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**Making Australia's East-Side Neighbours Visible:**

**An investigation into the use of transformative educational strategies as a means of developing knowledge of Australia's East-side neighbours through French-language instruction**

Thesis submitted by

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For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
In the College of Arts, Society & Education,  
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## Keywords

East-Side Neighbours

French-Language Education

International-Mindedness

Participatory Action Research

Transformative Curriculum

## Abstract

The recent development and release of a national curriculum in Australia by the *Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Agency* (2012) provides evidence that its content is not a simple neutral assemblage of knowledge, but is rather a selective tradition and autobiographical construct (Apple, 1993; Pinar, 2002) that illustrates how Australia, as a nation, seeks to define itself through the curriculum experience provided for its youth. Evident within the curriculum through the cross-curriculum priorities is Australia's encouraged engagement with its northern neighbours in Asia. Although the eastern neighbours of the Pacific region are minimally represented in the national curriculum, despite Australia's proximity to the nations of the South Pacific, a possibility for its inclusion is evidenced in the recent release of the Australian Curriculum: Languages French, which draws attention to the French-speaking Pacific nations east of Australia in its rationale. Epistemologically guided by a transformative paradigm, which encourages a critically informed, change-orientated, interventionist approach to curriculum development and enactment, this participatory action research employed a mixed-approach inquiry with teachers and students of French in a regional city in North Queensland, Australia to develop a change-oriented curriculum for Year Eight high school French. The aspired transformative curriculum sought to contribute to developing students' international-mindedness and knowledge of their East-side neighbours, whilst remaining responsive to the linguistic requirements set by the Australian Curriculum.

Findings from this research indicated that students, prior to the curriculum intervention, had limited knowledge of Australia's East-side neighbours. Also, the research indicates that it was possible to use the French-language curriculum as a vehicle to increase young people's knowledge about this part of the world, while also contributing to their international-mindedness. Despite these positive gains, the perpetuating influence of a France-centric

curriculum orientation was evident in teachers' experiences. The dominance of France-centric curriculum within French-language instruction poses important challenges for adjusting curriculum perspective and practice traditionally found in the French-language classroom.

The study indicates that this contextual transformation of practice in the French-language classroom is possible, albeit challenging. Both pragmatic and more epistemological changes were identified as needed to make this possible. Teachers need time, support and resources to enact change. As well, meaningful change on a large scale is likely to be supported through adjustment to national curriculum priorities, to give attention to not only the northern but also the eastern neighbours. Finally, at the epistemological level, developing teacher capability in teaching French through the context of the East-side neighbours requires a change in teacher's frame of reference (Mezirow, 1995), which requires a contestation of the France-centric orientation of the French-language classroom.

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STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS

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<b>Nature of Assistance</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Names, titles, and Affiliations of Co- Contributors</b>
<b>Intellectual support</b>	<b>Supervisors (thesis writing and data analysis)</b>	<b>Professor Brian Lewthwaite, James Cook University  Dr Lai Kuan Lim, James Cook University  Dr Pauline Taylor, ACER &amp; James Cook University Adjunct</b>

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## Declaration of Ethics

### **Human Ethics**

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from JCU Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Number H5556 on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 and the report for research or teaching involving humans submitted and entered by the Graduate Research School on JCU system on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

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## Publications and Presentations Arising From This Thesis

Boulard, F. (in press). She is from the East. *ETropics Journal Bold Women Write Back*.

Boulard, F. (2017, September). *Le Pacifique pour les Jeunes Australiens*. Paper presented at Francophone Pacifique Forum, CREIPAC 7-9 September, Noumea, New Caledonia.

Boulard, F. (2017, July). *Transformative Curriculum: French-language Immersion in the Tropics*. Paper presented at AFMLTA conference, Bond University, 6-8 July, Gold-Coast, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2016, October). *Australia's East-Side Neighbours: Empowering your French-language Classroom*. Paper presented at Professional Development for French-language Educators, JCU 7-8 October 2016, Townsville, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2016). A North and far North Queensland initiative: rethinking the 'why' when promoting languages education. *Babel*, 50, Issue 2-3.

