER VII- THE MESOSYSTEM

Research Question #2: According to HL school leaders and HL community elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And, how have they aided the development and visibility of HL communities in Alberta?

This chapter is divided into three sections: a definition of the mesosystem, an exploration of how schools influence the community (seven themes) and a demonstration of how schools have aided the development and visibility (four themes).

The Definition of the Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory can be used to describe how individuals develop as they interact with their environment. In the series of circles that represent not only the child, but the world in which she lives and develops is the mesosystem—the different environments where the individual interacts. Essentially, the mesosystem can be described as the intersecting points between one area of the child's life and another. (See Figure 2.3) In reference to typical child development, Bronfenbrenner (1986) states, "Although the family is the principle context in which human development takes place, it is but one of several settings in which developmental processes can and do occur" (p. 723). In the case of the

heritage language learning children, language development and community participation often take place within the family first, but also within the community, at cultural events (sometimes organized by the community and sometimes organized by two large HL school umbrella organizations called SAHLA and IHLA), and in the community HL school. As will be shown through the words of the HL school leaders and the HL community elders, these HL schools form out of community need and assist in inviting the children as well as new adults into the HL community.

This chapter addresses two research questions targeted at the Mesosystem in heritage language schools. The analysis of 25 hours and 24 minutes of data from 17 participants has yielded 11 themes. The first half of the question specifically looks at understanding what heritage language schools offer the heritage language community. The second half of the question specifically looks at what heritage language schools do to help heritage language communities be recognized by Albertans outside of their specific HL communities. To answer both these questions I asked participants about their schools' histories, what they felt were the benefits of participation, community sponsored events, curriculum development, community members, and school finances.

How Do HL Schools Influence the Community?

In response to the first half of my research question, how do schools influence the HL community, the participants' responses yielded seven themes: 1. HL schools form and are sustained in response to demands from parents in the HL community; 2. HL schools increase the language proficiency in children so that they can participate in the HL community; 3. HL schools represent children's voices in educational programming and HL community events; 4. HL schools introduce children into service work, 5. HL schools introduce new adults into the HL community; 6. HL schools get parents and other HL community adults involved in service work; and 7. HL schools are aware of the needs of newer immigrants and help them to meet their needs. In each of these themes, individuals (students, volunteers, parents, immigrants, and others) are called to join the community through the HL school.

Theme One: HL Schools form in response to demands from parents in the community.

School leaders who are in charge of schools which have been in operation for many decades comment that a community HL school is an expectation for the community. Lydia explains the origins of her school, "Back in the day we used to

have hundreds of kids because that's what immigrant parents used to do." Violet also tells of her experience growing up, "My father immigrated here and it was that community of, 'We need to provide language for our children, so we're going to do it through Saturday schools.'" Sage describes the questioning process of her community by asking "How are we going to give our kids our language and our culture?" Laurie's answer, the most pragmatic of the group of leaders, states, "I believe it is the same way as our school formed because people are the same. If they actually found a school, it means they have a need for it."

Three participants in this study (Monique, Victor, and Alice) gave a nuanced answer in which they discussed how the creation of a school is linked to the creation of a community environment for children. Monique explains the importance of proximity, stating, "They know how to learn, but they needed the environment to push them to understand." Victor explains "We are teaching our students something that even though you think it is old, but it's new to these students." Alice describes her school's history:

The school started about 30 years ago by a group of parents. When they came here they were mostly from two countries where they were minority language speakers. There was a need to start a school so the kids could learn

how to speak the language together.

As was described in Chapter VI, parents worry that their children's language proficiency, especially speaking and literacy skills are insufficient-

Parents, according to school leaders and HL elders, have always been interested in and still are interested in providing children with language instruction. Unfortunately, very few options for doing so exist inside regular schools (Mady, 2012; Speck, 2008). As has been pointed out by the parents in this study and Guardado (2002), many students require classes to push them to learn the language. Community leaders are often aware that this desire exists and they organize parents around these issues.

Theme Two: HL schools increase the language proficiency in children so that they can participate in the HL community and beyond/elsewhere.

Again, as was pointed out in Chapter VI, parents and school leaders are concerned about their children's speaking skills. When discussing oral language use, Fane, Fritz, Laurie and Lydia make similar comments describing how English easily becomes the home's *de facto* language. "Language use", according to Lydia, "is just natural that they will just speak English at home. So it is kind of sad".

According to the participants, the students do improve in speaking skills as

a result of their participation. Alice describes an international speaking contest in which her students compete. She describes the event:

Even some kids, like right now they have the language bridge competition.

We have kids that do very well. For me, even if some of them don't win a prize, they are still number one. When they start speaking in front of people and they can, for two and a half hours, stand and speak that well! That's a success story for me and the kids that work all over the diaspora! When they were in school they hated the language but now they come back and they say I am so glad that I learned it. That makes me feel very, very good.

Violet also describes the students' improvement in oral language in her school:

They wanted a book developed for their particular level. How do you do that when language levels are diverse? It's all in the teacher's technique. I still boast how we didn't have all those books and I taught at the upper end; those children could speak. These non-speakers, by the end of elementary were able to carry on a conversation. Were there grammatical errors? Yes. Were they missing words, lack of vocabulary sometimes? Yes. But could they carry on a conversation with me? Absolutely, back and forth, totally in

the language.

Imogen describes the importance of having competent bilingual speakers, not only from the perspective of students, families, and communities, but from the perspective of international trade.

And no matter what we say to the government, they [our HL students] will be the leaders of the future of the international market, because they are speaking the language of the country that you are going to be with. For example, Harper, I don't know who he takes with him when he goes to meetings abroad, but we have already students who have graduated and who have become very strong language speakers in this city. But they do not see that. How are we going to convince them?

Cui (2011/2012) enlightens that without HL language skills, culture becomes cheapened to a form of symbolic affiliation. Mady (2010) similarly argues that culture does not fully exist without language. Similarly to Chumak-Horbatsch (1999) who found that the home language became English over time even in the most vigilant Ukrainian-speaking families, the school leaders in this study reported that the parents were very concerned about the children's ability to speak the HL since the home language morphed into English. - Further, many studies have

demonstrated that HL students' literacy skills often are developed in HL schools (De Capua & Wintergerst, 2009, Guardado, 2002; Jean, 2011, Liu, 2007). Liu found that students who graduated from a Chinese Saturday school in Southern California had a reading level of about Grade five or six. Cui (2011/2012) explains that once students have literacy they can connect with technology and the media thereby accessing the global language community. Here, he explains what happens when students do not have to HL literacy:

Without having Chinese language skills, many participants are prevented from accessing Chinese websites, movies, music, community organizations and activities. In other words, their limited knowledge of ethnic language affects the maintenance of ethnic culture as well as the possibility of a substantial connection with mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

(p.138)

Theme Three: HL schools represent children's voices in educational programming and in community events.

If HL children enjoy participating in HL school as was shown in Chapter VI, perhaps it is because schools serve to welcome them. All seven of the school leaders in emerged communities acknowledge the importance of connecting children to HL

community events. The leaders tell of three ways that this happens: 1. teaching children how to participate in the wider community (Alice and Rory), 2. participating and performing at typically adult-centered events (Lydia, Sage, and Victor), and 3. creating events designed specifically for children (Violet and Ford).

In their schools, both Alice and Rory told of activities done with children in which they teach them specifically how to interact with their communities. Alice's school taught children how to buy snacks. She explains, "Like now, we have another event where we want the kids to do like real-life. So we have a snack sale. So we stick up the words so they have to practice in real-life to buy things." Rory also worked to welcome children into the community through building friendships with same-language speakers in the United States. He describes the program followed by his students:

They gave us an opportunity to tell us about United Nations, a new program in [an American city]. We sent our students to the international students program at the University [name removed]. It was fantastic. The kids loved it. Big boys, you know Grade 11, before they hated me. They hated learning the language, for some it was impossible. But they came and they liked the program very much. It was fantastic; they didn't want to go home. I told

them, “If you want to continue the relationship, it will be a test for me and you. You have friends, you have email, you have Skype. Let’s go”. And the next year people came to us. For me it was very good cooperation again. You know, it was for high school students, that program.

Three of the participants ensured that children were able to participate in community events typically for adults. Sage has her students participate in a community-led parade, sharing, “We have our own float to represent our school because that’s a parade. It’s called City’s Parade. So that’s what kids go there and they connect and they feel the connection.” Lydia has children lead a mass at church, describing the event, “We organize it and the kids did it all: the readings, the prayers of the faithful. They are up there speaking; it’s pretty cool. We do that every year for International Children’s Day and the parents are always like, “Wow!” Victor, while not describing any event in particular, did tell of how parents and children perceive participating in community events from their point of view. He shares:

A couple of mothers came to me and said to me “Thank God for the school because the kids are laughing and they’re not shy anymore.” There are a lot of kids that are not very communicative in the regular school environment because all of the pressures of competition, because of their background or

skin colour, because they are in a class where there are only two or three of them that are the same. They don't feel like they belong, but in here, they belong. They have a chance to actually express their feelings and get involved and become leaders.

Two of the school leaders describe creating community events specifically for children. Violet's school hosts an annual concert. She describes it as:

We always had a winter concert date. We celebrated every year with the students. That became too big to celebrate under our church, in the church hall, so I had to find a venue, and work with the venue, and with a special group to accommodate us.

Ford also hosts events designated for children. He describes his motivation for establishing child-centered community HL events as the following:

When they don't have any good memory of their community and it has nothing for them, how can they like it? So that is why they now come to the events. And they really enjoy it. Now they say, "When is the next event?"

My daughter is changed and many of the children are the same.

Noels (2005) and Comanaru & Noels (2009) investigated motivation in HL students taking university language courses. Specific to German learners, Noels

(2005) found that “Aspects of concept with the German community also played a role in motivated learning, particularly for heritage language learners” (p. 285). This relationship between one’s participation in a community and personal identity was also shown in Comanaru and Noels’ (2009) study which examined motivation in Chinese university classes. The researchers found Chinese HL learners to be more likely to participate in the community and to study out of a sense of obligation regardless of their proficiency than second language learners. They also concluded, “The results showed that the more learners felt that they were learning Chinese because it was personally meaningful and fun, the more they were engaged in the learning process” (p. 131). Although the HL school leaders were working with young children and adolescents (and not young adults like those in the mentioned studies, the school leaders went to great effort to bring the children into the community, to make things fun for the children, and to create meaningful HL learning experiences. The participants in this study demonstrated that they were aware of the children’s needs for belonging to the community and for personal enjoyment in order to feel motivated to learn the language and hoped for the children’s long term commitment to their community.

Theme Four: HL schools introduce children into service work.

Involving children and youth in service work was listed by some school leaders as a positive outcome of participation in heritage language schools. Of the six school leaders that mentioned service work, Victor and Lydia discussed students performing for either members of their communities or for public events in the province. Both mentioned how others, especially community members, enjoy watching the children perform. When explicitly describing performances at seniors' functions Victor states:

I mean we bring joy and we bring entertainment for them. There's nothing better than watching some happy kid with beautiful clothes dancing to the nice music, smiling in the winter when you know when you are alone and nobody is visiting you or something like that. I believe we have a lot to contribute to the health of these people and they love to see us perform for them.

In addition to performances, Alice and Sage also listed the importance of the children's service work for the greater community. They both see service work as long-term goals. Sage describes her vision, "They also feel like they are doing things for our community. So, they are more into doing volunteer work. I think in

the future they know that their community needs them to lead. I think that makes them better people.” Alice also has a long-term outlook towards service work. She shares, “So we teach a lot. More than just the books. Those are my goals, because I don’t just want them to be academically good, but I want them to be a well-rounded person and a good citizen.” Inga, a community elder, tells of the value of events, but from a micro-perspective. She links what children learn through these micro-opportunities to later leadership within their communities. She tells, “It’s kind of like seeding something really small, kind of giving students’ kind of little opportunities here and there. What happens is that these chances shape an individual.”

When describing service work, Alice listed some of the activities to which her school has contributed. She shares:

And then we also have a program to make sure that they learn how to contribute back to the community as well. Even though we have no money and we do no fundraising, the only fundraising that we do is like donate a ride and projects that all the teachers and kids do to come together and raise money, but the school raises money for others.

Both Fabian and Fane looked to their children to provide service work for

their communities once the schools became active. Fane looked to his community's children to assist their parents with their adjustment to Canada. He had hoped that children with better HL skills would be able to teach their parents how to read, a skill that they lacked in their first language. With first language literacy, Fane's community was aware that mothers would be able to both learn English faster and adjust better to Canadian society. Fane wants the children in his school to "teach the single moms how to read the Bible so the kids can have a relation with the mom." Fabian's outlook was farther reaching. He shared, "When those kids start doing community work, they will do better because they will know the system and do everything. Then all of them they will feel like this." He even clarified that his dream for the future children of the community was service, not only within Canada, but global:

And have that language knowledge. They will do better. Even if they grow up here with their friends who are Canadian, they can go to my country to do research there. They can go to the Elders. They can have chances and at the university will have access to anything that they want to do, because there are people that are good.

Of the five school leaders who did not explicitly discuss service work for

children, two of these schools belonged to a faith community (Violet and Laurie & Rory), two had only Kindergarten to Grade Four elementary-aged students (Monique and Ford), and one was no longer operating (Fritz).

To my knowledge there has not been a Canadian study which examines attitudes towards volunteerism by children who attended HL schools. However, a study by Jones (2000) found that along with observing their parents volunteer, Canadian children who participated in team sports or youth organizations gave more time to service work as adults. He concludes, “participation in activities during a person’s formative years may encourage them to take on more community involvement in adulthood” (p. 16). The relationship between HL school attendance, community participation, and volunteerism merits further study.

While Jones’s study examines participation in volunteer organizations in childhood as it links with adulthood service work, Ishizawa (2015) examines attitudes towards volunteerism and civic participation in immigrant youth according to race and immigrant racial status in the United States. In her analysis of data from 12, 590 participants who completed the Educational Longitudinal Study in 2002, 2004, and 2006, she concluded that race and ethnicity were factors in a young adult’s choice to volunteer. She found that both Asian and Hispanic

youth were more likely to volunteer than 3rd generation Caucasian youth. She also draws the following conclusion about the link between volunteerism and HL use:

In other words, the likelihood of volunteerism increases among first and second generational Hispanics if they have parents who talk to them in their non-English native language. It is important to note that this positive effect of having non-English-speaking parents on volunteerism was also true for Asians. (p. 227)

Theme Five: HL schools introduce new adults into the community.

According to the school leaders and the heritage community language elders, schools invite new members into the community by creating language classes for adults (Fane, Lydia, and Alice), by assisting those in need to meet their survival needs or find employment (Fane, Monique, Lydia and Alice), by helping those who have left to become reconnected with the community through their children's school (Violet), and by introducing some into a wider social circle (Fane, Victor, and Lydia).