Boulard, F. (2016, March). *International-Mindedness: Je m'appelle Pierre Manatea*. Paper presented at the All Languages Teachers Conference ISQ, 10-11 March 2016, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2015). Australia's education futures and the East-side neighbours. *Etropic: electronic journal of studies in the tropics*, 14 (1). pp. 57-63.

Boulard, F. (2015, October). *Transformative Curriculum in the French-language Classroom*. Paper presented at Deep Languages Conference, USQ, 17-18 October 2015, Ipswich, QLD, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2014, October). *Educating for change: international-mindedness towards Australia's East-side neighbours*. Poster presented at the Australian International Education Conference. In: AIEC 2014: Australian International Education Conference, 7-10 October 2014, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2014, July). *Australia Education Futures: The Visible North and the Invisible East*. Paper presented at the Talanoa Pasifika Conference, 16-17 July Cairns QLD, Australia.

Boulard, F. (2013). *International-mindedness: the implications for pre-service teachers*. Proceedings of the Australian Teacher Education Association Annual Conference. In: ATEA 2013: Australian Teacher Education Association Annual Conference, 30 June-3 July 2013, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

**DO NOT CONFINE TO THE HUT**

*The water in the creek sighed at their first meeting  
The water murmured words of love which drifted far away  
The old lady despairing of their absence called  
The blackbird replied  
You have lived and time has passed  
The buzzard added  
Don't call the wind that will carry you away  
The gull counselled  
Don't talk to the rain that will drown you  
And the turtledove concluded  
Do not confine to the hut those who inhabit the world*

Dewe GORODEY (New-Caledonia)

Translated by Eric Waddell in *Our Sea of Islands*

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The national priorities in education for a country are often widely contested, and this contest is evident in the text of the documented national curricula that are present in and represent every nation. As asserted by Pinar (2002), every intended curriculum is an autobiographical construct largely representative of the participants involved in its construction, the imperatives they hold and seek to see evidenced in the national curriculum and the aspired outcomes of a curriculum's enactment. He argues that the text of a curriculum provides evidence of how a nation attempts to define itself, and, by its very nature, as a human construct it is testament to a nation's aspired course for defining and possibly reconstructing itself.

In 2008, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008) articulated the educational goals set for the next generations of Australians and provided a series of action steps on how to achieve these objectives. This document has also more recently informed the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in the development of the first national Australian curriculum. In the development of the Australian curriculum, what is evident is the emphasis on cross-curricular priorities. Of importance to this dissertation are the three main cross-curricula priorities evidenced in the Australian curriculum. These include: (1) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, (2) Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and (3) Sustainability.

The second of these priorities, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, is of importance to this dissertation because it illustrates the power of curriculum in articulating geopolitical priorities. This is exemplified by the influence of former Foreign Minister, and later Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, who explained in August 2013 his wish for "Australia to become the

most Asia-literate country in the Western world”. In addition, Julia Gillard, who was at that time the Education Minister and later Australia’s Prime Minister until January 2012, said, “It is impossible to conceive of a future Australian education system that does not take the study of Asia seriously” (AEF forum, May 2008). As a result, this shared vision – at least by Rudd and Gillard - of providing all young Australians with opportunities to be actively engaged and literate in the cultures and languages of Asia is prominent in policy and political discourse. In a sense, the ‘autobiographical’ sentiments of the Labor government at that time have influenced and defined the national imperative of educational activity to continue cultivating Australia as an Asia-literate nation; the debut of which can be traced back to the 1970s when the Labor government was then led by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (Johnson, Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 2010).

A vision of what ‘Asian engagement’ will look like in the future for Australia is provided by Carrilo Ganter in a report entitled *National Summit on Studies of Asia* (Asia Education Foundation, 2003, p.4):

It is our shared vision that by 2020 we will live in an Australia in which our children can speak with respect and knowledge about Islam; an Australia that can communicate with its largest and nearest neighbour – Indonesia; an Australia that can take up the opportunities offered by the intellectual and economic powerhouses of China and India. An Australia in which a unique, vibrant, creative culture has blossomed, a culture that understands its Indigenous connectedness to land and is fed as much by the influences of the great civilisations of Asia as by those of Europe.

This shared vision for embedding Asian perspectives into the curriculum of Australian schools comes from a range of motives. According to the Department of Education, Science and Training as well as the Asian Education Foundation, this vision of Australia and Asia ‘together’

is significant for the future of Australia for two main reasons. First, the countries of Asia are Australia's closest neighbours and major trading partners. Thus, the reasons for such endorsement are primarily economically aligned (De Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). Second, learning about and engaging with Asia, as a close international neighbour, is a context through which all young Australians can become active, informed and literate local, regional and global citizens. According to Kathe Kirby, Executive Director of Asialink and Asia Education Foundation, Asian perspectives need to be taught to all young Australians in order to bring to an end the Eurocentric tradition that has been held in Australian school curricula for many years. During an interview in 2009 about why Australians students should engage with Asia, Kirby (2009, Video file) responded:

Imagine a 21<sup>st</sup> century world if you did not have some understanding of your closest neighbours. We need to resolve global issues with our neighbours, environment issues, health issues, people movement. We need to be able to speak the languages of our region; we need to understand where our neighbours are coming from.

These cross-curricular priorities underscore the importance of relationships in the making and re-making of Australia's identity, as well as the curriculum's positioning of who is worth understanding and knowing. As Gillard asserts, 'History teaches us that as economic weight shifts, so does strategic weight' (Australian Government, White Paper, 2012, p.ii).

One of the unintended consequences of prioritising Australia's northern neighbours, Asia, is the evident under-representation of the relationship with neighbours east of Australia, the Pacific Island countries. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Two, although these countries assign Australia a proportionally far more significant status in their curricula (in particular, New Caledonia), their identities and relationships with Australia are not reciprocally represented in the Australian curriculum. Given Australia is a founding member of key political organisations

in the Pacific, the unintentional marginalisation of its Pacific neighbours in the school curricula suggests a visibly asymmetrical power-relationship. In response to this, and to purposely move towards this congruency with the current emphasis of the relationship to the north in the cross-curricular priorities, the Pacific Island countries will be referred as East-side neighbours (ESN hereinafter) in this dissertation.

## **1.2 Problem and Purpose**

Whilst the Australian curriculum acknowledges that its content is about ensuring that the nation's future citizens are given opportunities to be successful learners, confident individuals and active and informed citizens, Australia's ESN remain very much invisible in the wider Australian curriculum and in the *Melbourne Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). However, these countries are some of Australia's closest neighbours geographically and historically. Despite this proximity in time and place, academics and experts in Pacific Studies continue to argue that there is a lack of attention in Australia towards our neighbours in the Pacific Islands (Quanchi, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2013; M'Balla-Ndi, 2013; Schultz, 2012; Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009; Fry, 1997; Henningham, 1995; Bilney 1994; Firth, 1994). Dr Max Quanchi (2013), leading expert in Australia-Pacific relations, explained:

Today, the presence of Pacific Islanders in Australia is rarely noted, and despite our long history of involvement, the region is only visible at times when Pacific is a focus for the media, mostly to record coups, cyclone and disasters (p.31).

The Australian media plays an important role in portraying the ESN to young Australians and their families, and continues to only take notice when catastrophes happen (Quanchi, 2013). ABC Pacific correspondent Sean Dorney (2009) argues in the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies National Report:

It is time the media in Australia starts to combat the ‘arrogance, ignorance, stupidity and blindness’ in its own ranks. The media also needs to play a larger role in informing the wider Australian public on the one region of the world where Australia is the major player and where so much Australian aid is directed (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009, p.104).