Three school leaders and one community elder in particular spoke of language classes for adults, albeit all three mentioned classes in differing ways. Alice shares that “we have adults who want to learn [our language]”. Lydia's school

hosts classes for adults; “Our adult teacher is also from [country name], so she teaches the adults. Joyce describes trying to recruit teachers, “We needed to raise awareness. So I thought I was going to take leaflets with me to [a tourist venue] because there was some festival going on. So I did 100 copies of those and we had a table display.” Fane’s community does not explicitly teach adults language classes, but his program does offer literacy and Bible classes. He explains:

We have four teachers, because sometimes we have the mothers, they don’t actually know how to read and write the language, too. So they have their own class. The kids are like there and then the mothers have their own class, too, because they want to read the bible in their language. When we came here some actually grew up in a refugee camp where they never actually learned the language well.

Some new immigrants or refugees have challenges when settling into Canadian society. Both Fane and Monique express how members of their community struggle to adjust to life here. Monique explains that “We want to provide a connection between the newcomers and the resources and especially the agencies in the city”. Fane’s community also needs support adjusting to Canada, but he frames his support more in the form of friendship and prevention from

isolation.

Violet's experience with bringing new members into the community is not about helping new Canadians adjust, but rather inviting back members who have left their communities, but wish to return, often for the sake of their children. She provides the example below which describes a language program for HL students who have little or no previous exposure to the language:

The face of HL just had to change a bit, and I never looked at seeking out other families that didn't speak it. They just came to me with the interest. When someone is interested, and really wants it for their child, I'm going to see what I can do. I obviously made the right decision, because it still exists today.

Both Fane and Victor explained that schools also serve a social function for parents, in addition to introducing friends to their children. Victor describes time spent among parents while their children are in school. He describes some of the things that parents discuss: "work and who is hiring," "the health of smoking", "whose house can host the next party", "cultural programs" and "exchanging information" and "cooking". Victor says that HL schools are "a social event for us, too."

According to Fane, schools are one method of entering a community without being forced into accepting a religious affiliation. He tells:

Some people are non-religious here, so you cannot force somebody to come to church unless they are willing, but if it is something dealing with the kids like an outreach program for the kids or a language school for the kids, some people will say okay, I am bringing my kids but don't force me to join your church. I am not coming for church services, like you mentioned, I remember, I have no time for church, but I have time to meet with you guys.

While HL schools are not directly linked with parental employment or social adjustment in the literature, it is possible and logical that some immigrants might seek out HL schools to meet their children's language needs as well as their social and employment needs. This was also found in Guo's (2013) study which found that many immigrants volunteer so that they can gain entry to the Canadian workforce. The role of adult (parental, teacher, student, and volunteer) involvement in HL schools in Canada merits further study since understanding their impact in HL education for children is not fully investigated.

Theme Six: HL schools get parents and other HL community adults involved in service work that benefits the school and the community.

As is shown through the participants' comments, volunteerism offers newcomer parents additional opportunities to connect with their children in the HL as well as offers them the opportunity to make contributions to the larger society. Throughout the interviews school leaders informed me that not only do schools encourage students to serve their communities through service work as shown in theme six, but others, especially parents, are called on to volunteer as well. In emerging schools, school leaders recruited volunteers to teach classes (Fane, Fritz, Fabian, Monique, and Candy), to provide snacks (Fane and Monique), and to collect the children and "bring the kids on the bus" (Fane) (Fane, Fritz, Fabian, Candy). The leaders of the emerged schools, all of whom had paid teachers, listed many more specific tasks that required the recruitment of volunteers: "tak[ing] the children to the washroom" (Monique), being "the persons who are in charge of the technology, copying, making" (Ford), "putting together programs" (Victor) such as "games day and it was all parent volunteers" (Lydia) and "reading week" (Lydia), participating at "AGMs" [Annual General Meetings] (Lydia and Alice), building props for school plays, such as "we needed a sleigh built" (Violet), and the

collection of certain materials because “it [the school] deserves some tools to help it because the students all have it in their regular schools” (Violet) (Violet and Monique).

According to one participant in particular, Victor, HL schools were one specific place where parents have freedom to offer volunteer service for their children since due to language and cultural differences they are limited in how they can participate in the K-12 system. He shares:

They might be involved more here than public school because they are required or needed but also the barrier. Some of our parents can’t be involved in public school programs because of the language barrier. You know some of the parents want to go on field trips with the kids speaking English, but or explain some math or some kind of problem. They want to go but they can’t because they themselves are not well versed in the English language, so they feel shy. But in here, it’s an easy environment because they speak their own language. So they feel more confident, so they are involved more because there are no hang ups.

Li (2005) found that many parents who volunteered in the HL school did so to meet their children’s HL learning needs, but also to meet their own personal

needs. This was confirmed by Liu (2007) who investigated a large Chinese Saturday School in Southern California. She found that adults who volunteered received “identity affirmation” (p.vii). In other words, the ethnic identity of the parents and volunteers is strengthened through volunteer participation.

Theme Seven: HL schools are aware of the needs of newer immigrants and help them to meet their needs.

As was learned in Chapter VI, HL schools often provide training and opportunities for teachers in their new Albertan home. Teachers are provided with chances to develop leadership skills, get work experience, and maintain their true vocation. HL schools offer supports to not only students and teachers, but to newer members of HL communities as well.

Some of the schools, both from emerging and emerged communities, have influxes of new members into their new Canadian communities. For these groups, making newcomers feel welcomed and well-adjusted is important. Fane explains that his school for children also invites parents “who are a little bit distressed, some people they are just sitting at home just watching TV all the time.” For these parents, his group offers socialization and friendship. Fabian explains that his community also has many members without formal education. For them, literacy and financial

literacy are foundational skills which can be learned through the community HL school with the assistance of more knowledgeable peers. Fabian's comments describe how new Canadians are often left on their own without supports. Help, while available, only comes if one is willing and knows how to ask for it. He describes:

Financially we don't know, but when you see that one, figure out those kinds of trainings, so everybody knows before. When they come here they are supposed to know how to deal with the bank. Even if they don't have any education, they need to ask somebody to help him in this area. And in this country nobody says I want to help with this. You are supposed to say, "I am a newcomer. I don't know anything, including the language."

Alice also describes how HL schools help new Canadians. She shares that her school offers relatively inexpensive childcare for children whose immigrant parents are required to work on weekends. She tells, "Also, some parents, they are new immigrants, they work Saturday, so they see us as a daycare, their kids would have nowhere to go, it's a very cheap daycare for all year round Saturday care, because our school fees are minimum."

School leaders are knowledgeable in both the challenges that newcomers to

Canada face and the support services that may be available to newcomers. School leaders showed that they were aware of mental health needs (specifically stress and feelings of isolation), basic survival needs in areas such as child care and banking, and language learning needs of children in both HL and English as a second language. Guo (2013) found that volunteerism was important for knowledgeable community members to provide supports for newcomers who felt unable to access other supports. He says:

Because mainstream government services were often intimidating and inaccessible, many immigrants turned to volunteering as a means of collective action to provide mutual support and build a community that immigrants felt they belonged to. Volunteering thus stands as an important site for social action and immigrant volunteers are active citizens. (p. 62)

Summary of the answer to the question: According to HL school leaders and HL community elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And, how have they aided the development and visibility of HL communities in Alberta?

In some of the American academic literature on HL schools, the efficacy of these institutions is sometimes called into question (Brown, 2011, Tse, 2001) for two main reasons: the children report that they do not enjoy them or learn much and

the schools appear to be organized haphazardly. While this chapter did not examine directly the opinions of HL students or the organizational structure of particular HL schools in the province, the comments of the participants call into question the appropriateness of comparisons of Canadian HL schooling with the American system of HL Education. It is clear that HL school leaders and elders in the HL community consider HL schools to be valuable institutions for both the children and communities in the Canadian context of Alberta. In the Albertan context, HL schools are organized. And while the enjoyment of the students has not been discussed, HL school leaders and community HL elders cite their schools' benefits to the community as increased language proficiency and language use among the children, added community involvement, and enhanced dedication to volunteerism and service work.

To understand the first half of the research question which asks "How do schools influence the community?" from an Ecological Systems Theory perspective, it is essential to understand the relationship between children (the microsystem), and two components of the mesosystem (the community and the HL school). As the participants in this study have shared, schools form in response to a need for language and cultural instruction for children which is brought into consciousness

by parents of the HL community. This is demonstrated by #A in figure 7.1 (p. 329).

According to the participants in this study, schools also provide benefits for students which include increasing language proficiency both in speaking skills and in literacy; creating positive affect through children's events and personally-relevant learning activities; and in developing positive attitudes towards community service and volunteerism. The gain of these skills is represented by #B. By benefiting from increased language proficiency, positive affect, and service work, children either join or rejoin the community as active participants and as full members. The strengthening of the feeling of belonging of children to their communities is shown in #C. Furthermore, as shown in #D, HL schools welcome other adults (parents taking language classes, newcomers who need support, or people interested in immigrating to Canada) into the community as well. They achieve this by taking care of new immigrants and by offering volunteer opportunities for others that are settled and comfortable in Canada. In other words, HL schools attract people to the community who otherwise might choose not to participate. In addition, as places where children (and also adults) can learn their language and culture, schools are often a safety net for newcomers in the community and a place of personal development for those who wish to share with others. As the right side of *Figure*

7.1 depicts, the children become members of the community under the school, and over time, the community grows larger and unified as new people are added through involvement with the school.

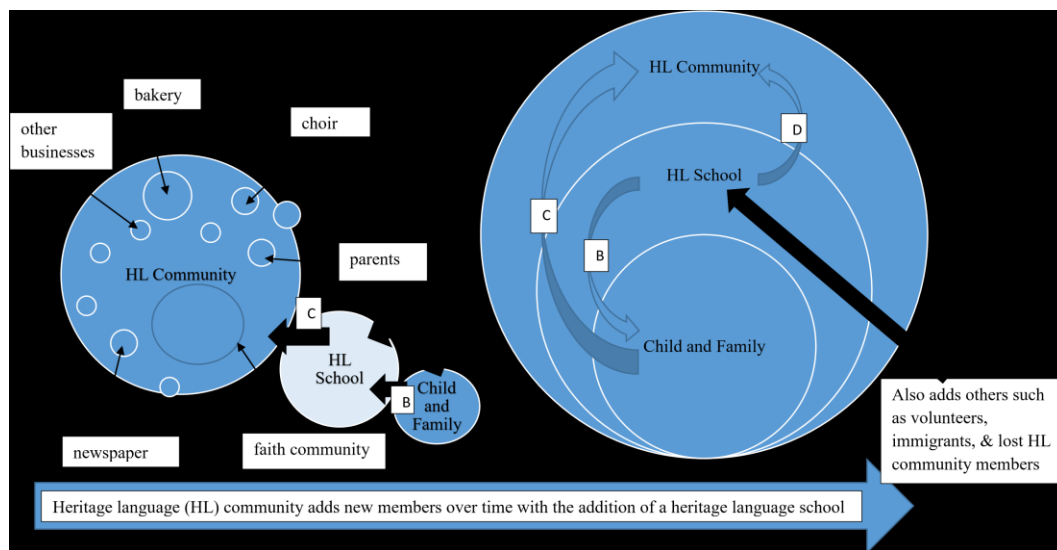


Figure 7.1. The developing child in relation to the mesosystem.

How Have HL Schools Aided the Development and Visibility of Communities in Alberta?

In response to the second half of the question, how do schools aid the development and visibility of communities in Alberta, participants' responses provided four themes: 8. HL school members create cultural spaces and plan and host cultural events; 9. HL schools increase the interaction among multicultural

groups; 10. HL schools attend and host local events and invite politicians and dignitaries; and 11. HL schools advocate for language instruction in both K-12 schools and universities. In this section of the chapter the participants help explain that not only do HL schools assist HL communities in gathering new members, but they also assist HL communities to become better known to other multicultural groups in the province, to politicians and dignitaries, and to educators in the public K-12 school system.

Theme Eight: HL school members create cultural spaces and host cultural events.

The actual creation of a HL school is often a sense of pride for community groups that have one. Alternatively, the lack of a community school is also sometimes seen as a sense of shame or embarrassment for the group. As mentioned in theme eight, Monique's decision to form a school was inspired by another community school which her children attended. She felt empowered to create a HL school expressing, "Why don't we as a community establish this kind of a program?" Fabian also went to great lengths to establish a school, "Even myself when I started the school here, I had a hard time. It took me like three years. I did it because I think that it is very important to have our mother tongue." Candy states that it is typical

for a community to want to create a school, explaining:

There is always someone on the board who says this is a burning need in our community. It's always in their bylaws so when they have their goals of their Society, to preserve the Sudanese, the Somali, Bosnian, Vietnamese culture, it's always been one of the goals of every society that I have ever seen. I look at the many ethnocultural groups that I have worked with, this will be one of their things. We have to preserve our language and our heritage. They try to reach that goal. And having heritage language or dance, or being at heritage language days is a way that they feel that they meet that goal.

Ford explains similarly that the actualization of the school in his community was a sense of pride, but also lists community events as a way to campaign for the creation of a school initially:

Because I was a teacher and I used to go to [other HL] schools, I saw that all languages are taught, but mine. And then I asked myself why? So it was offensive to me that [my cultural group] didn't have any school. From then I started to think, it was bugging me, and I couldn't get it out of my head. And that was why I started this campaign—going there and talking to them.

And what I did was I put everybody together.

School events on their own are also a source of pride. Lydia describes how school events are shared through social media, stating, “Facebook, I am telling you. That’s another thing I do. I run the Facebook page for the school. Every time we do an event, I post up pictures right away. The kids sing a little song, I post up a video. There will be 700 or some likes or views or whatever.” Victor shares his experiences of children participating in community events:

Whenever there are any performances and that they get to perform in public, you know at city hall, or they get invited to do special performances at the places of worship, or senior halls, or go to any of the public performances, they [the children] are very proud. When they put on their dresses and clothes, and they look nice, their hair is done, they are very proud of being from this culture. And even when they speak to their friends and they tell their friends about it, this is my language and culture. They try to translate a song or they explain to their friend that this is what the dance is all about and some of the words, they tell them this is what the words mean.

He shares that this pride of the HL does not only manifest in the students and performers, but in the parents, extended families, and community as a whole:

You know [when parents are] looking at their kids performing in front of other people, it's like "Hey, my kid is up there!" That is a lot of self-esteem that they wouldn't have otherwise. They take pictures and they send them back home and these people say, "Look at my kid!" You know, they show off to relatives to make them feel proud of themselves.

A similar sentiment was expressed by Fabian when discussing ways of developing a curriculum for his school and language which has very few written materials. He describes how the creation of a program benefits not only the children linguistically, but is a source of personal pride for the parents that they can share with others both locally and internationally; thus, a collective pride.

That is the one that people here need with their kids. They want to start doing that one. If they feel a part of that thing [curriculum development based on Freirean principles] they will be happy to work on it and they will be proud. We don't have to say that was their language in "somewhere else", they can say this is my language here in this city, too. And somebody like you will be there at the end of the day; you learn, too.

Fane's community also described how the world, not only Albertan families, is exposed to events through the community HL schools. Events are often

downloaded on to social media. Fane's community shares:

Something after that, we do big celebrations in the hall and we put it on the network. People see the kids singing and they have the traditional dress. Everybody who goes to the events is writing their father and saying that they saw us here. Because they think their culture is not dying. Those guys say you are doing even better than us here because other countries, you can do this. It is a good thing in Canada because they give you a chance, even a chance to do drum. No matter what, you can do it.

Theme Nine: HL schools increase interaction among multicultural groups.

The students of many HL schools often participate at multicultural events. Sage described participating in a Canada Day celebration. Laurie contributes to the annual Mother Language Day where students from all HL schools “shine and show their customs and traditions, just to become seen by others.” Victor's school contributes at public events where his students have “the benefits of learning from others, other cultures, the way other people have different understanding, what other languages are all about.” Politicians and other dignitaries are often invited to attend. Quite often they are open to the public and mainstream Canadians are also invited to participate.

While some HL school leaders mentioned that students interact with others as a result of festivals and functions, other school leaders mentioned that HL school student populations are not monocultural, but are comprised of students from a variety of different cultures. Before starting her particular program, Monique sent her children to a HL school, which focused on language and religion. Her friends were doing the same which resulted in the origin of the program she currently operates. “And I have other friends from my community and they were taking their children to another school, so we got an idea why don’t we as a community establish this kind of a program [a HL school].” Alice’s school has “some people who aren’t even related to our culture who are just there to learn the language. Like for example, we have some Spanish immigrants who come because they want their children to learn the language and about each other.” Violet’s school started a class because it had “these children who came wanting to learn [our language], but didn’t have a background.” Even the newest school leader, Fabian, wanted to connect his community’s children with other multicultural groups which is why he was working towards the creation of “a multicultural summer camp” which began with the impetus doing “something to bring all of these communities together. It is not just for us; it is for everybody.”

Learning from others and about others is important to the community HL school leaders in this study. Fane's community wants to teach the children to live in peace and harmony like other groups have done before him. He shares:

People came from Europe, German background, you know, Irish background. And now they settle peacefully. They know that they are Irish, but they settle with people that have a different history. That is also what we want to teach our kids. These kids, 20 years from now, when we have grey hair, everybody here, the kids will not even talk about our language or our ethnic tribes. They might be fighting there, but these ones will forget. Maybe they will know their background and the country that they came from. They will not know about their tribes. But we here, we still remember them, so we try to teach them. So multiculturalism is as important for us as it is for every Canadian. For us to have an opportunity to teach the kids multiculturalism and how to respect others it is very important.

Lydia also believes it is valuable to belong not only to her cultural groups, but a family of immigrant groups. She deems it important "to have a connection with second language communities, because I think it is huge to be connected to other languages." She feels that students in the K-12 system that she teaches lack

awareness and opportunity by not being exposed to those who are different. She concludes:

Teaching in the dominantly white community that I do now, I really notice the difference, that these kids are not exposed to all of these different cultures by the comments that they make or certain ideas that they have. I probably would never have thought that at their age. For me in a good way and for them in a bad way, because they are not aware of a lot of things that I think I was exposed to as a kid. Knowing that my Italian friends were similar to my family, my parents were very strict and you went to church and certain traditions that were kept. My Indian friends and my Muslim friends had to fast during certain times. I knew that as a teen and a lot of kids aren't aware of stuff like that, which I find interesting.

The belief that working with other cultural groups is something that permeates the HL school environment, not just at the level of the student or the teacher, but also at the International Heritage Languages Association and the Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association. HL schools come together to embrace their shared values of equality and democracy. Although Linda compares working with multicultural groups as anti-racism, she also adds a secondary

component: identity. She describes being a part of one of the umbrella organizations as “part of the fabric of my [her] being”. Linda says:

I was listening on the radio about discrimination and people’s accents and the way they speak English. So the interviewer said, “So how do we address this?” Accentism, like sexism, like any sort of discrimination, it is really hard to break down. As soon as a person starts speaking, in our mind, we start putting together, oh you come from this country and you do this. The antidote to that was being in contact with many cultures as often as you can because then it just becomes part of the fabric of your being. It is something really valuable. So through IHLA, NAHLA, SAHLA, AELTA, all the way back, this was one of the principles. It is just understood that everybody at the table is equal. I know you are Portuguese, Filipino, Italian, and let’s be happy about that because we work together.

Linda’s comments show how HL communities embody tolerance and respect for those who do not share the same language and values. While Linda explains that “everyone at the table is equal” is a value that is shared by HL groups, in Chapter VIII it is clear that this is not how they perceive their interactions with mainstream Canadian organizations such as Alberta Education, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor

Commission, and the Alberta Teachers' Association. Guardado (2010) reported that some parents who were focused on their child learning their HL were also interested in guiding their children towards orientations of global citizenship and interest in multiple languages, as per the Western Canadian Protocol for International and Heritage Languages. To my knowledge, it is not clear in the literature if alternative choices to HL school exist for parents that support them in guiding their children towards these values or what these choices might be if they do indeed exist. Attending HL schools may be one of the ways that multiculturalism is a lived experience in the daily lives of these students and their parents. This warrants further investigation in the Canadian academic literature.

Theme Ten: HL schools attend and host local events and invite politicians and dignitaries.

HL schools or HL community leaders often invite politicians or dignitaries to their events so that the politicians and dignitaries have the opportunity to meet voters. Likewise, HL school leaders have the opportunity to advocate for their own causes. Victor listed municipal, provincial, and federal politicians, stating "All the political leaders know about us. We invite them to attend our events." This was seconded by Ford.

While some schools are able to meet with politicians at school functions, IHLA/SAHLA have also been able to organize schools and work collectively to pursue causes that advance the field of HL education. As well, Linda describes in detail a past conference held for a special group of teachers:

There was a lot of connection. One year we actually offered a two-day session just for the teachers [of a specific language group]. Yes and the government was there, Janice Aubrey was there. What was the name of the program manager for International Languages? Sigrid Olsen. So, again a lot of these things on paper that look really official, in the background is always A DIRECT personal connection to somebody. And through that connection there is a possibility to make things happen. If anything else, IHLA and SAHLA had the opportunity to maintain those relationships and use those connections to make those things happen.

Imogene also described the past political activism for the umbrella organizations as well as the importance of taking on a political orientation. Her thoughts are:

We have to change the word 'lobbyist' to 'advocate' now. We have to be advocates. Not, lobbyists. Because there is a negative connotation [to

lobbyists]. And it all depends on how strong your board is, too. Now, when we had Sabatino, when we had Fiona, when we had Bonnie, these were strong connectors to their own individual communities, plus they had a lot of people in politics, especially the Ukrainians and the Italians. These, two, Roncucci could just go and talk to Gene Zwozdesky and call whoever and they would listen to him. If you look at our board of directors now, wow, many are neophytes who have never been political.

Guo (2013) demonstrates that in the academic literature new Canadians are sometimes described as “passive citizens” because their tendency to engage with their community is marked in non-traditional civic roles. He points out the problematic nature of this definition:

Participation, however, is often limited in its focus to immigrants’ civic engagement, which is defined by conventional indicators of voting, participating in party-based politics, and staying informed about current events (Jensen & Flanagan, 2008). (p. 51)

According to what has been shown through the comments of Victor, Ford, Linda, and Imogene, HL school leaders and elders must make connections with politicians and persons with positions of power to ensure the proliferation of HL

education in the province since no federal or provincial department is mandated to offer services or funding (See Chapter VIII). Often funding and other resources are controlled by gatekeepers and those involved in HL education work to keep relationships with these gatekeepers so that they can advance their own causes. Comments in this section demonstrate how HL school leaders are active citizens.

Theme Eleven: HL schools advocate for language instruction in both K-12 schools and universities.

Of the 11 schools that participated in this study, four schools were not in a position to pursue or offer a K-12 program (Fane, Fritz Fabian, and Monique), one school made a conscious choice not to seek approval for a K-12 program (Ford), and six others offered a K-12 program and awarded high school credits which students could use to meet some of the requirements of a provincial high school diploma (Laurie & Rory, Lydia, Violet, Alice, Sage, and Victor).

While the concept of offering a high school credit course appealed to Ford in theory, he decided to abandon the idea after speaking to others who were knowledgeable about the process.

And then when we, in fact, started to start the school, our Plan A was to have a language course as a credited course in high schools. But it's a long

process, very long. You have then to have an Alberta Education authorized curriculum. You have to have a certain registration and non-denomination. And then we said, OK, we can wait for them. So we started this community school.

Alice, whose school does offer a credit program, also describes the process as “long” explaining:

Actually it was a long process. You have to apply through Alberta Education. And you have to hire the teachers that have a certificate, who are able to follow the Alberta Education curriculum. We have to follow everything. All of the regulations that Alberta Education has set.

Linda, the HL elder who worked with both Alberta Education and various schools to help create provincially approved curricula for many language groups describes the initial steps that must be followed when creating an accredited program:

The government has their framework on the website. And then we apply, and we state that we would like to be credit, not funded which means you can ask us and we will fill out all of the forms, and we will tell you that we will teach it in the way that you have approved of our curriculum. So we

don't get funding from you, but the return is that the credits that we deliver you approve and then those kids can use those credits in high school. This is because by the time that a HL kid that starts at six or seven years old in a school, by the time they finish Jr. High, they have already done all of the work that a high school kid would take in a language course in school. So, that is an incentive the parents can then use to push their kids to go to school, because then they can say that you are getting something. You are getting 15 credits for when you start grade 10, you are 15 credits ahead of everybody else.

As Linda explained previously, many schools go through this difficult process so that parents can use high school credits to motivate their children to participate in HL language classes. Alice, too, says her school created a high school credit program "for people who want to use their high school credits for 10, 20, 30 to enter university." Sage also says something similar, "The kids are thinking, it is worth learning this language because we are going to get 15 credits at the end of high school. So, they now they have a reason to learn language."

Because of their work at the high school level, some students feel empowered to take language courses in University as Sage shares, "They know it

is worth it. And they have this language offered at the university-level, too. So they are planning to take the language there, too. That will give them a feeling of ‘Yes, this is a good thing.’ For Violet learning in a HL school prepares students for taking courses at the university level, “I am looking for these students one day not to be afraid because of their language level to take a language course at the university.”

Being able to award high school credits also benefits immigrant students who are looking to complete their high school programs. Newly-arrived immigrant and international students sometimes take challenge exams so that they can receive high school credits for their previously developed language proficiency. Lydia explains, “If a student wants to come and challenge, they can challenge our course and still get recognized for it.” Sage also describes the process, “So they don’t need to learn here; they just challenge the exam and the program. They write their exam and if they pass, then they get credits. This is because they already know enough of the language.” Laurie also says she has “lots of students who come just to write their challenge exams.”

HL schools, through the development of a curriculum approved by Alberta Education, are in a position to offer high school credits to Alberta-born, immigrant, and international students. While it is beneficial for these students, it is also

prestigious for the HL school communities offering these courses as sometimes school boards adopt them and offer them in mainstream schools. Linda explains that these curricula designed by HL schools sometimes get adopted by K-12 school boards. She shares the following story:

Currently we still have eight, the eight that were part of that framework. We always were above and beyond that [in having accredited programs]. Like I told you, some schools developed a curriculum for themselves and now the School Board now makes it part of their own curriculum. [...] So IHLA and SAHLA were always a few years ahead of spreading the languages.

Parents want language education for their children and often they would prefer for this education during the regular school day. These are the findings of a study conducted by Shoukri (2009) of Arabic-speaking parents in the Ontario school system. In fact Shoukri's study specifically mentioned that the Ontario school board examine the Albertan system with the idea of emulating our system in their province. Although not a study in the Canadian context, Borland's (2005) research on the Maltese HL community in Australia linked poor student outcomes in regular school with a lack of formal HL learning opportunities both inside the K-12 school system and within HL communities. Again in this study it was reported

that formal language learning opportunities are greatly needed to compensate for a lack of informal ones caused by language disruption in the family.

Summary to the answer to: According to HL school leaders and HL community elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And, how have they aided the development and visibility of HL communities in Alberta?

From an Ecological Systems Theory perspective, it is essential to understand how, not only do schools contribute to the development of the children, but to understand how schools contribute to the development and vitality of the community in which the children also engage. In this section I used the voices of the participants to identify ways in which schools have aided the development of communities and increased their visibility to those outside of the HL community. The analysis of this data has yielded three ways in which communities are strengthened through HL schools: creation of cultural spaces and cultural events; increased interaction between other cultural groups, politicians, media, and mainstream Canadian; and interaction with mainstream school programs across multiple levels.

Through the eyes of the participants in this study it is easy to see that schools believe they promote both languages and culture to the wider society including

other HL communities, government, mainstream, Canadians, and educational systems. Schools often host community events or participate in locally organized multicultural events. These events are often chances to share culture. Local dignitaries and politicians often attend these very same events, thereby assisting HL school leaders and elders to be recognized and to make connections with gatekeepers who control their educational and funding opportunities. Furthermore, along with multiculturalism and global citizenship, HL schools work diligently to bring their languages into the K-12 system. They do this by working with Alberta Education to design LDCs (locally developed courses) for high school credit, offering challenge exams for newly arriving children, and writing courses and developing resources that are used by the K-12 system.

CHAPTER VIII- THE EXOSYSTEM

Research Question #3: According to community HL school leaders and community HL elders, how have government policies shaped schools through finances, curricular development, and the day-to-day operation of HL schools?

The original goal of Chapter VIII was to identify policies which impact HL schools' finances, curricular development, and day-to-day operations. However, one of the first things that I learned was that neither individual HL schools acting independently, nor the collective of HL schools operating under IHLA/SAHLA, are not governed under a single federal, provincial, or municipal department. In fact, they are served by a large range of organizations and departments—each with its own mandates, goals, and regulations. In the first half of this chapter, I will introduce the federal, provincial, and municipal governmental departments, organizations, and agencies that work with HL schools currently and have worked with them in the past. These government departments and organizations are described in “Part One: Who are the main players in the exosystem of a child in a HL school?”

In the second part of this chapter “Part Two: What are the financial,

curricular, and day-to-day operational issues that impact a child either directly or indirectly in a HL school?”, I clarify what issues both emerging and emerged schools face according to community HL school leaders and HL community elders. It is important to reiterate that the organizations did not have the opportunity to address any of these comments or critiques.

In the third and final section “Part Three: How have legislation, organizations, and government both impacted and benefited from involvement with HL schools?”, I demonstrate how HL schools and their umbrella organizations IHLA/SAHLA are not only the recipients from government departments and organizations, but show how HL schools give back as well. Many of the comments from HL school leaders and HL community elders shows that they conclude that HL schools give much more to Canadian society than they take. Furthermore, since HL schools are not the primary concern of these departments or organizations, they often feel they are stretched to meet the ever-changing mandates to ensure their continued survival.