M’Balla-Ndi (2013) also supports this view as she continues to plea to the Australian media to bring meaningful attention to the Pacific. Further, she supports the position that Australia’s engagement with the Pacific’s French speaking ESN is less than its engagement with other Pacific Island Nations:

Australian engagement with the Pacific has largely neglected the Francophone Pacific communities despite the fact that New Caledonia is geographically closer to Australia than any other Pacific state except Papua New Guinea. This lack can be explained by the fact that accessing French resources may challenge many Australian scholars (p.209).

Despite the clear evidence in national policy directives that Australia as a nation is aiming to broaden its national identity to be one that is aligned with its regional neighbours through the development of internationally-minded young people, this consideration is less extended to the Pacific Island countries.

In 1997, Quanchi, Moore and Bennett published two history textbooks for primary and secondary school students. This was a significant milestone as it represented Australia’s first teaching materials on South Sea Islanders ever made accessible to Queensland teachers. Nevertheless, Professor Clive Moore (1997) explained:

The problem now is getting teachers to use the material. It has been sent out to all schools but that doesn't mean it will be used. The important thing is to alert schools it is in the system and teachers should be looking for them. (Moore, 1997)

In 2009, Rose, Quanchi and Moore argued that the challenge is to find a place in the curriculum to teach about the Pacific region. Nevertheless, another opportunity exists in the curriculum, especially through French-language instruction, for young Australians to develop knowledge of their ESN. This opportunity has been recently affirmed through the newly released Australian French-language Curriculum (F-10) which makes mention of the ESN as a potential and, in my opinion, opportune context of instruction for all French-language teachers across Australia.

The French-language classroom also provides a context for this identified challenge. A French curriculum that draws on, and represents the language and culture of Australia's ESN affords an increasingly significant and proximal means to expand the values, knowledge and beliefs of French within an immediate context of understanding Australia's neighbouring countries. Therefore, this possibility should be advocated for and advanced. As Governor General Peter Cosgrove in his previous role as Chief of the Australian Defence Force attests:

Good neighbours learn to speak each other's languages [...] Good neighbours learn to respect each other's religious and cultural beliefs. Good neighbours learn to allow for differences and to be inclusive. Good neighbours spend time with each other. Good neighbours understand that contentious issues should be resolved through negotiation  
*(National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools, 2006, p.4).*

Yet, Quanchi (2013) notes a shortfall in political rhetoric because of its conspicuous inattentiveness in strengthening its relationship with ESN:

Australia's governments have been unable to arrive at a long-term policy of mutually beneficial engagement with its neighbouring Pacific Islands region. A decade into the twenty-first century, Australia continues to struggle to establish a positive, forward-looking policy of collaborative engagement with the region. In the Pacific, the popular image remained of a wealthy, often friendly and generous neighbour but equally of a culturally-insensitive, indifferent regional bully (p.35).

Given the predominance of the French-language amongst the ESN (M'Balla-Ndi, 2013; Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009; Thaman, 2001), the French-language classroom could contribute to providing the context for developing knowledge of these neighbours and international-mindedness for the next generation of Australians.

But is this a realistic claim considering the apparent apathy towards second-language acquisition in Australian schools? As stated by Ingram (2003), the Australian education system has been and continues to be apathetic towards the teaching and learning of languages other than English. Despite the 2005 National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools, which stressed the commitment of the Ministers of Education in supporting language education, enrolment numbers in schools continue to remain low throughout Australia (Lo Bianco and Slaughter, 2009). However, recently, the constant political and economic discourse combined with the government support to promote Asian perspectives in schools is both challenging and enabling educational institutions to revitalise their Asian language programs. In October 2014, a discussion paper written on behalf of the Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) reminded the Australian public of the Australian Government's aim to have at least 40 per cent of year 12 students studying a foreign language by 2020. The QTU also stated that the Queensland Government has a similar, although significantly less ambitious plan as it also aims at having an increased number of school leavers with skills in a language other than English. Specifically, they aim to have 15 per cent of year 12 students studying a foreign language and

to introduce a language to students from preparatory year. In other words, State and Federal governments are attempting to wind back the clock, and restore language enrolments to proportions similar to those found in the late 1960s.