Part One: Who are the main players in the exosystem of a child in a HL school?

Located within the exosystem are events which impact the individual, but over which he or she has no direct influence or contact. Bronfenbrenner (1977)

describes the exosystem “as a setting that does not contain a developing person, but in which events occur that affect the setting containing the person” (p. 209). While no official watchdog inspects community HL schools to make sure that they adhere to a set standard, the provincial government still exerts its control over these schools finances, curricular choices, and day-to-day programming in indirect ways. At least four groups of legislation/organizations impact individual HL schools. Roughly, legislation/organizations can be divided into four groups: 1. legislation, 2. educational departments, 3. funding operations, and 4. umbrella organizations.

1. Legislation:

Provincial Multiculturalism: The province of Alberta does not currently have a multiculturalism policy. The Alberta Multiculturalism Act was revoked in 1996 (Jedwab, 2003). A cross-Canadian comparison of provincial multicultural policy as it relates to funding HL schools merits further study.

Federal Multiculturalism: The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees Canadians the right to bilingualism in English and French in a multicultural society. Canadians are guaranteed the right to protect their cultures (Decore & Pannu, 1989).

2. Educational Organizations

Alberta Education (AE): AE is the provincial ministry responsible for education in Alberta. This ministry is responsible for multiple aspects which affect both schools and teachers; however, participants in this study frequently mentioned interaction with AE for three reasons: teacher certification including the recognition of foreign credentials, locally developed courses so that schools could award high school credits, and professional development opportunities offered by the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC) and the Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC). (Alberta Education, 2015).

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA): The ATA is the professional association of teachers in the province. It lists its mission as "The Alberta Teachers' Association, as the professional organization of teachers, promotes and advances public education, safeguards standards of professional practice and serves as the advocate for its members" (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2015a).

Second Languages and Intercultural Council (SLIC): SLIC is one of 20 specialist councils offered by the ATA. The organization lists its mission as

The Second Languages and Intercultural Council (SLIC) enables Alberta teachers to become more aware of the issues of culture and second

languages and acts through the Association as an advocate for the advancement and promotion of second languages and intercultural education. (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2015b)

School Boards: School boards are under the jurisdiction of Alberta Education. Currently there are 62 public, separate, and francophone school boards that are elected by and accountable to the communities that they serve" (Alberta Education. 2015b). The website lists multiple responsibilities of school boards including budgeting as well as implementing and negotiating policies.

3. Funding operations:

Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission (AGLC): The AGLC offers funding to multiple kinds of community organizations that meet its mandate. According to the website,

Groups that are eligible for charitable gaming licenses in Alberta must: actively deliver a charitable program or service that provides benefit to a significant segment of the community; the programs or services must be reasonably available to all members of the general public who qualify and wish to participate in that program or use that service. (AGLC, 2015)

Municipal Grants: Both the municipalities of Edmonton and Calgary offer

small grants to establishing immigrant and refugee groups. In Edmonton, these grants are covered under the Cultural Heritage Project Grant program which offers up to a maximum of \$5,000. In Calgary, these grants are listed under the Neighbor Grant program which offers up to a maximum of \$5,000 as well.

4. Umbrella organizations:

International Heritage Languages Association/& Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association (IHLA/SAHLA): IHLA and SAHLA are sister organizations which act as an umbrella for heritage language education in the province. IHLA covers the territory north of the city of Red Deer and SAHLA operates in the South. Since the numbers of elders in both organizations are small, I have referred to them collectively as IHLA/SAHLA throughout the dissertation. Both organizations have similar mandates. IHLA defines its role as “supporting and promoting international and heritage language education, assisting in the development of international and heritage language teaching, learning resources, and other materials, and supporting international and heritage language teacher training and skills development” (IHLA, 2011). SAHLA describes itself as “a non-profit educational organization whose mission is to lead, promote, and provide resources for the promotion of international languages and cultural education”

(SAHLA, 2015).

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT): CASLT

is a federal organization dedicated to second language teaching across Canada.

According to the mandate listed on its website, CASLT “offers direct support to second language teachers, provides a professional networking community to second language educators, and presents a pan-Canadian view of second language education issues” (CASLT, 2015).

Part Two: What are the financial, curricular, and day-to-day operational issues that impact the exosystem of a child either directly or indirectly in a HL school?

Financial Issues

In this study, all HL schools worked toward keeping a balanced budget. School leaders had the challenging task of balancing the school’s main expenditures (teachers’ salaries, rent, and other associated costs) against the school’s few sources of revenue (student paid fees, municipal grants, AGLC funding, and fundraising).

Expenditure: Teachers’ salaries. Ensuring that HL schools have the most appropriate instructors to offer quality instruction is essential for the child and for the school. Often in emerging schools teachers are volunteers and do not even

receive an honorarium for their work (Aberdeen, 2015). Yet, these same teachers who are among their community's elite, in Canada, still struggle to make ends meet similarly to other members in their communities. Attracting and keeping teachers "who will work for free" (Fabian) is problematic in emerging communities. Monique feels it is essential to offer thanks to the teachers, even if it is meager, "So, at the end we gave a gift to the teacher. So this is what our organization created from our own pockets. All of it." Fabian explains that unpaid volunteers often prioritize paid work,

The teachers are so important because there are so few of them. And we have challenges with childcare. Because when the community comes we have to take care of the kids, too. People who are careful, they can do that. If they do it for free for one month, three months... After that, when they get a job or maybe go to school, everything gets dropped.

Candy who works at the organizational level with many emerging schools feels that positions within HL schools are essential for community development. She explains, "Because they need to redefine themselves in this new country, having those volunteer roles is just as important. It's because they have jobs that don't meet some of the leadership that they had back home." She adds a cautionary

tale about the experience:

And you know, a lot of those volunteers get really burnt out because within the HL schools you get all of the behavior problems of the kids and stuff, too. So, you are not only teaching language, but you are teaching youth and kids.

Emerged schools, however, often were in better circumstances with more community wealth and more secure funding options. Still, being able to provide HL teachers with a proper salary is of great concern to the HL community leaders. As stated in Chapter VI, Alice directly links the salary offered to the teachers in HL schools with teacher retention, and ultimately student retention.

The longer the community has been established in Canada and the larger the number of its community members, the greater the likelihood of finding teachers with certification, either from Canada or from the home country. Eventually qualified people refuse to do such a demanding job for an honorarium. Linda says:

So we are talking about standards. We are talking about unifying the role and expectations. You are talking about qualifications. You are talking about the fact that everyone who is teaching has a basic level of qualifications. And that comes with salary expectations as well. And that would be Alberta

Education's responsibility to fund everything.

For schools that wished to offer a high school credit program, there was a requirement of an Alberta certificated teacher for "at least one person on staff. It doesn't have to be the principal, it often is, but it doesn't have to be the principal. But one person on staff must have their Alberta teaching certificate" (George). For some schools that have a combination of internationally trained teachers and Alberta trained teachers such as Alice's school, this can cause problems since "certified teachers, they want to be there, but they know we need them. So they ask a lot more." While it seems unfair to the internationally trained teachers to offer different salaries based on where one has earned their credentials, Alice feels she has no choice since the alternative would be to not offer credit courses. For her this is not a viable option and she explains, "We lose money on our credit courses. We lose money every year, but we still run them because the students need them."

Expenditure: Rental of facilities. Operating a HL school requires secure classrooms so that children are safe and comfortable in their learning environment. In emerging communities, finding a secure location that did not charge rent or charged a very nominal rent was challenging. Fabian explains, "But we get difficulties because there is no connection. We don't know where we can go."

[A mainstream community organization] started to help us a little bit, but still we don't have money to rent." Fane's community echoes a similar comment, "The space we had was three or four different classrooms. It was given to us, but they wanted us to pay for it. So if we have funding, the first thing is to actually find a place." Monique is the only leader of the emerging schools that managed to secure "a space with the city. They were very helpful with us.

Also in emerged community HL schools, leaders often struggle to find appropriate accommodation. Even for schools with larger budgets, finding a location to house a large number of children once a week for a few hours is not easy. The emerged school leaders in this study reported that for most schools, there are two realistic options for securing a space: a religious institution's basement or a pre-existing K-12 school. For the two schools affiliated with a religious organization in this study, often (but not always as was the case in the emerging schools) the organization provided free space. This was the case for the HL schools lead by Violet and Laurie & Rory. The benefits of this type of location were a secured location and free rent; however, one of the drawbacks include being in a space that is not purpose-built for children's learning. Both Laurie and Rory's and Violet's schools had an intermittent internet connection which made using listening tasks

from the internet difficult. Violet describes her school's discussion around implementing more technology into classes:

Right now, that's what is in the accredited school that we're looking at.

There's an assumption, too, about technology, "Oh we can use technology.

If we're changing the program, let's look at technology. Let's look at iPads.

Let's look at maybe a smart board per class. Let's look at this." I'm listening to this and I'm going, "Just a minute, it's not our building. We're renting it."

Can we go and ask? Are the owners going to allow us to put a smart board in every classroom? If this school ever moves, whose smart boards are they?

Is it going to work in this cemented building, all the way down? What's the wiring like? So for coming here on Saturday, is that technology going to work?

Other community HL schools leased space from available educational institutions. Victor leased first from a university and then an adult school once the university rent got too expensive. Five others leased from a K-12 school. Community HL school leaders spoke of what they felt was very expensive rent in the K-12 school, especially considering it was a publically-owned building.

Lydia says,

We are fortunate enough because we get a casino. And that is the only way that our school can function. And this is what floors me. We work out of a local junior high which is part of a municipal school board. And, we have to pay rent to use the facility. They just increased our rent by 11% this year. So we are paying \$1,500/ month to use their building for five hours/week. We get one hour of gym use on Saturdays. So we use that for recess. We have to pay for custodial staff, for them to open up the doors, we have to pay for everything under the sun pretty much. So the bulk of our Casino goes to paying rent.

While school leaders felt that the amount they were charged was unjust, one pointed out that K-12 schools had to worry about legal precautions and because of a fear of litigation would not even consider a HL school without proper insurance. He said that K-12 schools required a \$2 million policy before community HL schools could consider applying to teach in a public space. Another participant in this study was able to see the cost charged by the school from the perspective of the K-12 principals. Linda shares,

It is unfair, but the opening of a school is usually attached to a caretaker and on Saturday they would have to get double time. So the school is going to

have to make sure that that person is paid. And then the opening of a school for the rental and there is some of the little schools don't understand, there is also the heating system, the water and everything else, and the liability for those amount of hours in case anything happens on that school ground through the agreement through the rental, the school is responsible for, right. If someone falls down, it will be an insurance issue as well. So it sounds like a lot, and it definitely is if you have very little money, but it is not like the school district is "Woah! Here is some cash cow!" Because that doesn't do anything for the overall picture of things. But it is big from the little school that has to go and rent space. And that is what AELTA, NAHLA, IHLA and SAHLA, for the longest time, tried to fight for since a school was in people's basements. But nowadays you can't do it in people's basements because of health regulations and insurance policies and everything else. We are a different world in expectations and we have to be aware of those things. Because the moment that you have people who are beyond your family and you are doing this on a regular basis, you are liable for a whole bunch of things. So you do want to rent a space that is proper. Even as a renter who pays a substantial amount of its budget to secure a

facility, the K-12 school does not consider you a priority. The following was experienced by Alice, who on the very same day as her interview, learned that her facility was being closed due to declining enrollment in the weekday school leaving her to scramble to find an alternative arrangement. Alice explains:

I just received news this morning that, actually I didn't receive it, I read in the newspaper that they are planning to close down the school. Of course, they never inform you of these things. The public school board never informs you, you have to read about these things, from the news, from outside sources. And we are the people who are paying the rent and we don't even get any news or warning at all.

Expenditure: Additional costs associated with operating a community

HL school. If HL schools spend the majority of their budgets on teachers' salaries and rent, then they have little else to spend on building the resources that children need to learn. In emerging schools where money was extremely tight, schools still had to attempt to cover costs. Commonly mentioned costs were snacks, busses, and materials. Fane's community talked about the importance of feeding the children, "We cannot just sit here without even a tea for the kids and some snacks. Some of the kids when they come they say I need something to eat or I'll go home, I'm

hungry. So if we don't have something they don't even come to school." Monique's school also "provides snacks for them and the materials for them." Candy explains that budgeting for snack costs is challenging, "You stick that food out there and it is gone in five seconds. So there is always a food component in these programs and literally drives me crazy. I don't think we should put food costs in there because I haven't won yet on even breaking even on a food cost on any of these programs, ever."

Getting the children to and from the program was a concern in emerging schools. Fritz says, "The parents have to bring them or you have to buy a bus and go from house to house to collect them." Having a bus to collect children whose parents did not know how to drive was seen as needed in emerging schools. Fane wants a bus to "pick them up where they are, bring them to school, after being taught in school, then two hours later they can be dropped back home" because the parents "cannot even read the signs on the street for driving." Fabian echoes this same idea, "The other thing is the bus, because a lot of them they are working. They are low-income, we need to bring their kids to the program."

One of the expenses was for materials. Fabian explains that in his community there are limited printed resources available and obtaining these

materials came with a financial cost,

And I know someone who told me that we have some books in the UK that somebody wrote about my language in 1920. They have books there. They gave me the link, I sent it to them, and then they send me the book. But they didn't give it to me for free. You can only look and you can print out, because it becomes a business and you have to pay. Now, I have to do fundraising to get money and pay in credit to send me my own language from the UK that has been there since 1920! And when I looked at the book, the book was good.

In emerged schools, apart from these two big costs, rent and teachers' salaries, most leaders reported schools still had to pay for other items. Victor lists other expenses including:

[...] school equipment, books, textbooks, notebooks, electronics, whatever the teachers need to teach, costumes for our dance troupes, rentals, field trips for the children when they are off school, snacks, and whatever emergencies come up, like contributions to the community, gifts for people who get sick or have a baby, parting gifts or whatever.

Revenue: Student-paid fees. Fees charged by HL schools can act as a

gatekeeper, preventing poorer families from sending their children for instruction.

In emerging schools, the school leaders did not have enough money to offer the teachers a salary or to pay rent, and as a result relied on volunteers and charity for two main reasons. The first was linked to community poverty at two levels: a lack of community-owned businesses which could offer financial support and familial poverty which did not allow for parents to pay student fees. Fabian's school attempted to collect fees, but was unsuccessful. He stated, "When we started the classes, we found it difficult to collect the money because the people they are low-income and it is difficult to do that." Fritz was unsure if the parents would have consented to pay school fees, explaining, "I don't know, we didn't ask. They paid to be a member of the community. But for those who are interested to know their children their language, they might." Although Monique's school was able to charge a nominal fee for tuition, "\$20/family", most were not in a position to charge anything at all. Candy explains why:

So these other groups because of literacy rates or ESL proficiency, are still being super low-income, won't have the ability to do that. They will not be able to pay for HL lessons; they will not be able to pay on their own without some grant. So there are kind of two groups here, so the groups that are

higher educated probably pull it off sooner than some of the other groups.

In all emerged schools the students paid some sort of fees. According to the leaders, collecting fees served two main purposes. First, fees injected much needed cash into schools. Second, paying fees demonstrated the family's dedication to the school and was shown as sign of one's personal dignity. However, this concept of personal dignity might be tied to cultural values and personal wealth. Victor said,

Our motto is everybody should pitch in with good will; we don't not want others to feel obligated. If you cannot afford to go to school, we are not forcing you. People have to be able to afford to pay the fees before they get here. I don't want people to feel bad because, you see, this is the thing, we want to treat everybody equally, on every level.

There were no set fees charged by individual schools and each was free to charge the amount it deemed affordable for the community's families. Emerging schools in this study were free or charged a very nominal amount to families. Schools that received casino money charged between \$125/year and \$250/year. In Violet's case, her school did not apply for funding directly, but received some AGLC money through her religious community's casino. The two most expensive schools did not have casino funding and relied on tuition from their students. These

schools charged between \$450/year and \$750/year. This information is summarized in the Table 8.1.

Emerging schools	Free (Fane), free (Fritz), free (Fabian), \$20/family/year (Monique)
Schools with casino funding	\$125 with casino (Victor), \$125 (Sage), \$250 (Lydia), \$250 (Alice), \$250 with indirect casino funding (Violet)
Schools without casino funding	\$450 (Ford) \$750 (Laurie & Rory)

Table 8.1. A breakdown of student paid fees.

Revenue: A grant through the municipalities which funds developing communities. Both the municipal governments in Edmonton and Calgary offer small grants for immigrant and refugee communities (Calgary Foundation 60, 2015; City of Edmonton, 2015). In Edmonton, these grants are offered through the Cultural Heritage Project Grant and are available for “emerging immigrant and refugee communities for projects that promote and strengthen their cultural identity and pride including: cultural dance, music, art, theatre and heritage language.” In Calgary similar funding is available under “Neighbour Grants”. Candy explains

how these operate, “you can get these little grants. I often help the groups write the grant. They have an idea and all of this wonderful stuff. And then the program happens.” Even though the funding is meager (only to a maximum of \$5,000) she describes those who receive the grants as well intentioned and honest:

Their intent is to do the right stuff. I have rarely seen what they said in the proposal, they never sneak off with the money and not do it. They are here picking up I don’t know how many sets of kids in their minivan getting them here to the HL school, trying to start on time, getting a few chips and pops in them, getting a few books and a few print outs. And they pull it off.”

How municipal government grants restrict emerging schools through regulations. In Fane’s community, a small amount of money is received by the community to support their adult literacy and children’s heritage language classes. Even though many community functions revolve around membership in a religious community, as Fane’s community states, “The city will not fund language schools through church. They say that it has to be separate, only through the community. There is a paper and I don’t think we have it here, I think the church has to be a member of Church Services of Canada. So the school has to be independent through the community services.” This is discussed further in Chapter IX. Monique’s school

also received this small grant for \$1,000 and she found that she was limited by the city in how the money was spent. Her issue in particular, was an inability to use this money to pay for her school's teacher. She says,

So what disappointed me from the matter of the grant, the government doesn't allow you to give gifts to the volunteers or the instructors. And the volunteers, they do participate. So in this case, how do you encourage them to come back again? Because they don't allow that. They say no gift cards, they don't allow it in the budget if they give you a grant. They don't allow you to give the instructors money. This is something that creates obstructions to the project to continue. If they say you are not allowed to give the instructors any money and you are not allowed to pay them, then what do you expect of them? To spend their free time? And their experience should be for free? Nobody accepts that. Who accepts that?"

It is not clear why the municipal governments have made these restrictions (salaries, honorariums, parking, religious affiliation, and specialist-led programming), but one can guess that these restrictions are in place for a legitimate reason. With such a very small amount of funding available (typically \$1,000 and up to a maximum of \$5,000) and the goal of teaching emerging communities skills

such as grant writing and operating a project, perhaps allowing these expenses would prevent the community's program from happening at all. While these restrictions might be advantageous for the promotion of community development, they are disadvantageous for community HL schools.

A problem much larger than simply accessing funds came to light during Fabian's interview. It was made clear that for certain communities, if funding is not consistent, then the community leader's reputation is in jeopardy:

So that is something that a community leader is always at risk of. If he sets up a language program and many children come, and it does well for a year and then the government cuts the funding for it, and it doesn't happen the next year, the community perception is that the leader is not so good because he took our children for a ride for a year and then dropped them. They don't see that the government didn't pay the money for the next year. They think it is his fault.

Revenue: Casino fundraising through the AGLC for emerged schools.

The AGLC offers the largest and most secure external funding for HL schools. As shown previously, a HL school which secures AGLC funding can greatly reduce the school fees for families. Not only do many schools rely on this source of income

either directly or indirectly, both IHLA and SAHLA finance many of their programs through money that they receive from the AGLC. To demonstrate the omnipresent influence of the casino, only two schools (Ford and Laurie & Rory) did not receive any casino funding either directly or indirectly through another organization, yet both were active members of IHLA/SAHLA which received casino money to operate their programs. Sage, whose school charged its students only \$125 per year, obtained her Alberta teacher certification with the support of IHLA/SAHLA.

Alice describes the complex dance that schools must do in order to keep their budget balanced:

We only have casinos. That's the biggest fundraiser that we do. But we can only do one every 18 months. So, this is how we do it. So the tuition pays for the school's operating costs for one year and then the casino pays for the next. If we didn't have the casino, the school could not run because we would be short of funds. Because the tuition we get is about \$80,000, but through the casino we get about \$70 some thousand. So all of the administration, we pay for the whole year. It's less than one person's salary, for the whole year I would say.

As Alice describes, emerged HL schools use funding from the AGLC to

supplement what they can collect from parents and other sources. These funds are essential to the operation of the programs that they offer. She also puts into perspective the amount of money that schools receive, \$70,000/18 month term, to operate their programs.

What casinos fund is subject to changes by the AGLC. In order for any organization to receive any sort of funding through the AGLC, they must comply with its regulations. Schools are not handed a cheque and left to spend the money as they feel best meets their needs. The majority of stories which the participants shared that demonstrate the impact of the AGLC's changing mandate targeted IHLA/SAHLA. It is important to note that this may be because schools were less comfortable sharing personal finance stories. However, changes in the programs that IHLA/SAHLA are able to offer also impact individual HL schools. Sage explains how she received Alberta teaching credentials with the support of an IHLA/SAHLA program that was funded through the AGLC, "I was just a member of IHLA/SAHLA and was taking courses. That is how I got my TOEFL. Then I got accepted at the University. There was another teacher who got it the same way. IHLA/SAHLA did a lot for teachers."

This successful program which aided individual schools to offer high school

credit programs was cancelled due to a change in the mandate of the AGLC. Linda had the following to say:

Because of deeper scrutiny, the funding for this kind of grant would come through casino money which is still provincial money, but it is a different account. It isn't Alberta Education. Casino money changes their rules every two years. So then they come to say no, this doesn't apply any more in their mind. But it is a phenomenal value! You are making a person who is most likely doing something they really loved in their home country being able to continue on. You are gaining native speakers of the language in one of those eight languages that you teach so that the school district has qualified native speakers who are able to teach with qualifications. So everybody wins in the cycle. But then the casino would say, but that is not our area.

Schools are particularly vulnerable to changes in legislation. Unfortunately, schools are not consulted in mandate changes by the AGLC. This is discussed later on under the section curricular development.

Revenue: Community-sponsored fundraising. HL schools that cannot balance their budgets in order to operate any other way often require donations from families or the HL community. When speaking of emerging HL groups, Candy

describes them as “usually not that good at fundraising.” For emerged schools, some communities try to fundraise through community sponsored events such as special dinners, these often cause problems among the community members. As such, some schools learn to avoid them. Victor tells, “We tried to have fundraising activities and everything like that but, now we try to avoid fundraising in our community because of the amount of work involved and all the complications that it has.”

Violet reported that she was successful in gathering volunteers because she did not ask very often and when she did it was usually something that was fun for the parents. She also linked her ability to always gather willing volunteers to do school-related tasks to the fact that she does not ask for money. She shares, “And it's not like I needed them all the time, so I think that's why I got help. You're not always being asked. We don't do fundraising. That's another thing: no fundraising at all.”

Curricular Development

HL schools need to have some sort of plan of what they hope to achieve with the students if they are to meet their goals. One of the differences between these emerging and emerged HL schools was the stability of their programs; and

having a developed curriculum seems to make a school more stable. Of the four emerging schools in this study, one had no idea where to begin designing curriculum (Fabian), one used photocopies of a national textbook developed for native speakers, one was receiving curricular help from IHLA/SAHLA when they disbanded (Fritz), and one was creating a program designed by an experienced language teacher (Monique). Only one of these four schools were members of IHLA/SAHLA (Fritz) and none had the ability or a plan to offer an Alberta Education approved Locally Developed Course (LDC).

Of the remaining emerged schools, all except Ford's used a hybrid approach to curriculum design which included an AE approved curriculum and an alternative curriculum. At the time of the interview the oldest student in Ford's school was in Grade Four. HL schools which follow an approved AE program are able to award high school credits. These programs followed the Western Canadian Heritage and International Languages Protocol. This document lists outcomes for early entry (Kindergarten), middle entry (Jr. High) and late entry (high school) language programs (Alberta Learning, 2001a). The alternative curricular choices include using educational programs from the former country (either for HL speakers or native speakers) or something of their own design. Each school's curricular choices

are identified in Table 8.2. In Ford's school, students followed the national curriculum for native speaking children from his country of origin.

	AE Model	Own Design	Home Country for Native Speakers	Home Country for Overseas Students
Emerging Schools		Fritz (working with IHLA/SAHLA to develop a course)		
		Fabian (had no idea where to start)		
			Fane (was trying to get and copy textbooks from home country)	
		Monique		
Emerged Schools			Ford (was told it was too difficult to create his own)	
	Victor	Victor		
	Alice			Alice

	Sage	Sage		
	Lydia			Lydia
	Violet	Violet		
	Laurie & Rory	Laurie & Rory		

Table 8.2 Curriculum used by Emerged Community HL Schools

The definition of a locally developed course (LDC). HL schools that wish to give their high school students credits for following their courses must apply to AE and develop a locally developed course (LDC) for approval by AE. At present, the team of teachers that creates this document must use the Western Canadian Protocol Framework for International Languages (WCPFIL). The WCPFIL is a generic framework document that can be adapted for teaching any language. This process of developing a LDC and offering courses that award high school courses was described by Linda earlier:

The government has their framework on their website. And then we apply, we state that we would like to be credit, not funded. This means you can ask us and we will fill out all of the forms, and we will tell you that we will

teach it in the way that you have already given us approval for our curriculum. So we don't get funding from you, but the return is that the credits that we deliver you approve and then those kids can use those credits in high school.

As Linda has shared, HL schools who wish to offer credits must meet AE guidelines, design a course that is based on the WCPFIL, and follow AE standards. According to Laurie, designing this kind of language course is as simple as plugging in certain missing pieces of information with facts from one's HL. Laurie described the process as:

Actually it is not very complicated because you have the framework, and it is good for all languages. So the only thing that you change are the facts. When you write about the language, you need to use the facts of that language. How many people speak it around the world, then when you go to the grammar component, you need to use your language and all of the rules, etc. etc. So but basically there is a framework, the complicated part is the framework and you need to know the details of your language's syntax and grammar.

Not all HL school leaders felt that the process was simple. Lydia felt that

developing the document was complicated and it treated her culture generically. Furthermore, she argued that she was a teacher, not a curriculum writer, and as a result felt unqualified for this job.

It is incredibly difficult. We actually got our credit courses in the late 80s or early 90s. However, the process changed about six or seven years ago. They made us rewrite our whole curriculum. So another teacher and I spent a few weeks in the summer writing our entire curriculum with all of the grammar and everything. We had to base it off of [the program of a language that does not share any linguistic, cultural or geographic similarities] for God's sake. It got picked through with a fine-toothed comb. It got picked apart. Both her [my colleague] and I are not curriculum writers.

Although Laurie felt that developing the curriculum was simple, she implied that it was generic. So, when Laurie was questioned about the validity of the document or if it was so broad that it actually prevented schools from teaching culture, she said that the document offered little guidance in how to teach the course and that the culture was embedded in the choice of topics that the school had previously selected.

In the curriculum it doesn't say the way how you teach, so it doesn't make

any difference. So you can teach how you want. The only thing that the curriculum says to you is, these are the most important things. The whole component grammatical component is here. But how you teach it is your decision.

Joyce describes the tensions that exist in schools when curricular choices need to be made. Like Laurie, she sees the framework provided by AE as a guide, but feels that it does not direct HL school curriculum where they wish their leaders, teachers, parents, and students wish the curricula to go. She explains:

Well that is debatable. It is a curriculum, but if you think about the framework of it for sure, I think HL schools have potential to know what they want their students to learn, but then that framework is missing. And what AE has a framework, but then again, not necessarily something that is objective or useable. So the framework is there but the content is debatable. But for HL school the content is there, we can pull lots from culture, and from language, but the framework is missing.

Reasons for offering a Locally Developed Course (LDC). Children often feel that they need an external reward to motivate them to study their HL. So, despite the challenges of offering an LDC, six HL schools chose this direction. Six

of the eleven schools offered an LDC through Alberta Education to award high school credits. Of the schools in this program that did not offer this program, three were not operational (Fabian, Fane, and Fritz) at the time and two had only elementary aged students (Monique and Ford). Many HL school leaders feel that offering a high school credit program is a draw to their school since parents can use it as an incentive to push their children to learn the language. Sage says:

It was very good and fast, at the time it was like the kids are thinking it was worth learning this language because we are going to get 15 credits at the end of high school. So now they have a reason to learn language. Yeah, we had a reason before we started giving credits. They were Oh! Why do we have to learn this language? Why? When are we going to use it? What's the point? And stuff like that. But when we started our credit course they all were excited. They are doing much better. They are more dedicated in finishing their assignments and they are more dedicated towards the class.

Another spoke of the benefits of offering the course, not only for the students, but also the school. Victor said,

Well there are two things that we like: one is being accredited sets us apart from the normal, everyday, whatever you want to teach school. The other

one is it puts us in a better position. We attract more people, we put our language in a different level from non-accredited ones. And also because our students are working hard and they should get rewarded for what they are doing. And the third part is that it is part of our program that's different from any other part of our program, therefore students should get credit for it.

The cost of an LDC. When a school offers a high school credit program, it must have an Alberta certified teacher overseeing the program. For some HL schools finding certified teachers is possible, but for other communities, the task is very challenging. Imogene states:

[...] that in every school there should be one qualified teacher, certificated teacher, if the school is teaching a curriculum that is high school. And that is exactly what we are doing now. A certificate teacher. All of our teachers in my school are all certificated, but in some you can only find one teacher that is certificated to oversee what the program is. That's it! I don't know how we can really convince our government to support us. It is very difficult.