Noteworthy for this study is the opportunity for attention to the ESN that has been endorsed in the recently released Australian Curriculum: Languages: French. In this document, the scope of French-language and culture extends beyond the art, philosophy, architecture, music, literature, film, fashion and cuisine of mainland France, and, instead, draws attention to the territorial communities of New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna Islands, and French Polynesia (ACARA, n.d).

In response to this recent curriculum endorsement, this research project focuses on the ESN of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia in response to their current invisibility in the French-language classroom in Australia. As will be exposed in this study and unbeknown to many Australian students, one of the primary languages in this part of the world, outside of English, is the French-language. New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia are French Overseas Territories. Although Vanuatu is not a French Overseas Territory, it has been included in this research because it remains a French-speaking territory, as a result of the French-British Condominium that existed there between 1906 and 1980. French has been taught in Australian schools since the 1800s; however, educators in Australia often teach the French-language from a France-centric perspective, reducing the international value of the French-language and culture by attributing and limiting it to France only (Ritchie, 2003). This is typically because of the formative Eurocentric experiences language teachers were exposed to as learners of French themselves, the lack of resources available to them to implement an alternative French context other than France, and the historically France-dominated content of the current school French programs that they have to follow (Ritchie, 2003).

The benefits of such an adjusted and transformed implementation are many. On a broad level, increasing the number of students who can speak French and have an understanding of ESN would enable more young Australians to communicate directly in an informed manner with and about our ESN. Raising awareness and generating interest in ESN is a first step to encouraging young Australians to give attention to their historically overlooked French-speaking neighbours. With an understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependency with their ESN, the possibility of imagining, creating and leading change towards collaborative engagement is more tenable. As stated by Professor Sandra Harding, currently Vice-Chancellor at James Cook University, in the 2014 State of the Tropics report, 67% of the world's children will be living in the Tropics by 2050. The French-language is the language of some of our closest neighbours and attention to this language within the socio-cultural context of these countries contributes to enhancing the mutual wellbeing, prosperity and sustainable development in the tropics. On a professional level, this research project also addresses the Tropical strategic focus of James Cook University and its graduates, which includes promoting and enabling French-language students and future teachers to be internationally-minded of their place in the tropics.

Learning French, as it is currently being taught in our schools and universities, will not create this engagement with our neighbours, because of the current France-centric representation of French in the curriculum. The French classroom can become a transformative place in changing students' attitudes to and knowledge of language if it concentrates on the ESN as an authentic and rich language context that makes visible the interconnections between countries and their autonomous dependencies, and promotes international-mindedness in students' worldview. By transforming the current French curriculum, it raises students' awareness of the French communities in their region, or in Australian vernacular, 'in their backyard'. It also emphasises the historical, social, economic and political connections between these countries and Australia.

This geo-political adjustment is critical in fostering ‘good neighbours’, and shifting the positioning of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia as mere exotic tourist destinations or sites for humanitarian aid. For these reasons, it is important that the ESN are emphasised in the curriculum and the French-language curriculum is a context for such possibility.