Furthermore, with these added credentials are added costs, since certified teachers expect to be paid according to their qualifications. A similar language

course run by Edmonton Public Schools: Metro Continuing Education (2015) costs \$275 for 15 hours of instruction. By offering high school courses, community HL schools can lose money. In Alice's school, an entire course for a school year with over 120 hours of class time costs \$250. She explains:

I mean even our certified teachers, they want to be there. They know we need them, so they ask a lot more. We lose money on our high school credit courses. We lose money every year, but we still run them because the students need them.

In addition, many teachers who have worked on the curriculum writing process have found that there are a great deal of personal costs. These include having to attend multiple unpaid meetings (Alberta Education does not pay the individual teachers who are working on the curriculum and the schools often cannot afford to pay them, either.), dinners outside of the home, babysitters, and parking. One lead teacher even wrote a curriculum with two sister schools elsewhere in the province. This obviously added an additional layer of complexity and expense.

Individual schools not getting funding through Alberta Education. Not a single school in this study received any direct funding from Alberta Education for its locally developed course. Many leaders felt that this was unjust since community

HL schools were doing the work that benefited both Alberta Education and the school boards. They pointed out that some of the school boards in Alberta adopted the curricula that were developed by the volunteers of community HL schools.

Lydia stated the following:

It makes no sense to me that we have to develop these curriculums. It is recognized by Alberta Education. And THEY USE IT. If a student wants to come and challenge, they can challenge our course and still get recognized for it. So Alberta Education has our curriculum. We have students graduating every single year and we don't get a penny for those credit courses. Where does the money go?

One school explained that while it may be theoretically possible for the school to be paid for offering high school credit courses, since regular high schools would receive funding for students taking their courses, realistically this was impossible.

Victor tried to apply for a funded program as opposed to the non-funded one.

He described his experience:

They will approve us for the non-funded accreditation, but they will not approve us for accredited funding. The reason being is the policies involved.

The number of students that get funded for the program that we have would be outweighed by the extra expenses that we would have. Because the younger kids, we have the most of them, they don't get any funding from this accredited program, only the high school kids. The cost for the high school kids is way too much. And the costs of doing the bookkeeping and the financial report, they want a certified accountant to do it. It would cost us more money than we would actually get. And also all these extra things that they put in there that we wouldn't be able to do.

In summary, HL schools wish to offer LDCs for their students. They believe that the ability to award high school credits is a draw for students and it legitimizes the work that they do. Despite their many advantages, HL courses, which are used by school boards without cost, are developed at expense to HL schools who must find volunteers or pay teachers to write the document and they must hire a provincially-certified teacher to oversee the program. Furthermore, HL school leaders feel these curriculums which are designed to meet the accountability standards of AE are somewhat generic and void of cultural elements.

Alternatives to an LDC: Design by the individual school. HL school leaders are not required to offer an LDC which is approved by AE for each course

that they provide. In fact, they only need to offer an LDC for high school credit courses. As a result, many school leaders use an LDC for these classes and an additional option for the rest of their programs. One option for HL school leaders is designing a program by one's self. Sage stated that her program was developed according to a consensus among the teachers in the school. Sage said:

You know we actually, you know in our school we do it more according to us. So I don't have a report, but I have an outline written. We sat together, four teachers and the principal and we made it. So at the end of this level they should be able to do this, and at this level they should be able to do this, it's written in pen. I haven't even typed it up. I have it, I didn't need to type it.

What Sage is sharing is that schools have their own particular needs when it comes to curriculum development.

The principal of the longest operational school in this study, Violet, explains the benefits of using one's own design. She explains to her teachers that they are liberated to meet the needs of the students, and are not bound to meet the needs of AE. She describes the relationship between the elementary school, her teachers, and Alberta Education:

The principal who took over from me, they still follow it, but it's always, "Here's your structure. Just remember Alberta Education is not looking down on us." We're not mandated by Alberta Education. So don't push this whole curriculum on them. You have to examine your students and work with them. What are the main things we want? We want them to be able to number one, speak. Do a lot of speaking.

While some HL school leaders choose to design their own method of instruction as a panacea for meeting their students' specific HL instructional needs, doing so is not without drawbacks. Inga, a HL elder who has visited many schools and taught HL classes in her community, explains:

I think there are attempts, but I don't think the curriculum is consistent. Because when you say curriculum it means that you can tell a parent that this is what you are going to teach your child this year, this is how it is going to change next year. So a parent should have a good understanding over four years that the child will know exactly this is what my child will learn. I don't think schools are ready to present information like this in this way. I think the older schools have more, but I wouldn't call it a curriculum though. Just because my school, I know how it was built. How things are done there and

how teachers are struggling for content. Putting together activities and calling it a curriculum is not the way.

Having designed one's own curriculum is freeing as Violet explains. It creates spaces for students to be receptive to students' individual needs. Yet as Joyce shares, without a specific document, teachers are not always certain where they are leading the students. This is a challenge for those who wish to see an expected trajectory for the students. There is a need for the enhancement and documentation strategies for curriculum design.

Alternatives to an LDC: Using a text designed for native speakers by the home country. Two HL school leaders in this study used textbooks designed for native speakers: Fane and Ford. Fane's community did not describe the decision to use this text; however, his group noted that they were struggling to put together a program. Alternatively, Ford sought out advice from an expert at a local university who suggested that he use the national textbook. He had "a retired teacher from back home with 25 and 26 years of teaching experience bought them and then she brought them herself in her suitcase."

There were two main reasons that he made this choice. The first was pragmatic. He explained about a community who attempted to create their own

curriculum:

I read that writing one of these textbooks to make grade one and two - curriculum somewhere in the [United] States took like two or three years and 5-10 academics! They were working on it. How the hell can we do that then?”

The second reason was academic. He shared:

They have the religious components included in the textbooks, and that was the only part that people have issues with. That’s what I said to them, you can do whatever you want to do with these pictures, if you want the teacher to teach that, she will teach it, but if you don’t... Everybody said, ‘We don’t care.’ You know why? Because religion is part of the culture. You have to know it. If you don’t participate in it, you have to know it.

Lydia designed much of her school’s curriculum based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which was designed for teaching European languages second language learners in Europe (Council of Europe, 2015). She feels that this approach is most appropriate for her students since many of her students use English at home. For this reason they use textbooks that have been created for second language learners, not heritage language learners. She explains

her school's system:

We base it on the European Framework so we do the A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. And that made more sense in teaching a second language than the program that we had because the programs of studies that we had were based on teaching the language to students that were native speakers. So I sat down with them [the teachers] and we changed all of our programs of studies to go hand in hand with the European Framework [CEFR] to teach it as an L2. So even all of the textbooks that we use are all second language which we get from the former country.

Due to challenges in designing one's own curriculum or program, some HL schools choose to adopt a textbook or a framework from elsewhere. This is also not an ideal situation since the books may contain cultural or linguistic elements that are not relevant for the Canadian context.

Day-to-day Operations

Teacher Certification. Once a HL school has an Alberta certified teacher, it can offer a LDC so that high school students can be awarded credits. Many schools struggle to find one since obtaining an Alberta K-12 teaching license is an all-or-nothing affair with teachers holding either an interim-professional certificate

or a permanent-professional certificate. All teachers trained outside of Alberta (even including all other Canadian provinces in Canada except British Columbia) must meet Alberta standards. According to the Alberta Education website (<http://www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/certification/requirements.aspx>), all teachers must complete the required coursework, hold valid certification from wherever they last taught, have recent teaching experience, be permitted to work legally in Canada, be fit to work with children, and be proficient in English or French. Once potential teachers have collected evidence to show that they meet these requirements, they can then apply for a certificate from the province.

The steps of applying for certification are outlined on the Alberta Education website (<http://www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/certification/apply/out.aspx>). Teachers must follow the process which includes preparing a package of documents, filling out the on-line application, paying the \$250 fee, and finally submitting the documents by mail which include the items listed in the previous paragraph: proof of immigration status, a criminal record check, evidence of names used, proof of language proficiency, secondary school leaving certificates, official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended, and an official statement of professional standing from all jurisdictions in which the applicant taught. Once this

is received by Alberta Education, examiners determine if the teacher's credentials meet the same standards that are required of Alberta teachers and directs them as to which gaps, if any, to fill. Once the teacher fills in any missing gaps, Alberta Education then sends the applicant a teaching certificate. The applicant is then allowed to seek out K-12 teaching jobs in the province.

Once the teacher is told what requirements they will have to meet to get certification, then they go through the process of filling in the requirements deemed necessary by Alberta Education. This often means meeting university entrance requirements (which includes passing an English proficiency examination), applying and getting accepted into courses, and then finally completing them. This is not always emotionally easy for teachers who are used to working in the profession. Linda describes mediating the experience for teachers as the following:

We even had cases where teachers would say that AE assessed me and said you have to go to the education department and go for this. Now the education department! These people [internationally trained teachers] who already had education degrees or Master's, would be treated like kids out of high school, because the office [education department] wouldn't know. So we would mediate that conversation and phone up the people here in the

office at the university to say, you are talking to a 40 year old woman who has been a teacher 20 years in her country. She has gone through the steps that the province says. You can't treat her the same way you treat a kid straight out of high school.

In addition to time, all of these courses and required papers cost a great deal of money. Since most internationally trained teachers are immigrants, most need incentive and financial support to make obtaining a license a reality. Teachers in Alberta, however, have had the support of IHLA and SAHLA, not only in understanding the process, but in paying for some of the fees, receiving English classes, and being awarded with scholarships. This has helped build capacity and sustainability within the school. Sage described her experience:

I got a scholarship. I used to get some percentage of what I spent back from IHLA, I forgot exactly how much. I had to give them a receipt along with a list of the courses that I took. I remember one time I got a cheque because there were lots of fees. So at least that was a relief. I used to be able to share the money I paid, so I used to get some money back.

Linda describes the experience:

We actually had, and that was at the beginning of the grant starting with

Alberta government, someone teaching TESL courses because one of the requirements here is that you need to demonstrate they speak English, and TESL courses are very expensive to prepare for the exam and everything else. So that was also was part of what those grants allowed us to do at the very beginning and they were very successful.

The teacher training had other benefits than allowing schools to offer high school credit courses, they also allowed for schools to build capacity and sustainability. Having K-12 certified teachers are a benefit to the HL school's reputation, but they are not required unless the school offers a LDC that has been approved by Alberta Education. Despite the fact that a high school credit course is the only program that requires a certified K-12 teacher (and only one for each school), it is challenging for some schools to find one. Lydia described how she became involved with HL teaching when the only instructor in the school moved out of country and the school was being forced to close their credit program or find another teacher:

I was a student there.[...] I graduated from university and the teachers who taught me found out that I was now a teacher and they needed a certified teacher to maintain their credit courses. So, I got a phone call, hey, wanna

come teach? I was 21, just graduated. I thought, hey this will look awesome on my CV. I said sure. So I went to teach, and before you know it I was president of the board and the principal of the school.

While this may have been a serendipitous moment in the life of this particular administrator, other schools have been forced to close their credited programs when they couldn't find a certified K-12 teacher. Laurie tells the story of a colleague:

This was the problem of the school in the other city, she was the only one and she had 80 students. Can you imagine 80 students? So, she worked full-time. She had school every day for different levels because she was the only one. And now she is sick, she cannot do it, so the school closed.

The ability to keep programs on-going when they are dependent on a single person is problematic. Yet, teaching licensure programs exists for other kinds of learning institutions besides K-12 schools, for example adult English as a second language (<http://www.tesl.ca/certification/tesl-canada-professional-certification/>), early childhood instructors (<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/child-care-staff-certification-guide.pdf>) and swimming instructors (<http://www.redcross.ca/what-we-do/swimming-and-water-safety/become-an->

instructor-or-training-partner/become-an-instructor). This makes for a very complex dynamic. HL schools are not required to have teachers with any kind of certification unless they offer a high school credit course. Yet, for high school credit courses to take place, schools must engage an Alberta certified K-12 teacher. Furthermore, an internationally trained teacher must go through an arduous process that is not an efficient use of their time or finances so that they can do poorly paid or volunteer work. Once teachers have an Alberta teaching license they can begin working in K-12 schools where they have little free-time, emotional incentive, or financial need to be working in HL schools.

For internationally-trained teachers obtaining an Alberta teaching credential is time-consuming, complex, and expensive. Internationally-trained teachers often need assistance and have received it from IHLA/SAHLA. However, cutbacks in funding have stopped or stalled some of these programs. This has left some communities in dire situations since they are no longer able to operate their programs.

Professional Development. If teachers want to develop top-notch programs for their students, then they need to continue to update their professional skills. IHLA/SAHLA, though Alberta Education, assist teachers in finding PD

opportunities through the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC) or the Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC). These two groups are part of a larger organization which supports five other consortia in the province and offers professional development services for adults that work with children. ERLC lists its mission: “As an advocate for quality professional development and as a service provider, ERLC works with its partners to develop, implement and assess professional development programs and comprehensive plans that support adult learning for students' sake” (<http://www.erlc.ca/who/default.php>). Calgary's mission is similar, “The Calgary Regional Consortium is committed to improving student learning through the provision of professional development, in-service and training opportunities to the K-12 education community” (<http://www.crcpd.ab.ca/about>). Only elder members of the HL community had direct dealings with ERLC or CRC, yet they described three main problems with having HL teachers access professional development in this way. First, both ERLC and CRC provide PD across all areas of the school curriculum, not just heritage language instruction and/or multiculturalism. Linda says:

The ERLC/CRC are councils that get- money from the government to support as a PD for all the teachers in the different schools. The ERLC/CRC don't just

do languages, it [they- sic] does all different sorts of opportunities in Alberta that belong to the province and their own council.

Imogene described this very situation in a different way. She felt that the problem was also that IHLA and SAHLA had a better understanding of the specific PD needs of HL teachers working in a school once a week instead of the more general needs of a language teacher in a K-12 school. She stated:

Plus they were saying now at Alberta Education, they have their own department for professional development. Well maybe instead of just having your [IHLA/SAHLA] own, why don't we just send them to all of these PD courses that Alberta Education is presenting to regular certificated teachers? Instead we were trying to say, alright we know our own people. We know our own teachers, we should be the ones to develop it. So we were very successful, until they said no more money for that. They cut it, because they want us now, instead of doing the professional development to go to their regional consortium.

Another organization, the Second Languages Intercultural Council (SLIC), operates through the Alberta Teachers' Association and offers exclusively with PD

related to language instruction. However, these opportunities are closed to HL teachers that are not members of the ATA. Linda makes this point because many opportunities afforded to K-12 teachers are closed to HL school teachers because they do not have Albertan credentials. Their presence might be seen by some in the K-12 system as weakening K-12 teachers' sense of professionalism. Linda explains:

They [SLIC] organize PD things on behalf of the government specifically on things to teach all teachers in any school. However, they have to be teachers. They have to be members of the ATA and not all of our teachers are certified. So then there is another big conversation there because you [a HL teacher] are not a "real" teacher because you are a Saturday school teacher and you don't have certification. I don't want to be treated equal to you because I went to university and I did everything else. So we [IHLA/SAHLA] were trying to break those barriers. Because it so happened that a Spanish teacher in a public school would have all of the credentials and speak awful Spanish, we would have native speakers of Spanish who can't work in the schools but can at least share native language expertise, but they couldn't be in the same room.

As shown in the comment above, Alberta Education funds ERLC/CRC PD as well as the one time operational grants. They suggested that it would be a more

efficient use of taxpayers' money for HL teachers to attend ERLC/CRC workshops instead of developing their own through IHLA/SAHLA. In addition to the problems mentioned above (lack of language focus/lack of professional cooperation/lack of understanding of HL teachers' needs), IHLA and SAHLA also felt that funding stifled the groups' abilities to create their own agendas. Joyce explains:

Did you go to that curriculum redesign session? I don't know if you had a chance by ERLC/CRC that administers the funds for IHLA/SAHLA this year. But see the way you are presenting this is a very different approach from the way AE is approaching language education. They are all about raising the business spirit, and creating opportunities for the younger generation. And the way you are presenting things it is sentimentality and it's very personal. And it is sort of private in a sense that it is the way that you would hope the language would be used. But again the practicality of it is that there is no urgency. The way that any funder works, they want to see the urgency in the proposal or in any thing that they are funding.

HL schools need to have AE certified teachers if they are to run their programs according to AE standards. However, these teachers are difficult to find and retain. AT one point, HL teachers were receiving support to get their teaching

Alberta teaching licenses, but the funding for this program was stopped. There is not a certification process that is unique to HL teachers despite that this exists for other kinds of teaching in Canada and the province.

HL teachers get ample opportunities for professional development, but the funding for these lies within the discretion of the funder. At times, HL teachers receive the opportunities that ERLC/CRC wants them to receive, rather than the opportunities that they desire for themselves. Furthermore, some K-12 language learning opportunities are closed to HL teachers because they are not part of the ATA even if they are in fact teaching high school credit courses.

Joyce notes that the control exerted by the funding agent prevented IHLA and SAHLA not only from creating their own vision of what HL education could be, but also that it ignored the expertise of the HL community. Since someone else is funding the process, finances must be directed in the way that they see fit. While IHLA/SAHLA may have their own understanding about the goals they wish to achieve, the funder may have other objectives.

I think opportunities change from year to year, but then again the focus is on professional development. But again, it is heavily imposed by the funder.

I think IHLA/SAHLA would have much more to offer if the restrictions

were not that strict. If they were like, we are going to give you 100k/year and you can do whatever you want and report back to us, and having a little bit of freedom. Because we have really talented people here.

George problematizes the controlled professional development in yet another way. He pointed out that government offices and departments frequently change management, and with that management they often change their vision. This impacts the small volunteer-led organizations of IHLA/SAHLA because they have to be continuously advocating for their cause with new leadership who may or may not value their work. He describes the funding situation:

I think political will has a lot to do with these things as well. If there's leadership within - I think primarily within the upper hand governance, specifically with upper education. If there's a real emphasis with leadership that language education is important. Starting from the minister and the deputy ministers. In the past we've seen stronger support for languages. Then with other minister's less awareness, or less understanding, and less appreciation.

This is seconded by Linda who explains:

And as you were saying, that importance of networking and having those

connections and having to start all over again when there is a new director in one area. By 2012, the Alberta Government was granting funding through the ERLC/CRC. So right now, all of a sudden, a new person who knows absolutely zip about us, it is just the person that the body (Alberta Education) works with that deals with the money. We have to work with this person and still they are not the giver of the money. So it is a really complex dance to be done. The scrutiny starts and the casino starts to be a more safe avenue, but they change, too, but the casino is not as volatile as AE.

As was indicated by Inga, the mainstream system dismisses the expertise of those involved in HL education. The ability to maintain appropriate programs and demonstrate one's expertise often happens as a result of making personal connections with the leaders in that area. However, HL leaders and elders often find themselves in the position of having to repeatedly make these connections since those in charge of governmental departments change and new mandates become imposed by new leaders and the new directors do not seek out IHLA/SAHLA personnel.

Part Three: How have legislation, organizations, and government both impacted and benefited from involvement from HL schools?

When describing human development in the mesosystem, Bronfenbrenner (1977) postulated that invisible factors influenced the development of individuals and that each individual had very little control over them. Likewise, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) described language policy as a metaphorical onion with policies and environments limiting and creating opportunities for individuals working with and carrying out the policy. Both of these are certainly true for individuals in HL schools in Alberta. Through the multiple agencies, organizations, and departments (AE, the ATA, the AGLC, SLIC, CASLT, IHLA/SAHLA, municipalities and school boards) provincial and federal governments exhibit both an air of nonchalance and one of overt control over the finances, the curriculum, and the schools' day-to-day operations which ultimately impact the HL student directly and indirectly. The influence of the exosystem (The federal and provincial government) on the mesosystem (the HL school) is shown in *Figure 8.1*.

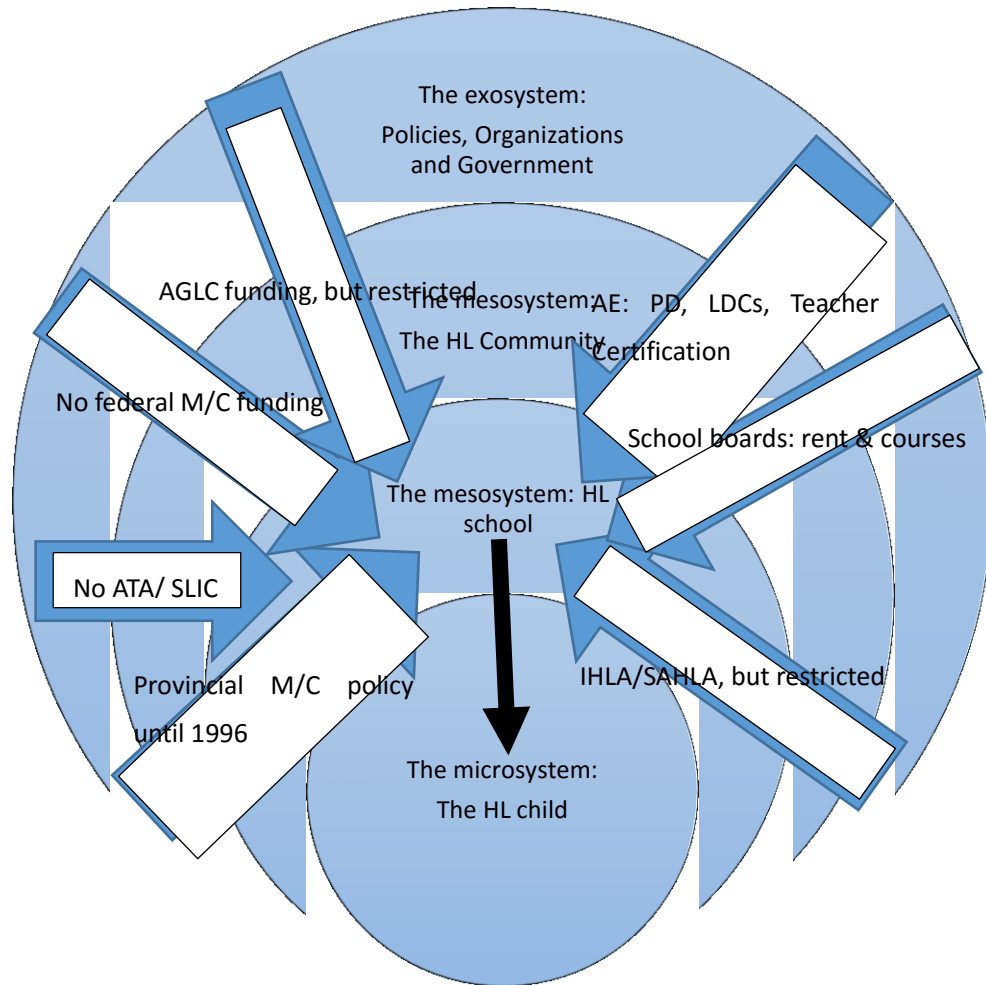


Figure 8.1 The influence of the HL child's exosystem on the mesosystem.

The federal government. The federal government, despite its obligation to the proliferation of multiculturalism in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, favors financing bilingualism over multiculturalism (Gallagher, 2002; Mady, 2012; Seiler, 2002; Underlienger, 2012). In the past the federal government offered HL schools a per student grant to HL schools, but this was stopped in 1996

(Prokop, 2009). Since the federal government funds the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) it has the potential to influence HL schools. However, while in theory CASLT's mandate is all language teaching in Canada, in practice it is mainly directed at English teachers within Quebec and French teachers throughout rest of Canada. To my knowledge the federal government currently does offer support to HL schools. There is a continued need for Canadians to discuss how multiculturalism defines and shapes us as citizens and in line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The provincial government. The provincial government impacts individual HL schools in a myriad of ways through what they chose to fund, sponsor, or support. Although the province disbanded its multiculturalism policy, they still indirectly acknowledge HL education through multiple offices of AE (ERLC/CRC, LDCs, and Teacher licensing), individual school boards, and the AGLC. As was shown in the previous section, HL education falls under multiple government departments, each with its own goals and mandates. While some departments work with individuals or with individual HL schools, many work with IHLA/SAHLA who advocate for all HL schools in the province.

AE. AE decisions impact HL schools greatly and both HL schools and

IHLA/SAHLA, who often negotiate on behalf of schools, are in a weak negotiating position when decisions that impact them are made. As was stated previously three departments within AE impact HL schools: ERLC/CRC, LDCs, and teacher licensing. Understanding how HL schools, either individually or collectively through IHLA/SAHLA, can meet their teacher certification, course development, and professional development needs merits further study.

School Boards. Currently, some school boards in Alberta use language courses designed by individual HL schools. This is advantageous for the school boards since they save money by not having to pay curriculum developers to design them. Some HL schools offer high school credit courses, saving public schools money since they do not have to pay teachers to offer these courses. Moreover, some individual HL schools also rent the facilities that belong to school boards. However, for HL schools, rental fees consume the largest or second largest part of the budget aside from salaries. From the HL school's point of view this is unjust. School boards do not have to offer any compensation for what they take. And since education and school boards are funded through tax payers, it seems illogical to some that HL students are allowed to use these facilities for some, but not all, of their education.

The AGLC. As has been shown throughout this chapter, the AGLC is the most secure funder for both individual HL schools and for IHLA/SAHLA. The AGLC has changed their funding mandate leaving both individual schools and IHLA/SAHLA insecure in continuing their programs.

IHLA/SAHLA. The two sister organizations which have been designed to support HL schools and their teachers, IHLA and SAHLA, are subject to the same demands and restrictions as individual HL schools. While much larger than the individual school, they are still small in comparison to provincial departments. As an organization they can often petition as a collective and represent HL schools as a whole. However, this gives IHLA and SAHLA the responsibility to continually search for connections within departments or with politicians. While they can often access money to offer programs, such as PD, they are also limited by restrictions in what they can accomplish. An example of a restriction in funding is IHLA/SAHLA's once ability to offer of ESL courses to teachers which later was cancelled. Funding is also restricted not only by the limits placed by the funders, but also by the fact that the sister organizations are run mostly by volunteers, and as such sometimes are able to access money for programs that they do not have the (wo)manpower to execute.

As has been shown throughout this chapter, HL schools and IHLA/SAHLA are prevented by strengthening their positions by being denied access to the supports which would strengthen their positions all while their work is used to benefit others. What is especially unfortunate for IHLA and SAHLA is that much of their time (which is exclusively volunteer with the exception of paid coordinators) is spent attempting to fit the mandates of other government organizations. They are often treated somewhat like Cinderella, good enough to do the hard work when volunteers and experts are needed, but not welcomed to the ball when resources and funding are offered.

The AGLC is not only the chief funder of HL schools, it is also the chief funder of IHLA and SAHLA. Regrettably but understandably, the AGLC funds projects that meet its mandate and its needs which are not necessarily the same as the two sister organizations. IHLA and SAHLA should be permitted to conduct needs assessments based on their communities and fund the projects that are most meaningful to them. This may require salaried experts and salaried employees and the AGLC needs to take this into account.

Summary of the answer to: According to community HL school leaders and

community HL elders, how have government policies shaped schools through finances, curricular development, and the day-to-day operation of HL schools?

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, HL schools are not governed by policies. Rather each individual HL school or the collective of schools known as IHLA/SAHLA is able to operate in a manner that meets its own needs. However, HL schools are impacted by a host of other legislation, organizations, and government departments. Each of these impacts schools either directly or indirectly. HL schools must comply with the wishes of the larger institution if they wish to benefit from what the organizations or government departments have to offer.

CHAPTER IX- CONCLUSION:

SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

I initiated this research project by documenting my experiences working in a Vietnamese Heritage Language Saturday School. When I analyzed these experiences I discovered I was surprised by my lack of understanding the student population, my challenges with writing school policy, the complexity of negotiating school finances, my struggles with writing an appropriate curriculum, and understanding the importance of identifying community values. I was also surprised by what I failed to describe: the importance of culture and identity.

. After collecting and analyzing the data, I began to answer the research questions. I discovered that answering the questions required more contextualization. Just as I described my need to understand the Vietnamese students in Chapter I, I soon learned that I also needed to truly understand my study participants. They had great faith in me as a researcher and they desired their stories to be told. And while common themes among their schools and their stories abound, I never assumed the leaders or elders to be similar. Each participant was involved deeply in heritage language education in his or her community on both a personal

and a professional level. As a sign of further dedication, many were also involved active in IHLA/SAHLA or other organizations. Through the interviews and focus group sessions, I became increasingly aware of the professional knowledge held by those involved in heritage language education. To my knowledge, few studies explore HL education from the perspective of the community HL school leaders..

As a result, Chapters IV and V to ensure that the reader had sufficient background knowledge. After collecting and analyzing the data, I began to answer the research questions. I discovered that answering the questions required more contextualization. Just as I described my need to understand the Vietnamese students in Chapter One, I soon learned that I also needed to truly understand my study participants. They had great faith in me as a researcher and they desired their stories to be told. And while common themes among their schools and their stories abound, I never assumed the leaders or elders to be similar. Each participant was involved deeply in heritage language education in his or her community on both a personal and a professional level. As a sign of further dedication, many were also involved active in IHLA/SAHLA or other organizations. Through the interviews and focus group sessions, I became increasingly aware of the professional knowledge held by those involved in heritage language education. To my

knowledge, few studies explore HL education from the perspective of the community HL school leaders.. Thus, Chapters IV and V offer the reader background knowledge about each participant in the study.