### **1.3 The Researcher’s Background**

Professor Arnetha Ball (2009, p.49) explained that “the sharing of narratives with others can result in a facilitation of problem definition and resolution, and it can expand understandings of the practices of students and teachers in informed and sensitive ways”. My narrative, of the possibility of using the French-language curriculum as a context for enhancing students’ knowledge of the ESN as well as their international-mindedness, is strongly grounded in my experience as an immigrant to Australia, and has been consolidated through the recent developments in Australian Curriculum: Languages: French. I came to Australia on a student visa two weeks after turning seventeen back in 2002. Originally from New Caledonia, I grew up in the capital city of Noumea. My father was born in mainland France and my mother was born in Laos from a Vietnamese mother and a Chinese father. When I was growing up and when questions of identity arose, I remember my mother teasing my little brother and me as she compared us to “scrambled eggs”- a good mix of white and yellow. At home, we celebrated both the Chinese New Year and the Saint Sylvestre. We ate *banh cuoan* and *bun cha* with chopsticks but opted for a knife and fork when being served *boeuf bourguignon*. Similarly, we grew up hearing French and Vietnamese spoken equally during family reunions. To complement my ‘scrambled egg’ identity, outside of home, I would often enjoy a *nem* and a *Tulem* while having daily interactions with friends from schools who were also “*des enfants métis*”- friends, whose ancestors came from the Pacific Islands, as well as from Asia and Europe.

In my early experiences with Australians in 2002, it wasn't uncommon to have the following conversation:

"Oh, you have an accent, where are you from?" asks the stranger.

"I am from New Caledonia," I reply.

"Where is that? You sound French."

"It is an island between here and New Zealand," I answer.

"So, they speak French there?" replies the excited stranger.

"Yes, it's the official language. We speak French," I say with a smile.

"Wow awesome but that's so strange!" concludes the excited stranger.

There were variations of this conversation, such as:

"Oh, you have an accent, where are you from?" says the stranger.

"I am from New Caledonia," I reply.

"Oh yes that's in South America, isn't it?" asks the stranger.

"Hmmm no, not really. It is between here and New Zealand. It is a small French island in the Pacific Ocean," I answer.

"Oh wow! And so you can speak French?" replies the stranger.

In response to these conversations, I became more proactive in my responses, as evidenced below:

"Oh, you have an accent, where are you from?" says the stranger.

“I am from New Caledonia. It is a small French-speaking island between here and New Zealand, only two hours flight from Brisbane. We speak French there.” I reply.

Many years have passed since 2002, but my accent has not vanished and, therefore, this type of conversation still occurs, and is just as frequent. People do not seem to know where New Caledonia is, and they are surprised to discover its proximity and, even more so, that French is spoken in this part of the world. Despite this ignorance, I must acknowledge that over the past few of years, I have found that a few more people know about New Caledonia, mainly because, as they have said, they have been on a cruise (“*Thank you P&O!*”) to our French-speaking ESN. I have no sense as to whether this exposure has caused an improvement in our local residents’ international-mindedness, but the recent curriculum initiatives and my acute awareness of the lack of understanding of the Pacific French-speaking nations inspired me to consider developing such a state of mind through exposure to this context in the French-language classroom.

If I look back on my experiences in Australia as a French-language teacher, I am challenged by the missed opportunities for French-language teachers. From 2008 to 2011 I worked as a French-language teacher for four years at the largest state school in North Queensland, and since 2012, I have been teaching French at James Cook University. This period of my teaching career coincides with the ‘Asian Century’ discourse that positioned Asia as the most important regional neighbour to Australia. Being the president of the North Queensland Language Teachers Network, I worked alongside a range of language teachers and, therefore, I was critically aware that these policies created both tension and animosity between the Asian and European language teachers, with the latter at times feeling as though they were publicly put in competition with Asian languages, which were clearly being marked as the privileged languages. Although I have always agreed with the promotion of Asian languages and Asian cultures, I began to advocate that if Australia is truly aiming to develop future global citizens,

then educators should find ways to expand the worldview of young people. Whilst drawing on the languages and cultures of neighbouring Asian countries is politically, economically and socially valuable, limiting students' worldview to Asia denies young Australians of the diverse knowledge and perspectives abundantly accessible in the region.