In response to the first question, “How do community HL leaders and community HL elders believe that HL schools contribute to the development of HL teachers and HL students?”, I found that HL leaders and elders believe that the students in their schools are often weak in all four language skills. They also responded that they prioritize enjoyment and motivation for the children, which appears contrary to some other research on community HL schools (Jean, 2011; Jean & Geva, 2012; Tse, 2001). I also documented three kinds of teachers involved in community HL schools in Alberta: Alberta-trained teachers, internationally-trained teachers, and volunteers. This also seems to be different from the composition of teaching staff in other contexts where the majority of instructors seem to be volunteers (Brown, 2011; Doerr & Lee, 2009; Kondo, 2008; Li, 2005; Liu, 2007). As was shown in Chapter VI, HL leaders and HL elders shared that some teachers benefit from participation in HL schools by keeping overseas credentials current, establishing a Canadian work history, answering a calling, and/or obtaining teaching experience. Through this chapter, the importance of

documenting context in community HL research became apparent. This chapter also sheds light on the challenges of maintaining a sustainable staff and the school's overall influence on the life of the child.

In Chapter VII I asked, "According to community HL school leaders and community HL elders, how do HL schools influence the community? And how have they aided the development and visibility of the communities in Alberta?" Ten common themes which emerged were 1. HL schools form according to community demand, 2. They increase children's language proficiency, 3. They represent children in the community, 4. They involve children in service work, 5. They invite new adults into the community, 6. They involve parents in service work, 7. They get community members to become aware of newer immigrants' needs, 8. They plan and host cultural events, 9. They increase interaction among cultural groups, 9. They meet with politicians and dignitaries, and 10. They advocate for language instruction in K-12 schools and beyond. Perhaps because I chose to word this question optimistically, I was able to illicit a cache of positive contributions to Canadian society. One surprising aspect was that I was able to identify some of these positive contributions in the literature in journals that reported studies on community development or volunteerism, and not HL education. Each of these 10

positive contributions merits further exploration in relation to HL schools, especially within the Canadian context.

In the very first chapter of this dissertation, I described the complexity of finances and curriculum in the HL school where I taught. I believed that these challenges would be similar for all schools. However, these factors impact schools in many different, interconnecting and unanticipated ways. While each school is unique, commonalities among HL leaders and HL elders exist. For my third research question, “According to community HL school leaders and community HL school elders, how have government policies shaped community HL schools through finances, curricular development, and day-to-day operation and functioning of the schools?”, I was unable to find specific policies for HL schools. However, I identified multiple pieces of legislation and government departments that either influenced schools or influenced IHLA/SAHLA. As I made note in the document in Chapters IV and VIII, those working in these departments were not able to participate in this study. The relationship between individual HL schools, IHLA/SAHLA, and the departments deserve future study where contributions and opinions of individual schools and IHLA/SAHLA are balanced against those in the government departments.

Future Research

As was stated by Jean and Geva (2012) about childhood identity and language maintenance, the research possibilities are seemingly endless. A similar statement could easily be made about HL schools in Alberta; however, I have identified three areas which are priorities: historical documentation, sustainability possibilities, and a Canadian research agenda. I will briefly expound each of these in the paragraphs that follow and outline how these data might also be interpreted through a critical theory lens.

Historical documentation. In my introductory chapter where I presented my experiences with one particular HL school, I found the school communicated through informal channels such as personal phone calls or discussions. Likewise, at times, IHLA/SAHLA appeared to have informal communication channels. However, due to a lack of unpublished history, it was at times difficult to verify or corroborate personal stories. Since over time, memories fade and details are forgotten, it is essential that events are not only shared verbally, but in written form. IHLA/SAHLA have worked hard as an organization and experienced many triumphs and setbacks. Yet, it is challenging to examine some of these critically without proper documentation. Only by speaking with one of my participants did I

discover the soft literature left housed in the drawers of IHLA/SAHLA and in the Municipal and Provincial archives. These records merit closer analysis. Likewise, the current leadership of IHLA/SAHLA needs to document events carefully and in detail so that researchers in the future can also study them.

Sustainability possibilities. As was mentioned at length throughout this dissertation, sustainability is constantly an issue in HL schools at every level. Some sustainability issues addressed people: How do we keep students motivated? How do we keep teachers employed? And how do we prepare guide the next leaders to reprise our roles? Sustainability was also an issue for systems: How do we ensure funding? How do we get and keep our languages in the K-12 system and beyond? What school level policies help schools to advance? How do IHLA/SAHLA ensure that schools stay connected with each other and how do they build proper supports for schools? The answers to these questions are obviously complex, multifaceted, and dependent on a multiple factors.

In Chapters IV and V, I placed participants into two categories, leaders and elders, and in Chapter IV I further divided HL school leaders into two basic groups, emerging and emerged. Trying to categorize HL schools has an advantage for researchers who wish to investigate and evaluate HL schools. First, criteria for both

success and sustainability are mostly likely different in most areas across groups.

While this division into both emerging and emerged schools is at best crude, further analysis of schools will provide better categorization. Second, developing the most appropriate strategies for improving sustainability and evaluating their success is most likely linked to factors which describe the HL schools.

Canadian research agenda. Upon rereading the introductory chapter of the dissertation, I note that I did not acknowledge the importance of culture and identity; in this project, both culture and identity are important to the participants, not only as these concepts relate to the HL groups, but as they relate to a multicultural Canada. According to the participants, HL schools embody the values of multiculturalism. Yet, at times it is challenging to find research that is specific to Canada. For example, in the literature review I analyzed Brown's (1995) taxonomy of curriculum development. It was only by conducting this dissertation that I came to understand the core differences between these two HL educational systems. While I am not positioning one as superior to another, the Canadian system, at least in Alberta, has evolved to support the multicultural rights of Canadians. It appears that our HL system not only differs in regards to curriculum and curriculum development, but also in professional practices and professional development,

interaction and rights within school systems, funding, and the role of HL communities in one's life. Just as I, at the onset of this dissertation, failed to recognize the importance of culture and identity, so, too, at times has the literature failed to recognize these differences in the Canadian context. HL schools are not only important in the lives of the HL students, but are also significant institutions for our identity as a multicultural Canada. Moreover, we must be cautious about assuming that factors prevalent in one context also dominate another.

While the interpretation of data through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory sheds light on how the structures and beliefs of the wider society influence the life of the school and thus the school's role in the life of the child, an alternative analysis could be conducted through Critical Theory. Such an analysis would examine how HL are viewed in Canada according to concepts such as domination, access, diversity, and design (Janks, 2000). While this form of analysis is beyond the scope of this dissertation, analyzing the data through this lens would bring forth discussions such as the domination of English in Canada to the exclusion of other languages, the "place" of languages in the neoliberal agenda, the strategies behind the criteria for recognizing teaching credentials for internationally trained teachers, the limited and marginalized place of diversity of

language instruction within the K-12 system, and the exclusionary design of the funding system for HL community schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Interview

Interview Protocol

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview for the project *Understanding Community Heritage Language Schools*. Before we begin, I would like to review some information. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, you may say “Pass” and we will continue with the next question. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, please feel free to stop and ask for clarification at any time.

First, I want to make sure you understand that the data gathered from the survey will be used in conjunction with my research on community heritage language schools in the following ways:

1. To complete a dissertation that will be submitted to the University of Alberta in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (PH. D.).
2. In research articles and presentations.

Second, your identity will be kept confidential through these measures:

1. All documents pertaining to your responses will be handled exclusively by me, the researcher, and securely stored in my personal domain, and in a secure location at the university for a period of five years.
2. No names or direct quotations/paraphrasing or specific responses will be used.
3. You may choose to opt out at any time during or after the interview by contacting me; any relevant responses/data gathered from you if you choose to withdraw will be destroyed and not included in the research project.
4. You may choose to contact me about information pertaining to the availability of the resource; any and all contact information will remain strictly confidential, will not be included in the project in any way, and

will be destroyed once participants have received the information they requested.

5. You are participating in this interview voluntarily.

Do you have any questions regarding any of these statements? (*Pause for questions or comments.*)Let's begin.

Please answer these questions:

Thank you again for your participation in this interview. Please contact either me or Dr. Olenka Bilash if you have any questions or concerns. Have a great day!

1. What does multiculturalism mean to you?

Probing questions: Do you think it means the same thing to all Canadians? Do you think it is important to Canadians and Canadian society to have multiculturalism? Why or why not?

2. Can you tell me a little bit about the history of your school?

Probing questions: How and why did your school form? What support does your school receive from the home country? Can your school award high school credits? Why did you choose to pursue or abandon this goal? Where is your school located? Why is it located here? How close is it to community members/parents? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this location?

3. Can you tell me about your school curriculum?

Probing questions: What is the curriculum used at your school? What do you teach (fine arts, history, language, culture, religion, etc.) Who developed the curriculum? Is it followed? From where have you sourced materials for your school's programming? What challenges have you experienced with developing your school curriculum? What have you done well?

4. Can you tell me about the teachers in your school?

Probing questions: Are they volunteers? Who are the teachers in your schools? What are their credentials and their motivations for participating?

5. Can you tell me about the students in your school and how they benefit from the HL school?

Probing questions: Who are the students in your school? What background do they come from (Canadian/foreign born, both parents from the same culture/ mixed marriages, linguistically proficient/beginner, etc.)?

Can you tell me about the friendships that have developed among the adults and the children as a result of the school? What do you think your learners get out of attending your school? Can you share some examples? If your school were to

disappear tomorrow, what would the loss be for the students, the community, the city, the province, and the country? Can you share some stories about children learning to be leaders? Culturally respectful? Proud of their heritage? Knowledgeable about the heritage country or heritage community? Language?

6. Can you tell me about the parents that bring their children to your school?

Probing questions: Has immigration impacted your school community? How so? Does your school play a role in welcoming newcomers to Canada? Can you tell me a story about how it does this? Do some of the non-teaching parents remain in the school while their children are in class? What do they do while the children are studying? Why do you think the parents bring the children each week? What have they told you that they want the children to learn? Can you tell me how the school has met or failed to meet parental expectations?

7. Can you tell me about how your school is connected to the community?

Probing questions: What events has your school organized for the community? Why did your school organize these activities? What do you think those who attended got out of them? What are some of the community events that your school has supported? Why did you attend them? Who benefitted most from the participation? Why do you think that? What do you think your learners get out of attending your school? Can you share some examples? What events has your school organized for the community? Why did your school organize these activities? What do you think those who attended got out of them? What are some of the community events that your school has supported? Why did you attend them? Who benefitted most from the participation? Why do you think that?

8. Please tell me about the issues or challenges your HL school faces? Perhaps some that you have overcome and how? As well as current ones.

Probing questions: What sources of funding do you have? What are your expenses? Can you tell me about how your school **operates**/runs? (e.g. funding, resources from homeland, need for bingos or casinos, expenses...).

9. Please tell me about how your school has benefitted from participation in IHLA? What do you think the older schools have to offer the newer ones?

Probing questions: Why did your school decide to join IHLA? What have you learned from other schools? What do you think would help your school to move forward?

Appendix B: The Focus Groups

Focus Group Protocol

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview for the project *Understanding Community Heritage Language Schools*. Before we begin, I would like to review some information. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, you may say “Pass” and we will continue with the next question. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this information, please feel free to stop and ask for clarification at any time.

First, I want to make sure you understand that the data gathered from the survey will be used in conjunction with my research on community heritage language schools in the following ways:

1. To complete a dissertation that will be submitted to the University of Alberta in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (PH. D.).
2. In research articles and presentations.

Second, your identity will be kept confidential through these measures:

1. All documents pertaining to your responses will be handled exclusively by me, the researcher, and securely stored in my personal domain, and in a secure location at the university for a period of five years.
2. No names or direct quotations/paraphrasing or specific responses will be used.
3. You may choose to opt out at any time during or after the interview by contacting me; any relevant responses/data gathered from you if you choose to withdraw will be destroyed and not included in the research project.
4. You may choose to contact me about information pertaining to the availability of the resource; any and all contact information will

remain strictly confidential, will not be included in the project in any way, and will be destroyed once participants have received the information they requested.

5. You are participating in this interview voluntarily.

Do you have any questions regarding any of these statements? (*Pause for questions or comments.*)Let's begin.

Please answer these questions:

Thank you again for your participation in this interview. Please contact either me or Dr. Olenka Bilash if you have any questions or concerns. Have a great day!

1. What does multiculturalism mean to you?

Probing questions: Do you think it means the same thing to all Canadians?

Do you think it is important to Canadians and Canadian society to have multiculturalism? Why or why not?

2. Can you tell me a little bit about the history of heritage language schools in Alberta?

Probing questions: How and why did IHLA form? What do you think are the benefits of IHLA membership? What supports does IHLA receive from outside the organizations themselves? How important do you think it is that schools can award high school credits? Why do you think schools choose to pursue or abandon this goal?

3. Can you tell me about community HL school curricula?

Probing questions: What is the curricula used in community HL schools? What do they teach (fine arts, history, language, culture, religion, etc.)? Who usually develops the curricula in community HL schools? Is it followed? From where do schools find the best materials? What challenges have you personally experienced with developing a school curriculum? What have you done well? What are the biggest challenges for heritage language school curriculum in general?

4. Can you tell me about the teachers in IHLA?

Probing questions: Are they volunteers? Who are the teachers in community HL schools? What do you think are their credentials and their motivations for participating?

5. Can you tell me about the students in your school and how they benefit from the HL school?

Probing questions: Who are the students in these schools? What background do they come from (Canadian/foreign born, both parents from the same culture/ mixed marriages, linguistically proficient/beginner, etc.)?

Can you tell me about the friendships that have developed among the adults and the children as a result of the school? What do you think your learners get out of attending these schools? Can you share some examples? If these schools were to disappear tomorrow, what would the loss be for the students, the community, the city, the province, and the country? Can you share some stories about children learning to be leaders? Culturally respectful? Proud of their heritage? Knowledgeable about the heritage country or heritage community? Language?

6. Can you tell me about the parents that bring their children to your school?

Probing questions: How does immigration impact the school community? Do these schools play a role in welcoming newcomers to Canada? Can you tell me a story about how it does this? Do some of the non-teaching parents remain in the school while their children are in class? What do they do while the children are studying? Why do you think the parents bring the children each week? What have they told you that they want the children to learn? Can you tell me how these schools have met or failed to meet parental expectations?

7. Can you tell me about how your school is connected to the community?

Probing questions: What events has IHLA organized for the community? Why did you organize these activities? What do you think those who attended got out of them? What are some of the community events that your school has supported? Why did you attend them? Who benefitted most from the participation? Why do you think that? What do you think teachers get out of attending IHLA? Can you share some examples?

8. Please tell me about the issues or challenges that both IHLA and community HL schools face? Perhaps some that you have overcome and how? As well as current ones.

Probing questions: What sources of funding do you have? What are your expenses? Can you tell me about how your school **operates**/runs? (e.g. funding, resources from homeland, need for bingos or casinos, expenses...)