#### **1.4 Recent educational developments in the ESN**

The Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies (AAAPS) National Report (2009) quoted Helen Hill who explained, "Australia is constantly in the minds of Pacific Islanders, whereas the islands are rarely in the minds of Australians" (1990, p.19). This continues to occur today as evidenced in recent changes in the French education system in New Caledonia that mandate a departure from a Eurocentric curriculum and re-focus on the priorities in the region, placing a strong emphasis on Australia as a main studied theme throughout the schooling years. In September 2015, the Honorable Christopher Pyne MP, the then Minister of Education and Training visited New Caledonia. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September Minister Pyne and the French High Commissioner to New Caledonia, Mr Vincent Bouvier, along with the President of the Government of New Caledonia, Mr Philippe Germain, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (*Le Mag du Gouv*, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015). The signed MoU outlined an important step in demonstrating the triangular educational relationship between Australia, New Caledonia and France. The MoU also included attention to transforming the curriculum of New Caledonian schools to embed explicitly knowledge of Australian literature, Australia's history and Australia's geography. The MoU allowed for the development of an Australian curriculum section within the French Baccalaureate, which is the final Year 12 exam that all students work towards in this education system. Another example of this attention to Australia can be found in the *2016 Protocole d'accord Nouvelle-Calédonie – Etat pour la mise en œuvre du projet éducative de la Nouvelle-Calédonie* published by *La Direction de l'Enseignement de la Nouvelle-Caledonie (DENC)* which explained:

Article 4: To open the doors of schools to the Oceania region and the rest of the world. Considering the position of New Caledonia in the Pacific, developing educational partnerships, notably with Australia, New Zealand and Japan, appears judicious. Therefore, the New Caledonian Government commits itself to support the trial of the first internationally focused classes implemented in New Caledonia in accordance with the administrative arrangement of September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 between the Australian, French and Caledonian authorities. These specialised classes will be implemented starting in February 2017, first in two public middle schools (Translated from 2016 *Protocole d'accord Nouvelle-Calédonie – Etat pour la mise en œuvre du projet éducative de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, DENC, p.6).

According to the Embassy of France in Canberra, this agreed partnership of the three countries, New Caledonia, Australia and France, serves two main purposes. Firstly, it helps promote academic excellence, as it will be offering a bilingual and bicultural education to New Caledonian students, Secondly, it enhances the regional integration of New Caledonia and strengthens its relations with Australia. However, the current Australian curriculum neither proposes New Caledonia, or any other ESN, as a focus of study, nor emphasises it with any priority in the French-language curriculum. This contrast in curricular emphasis gives evidence of an uneven positioning of priority between nations of the Pacific.

On the other hand, the *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority*, which is highlighted in the Australian curriculum, requires schools to provide students with opportunities to learn about and recognise the diversity within and among the countries of Asia, and promotes opportunities for students to become literate in an Asian language. The Australian curriculum also states that students will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. Arguably New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia

are amongst Australia's closer neighbours by geographic proximity, yet they are diminished to being part of a vague non-descript entity in the national curriculum, as evidenced in their reference in the national curriculum to as "the rest of the world" (ACARA, 2014; p. 6.).

This research project entitled "*Making Australia's East-Side Neighbours Visible*" is inspired by my personal experience as an immigrant from New Caledonia and as a language teacher in Australia. I have been working as a French-language educator for almost a decade, and despite my origin, I have to confess that when I reflect back on my practices, I, too, delivered a curriculum that was France-centric and overlooked the linguistic and cultural value of ESN as a language context, and the opportunity and imperative to introduce ESN to my students. It is only since embarking on this PhD journey in 2013 that I consciously made the decision to transform my personal practice so that I could develop student knowledge of the ESN and grow an additional dimension to my teaching practice: international-mindedness. The Tropical agenda, endorsed by James Cook University, has also been an important motivating factor that supported my beliefs, and encouraged me to explore the possibility of using the French-language speaking nations as a context for French-language instruction, since one of JCU's imperatives is to engage with and develop understanding for and affiliation with the peoples of the Tropics, which includes our ESN. Teaching provides the opportunity to help shape and transform the lives of our students, but also to sculpt a national and international future.

I aspire for a future in which the ESN of Australia receive better attention for the benefit of Australians and Pacific Islanders alike. The ESN are a proximal and tangible context for such attention. Their proximity provides the impetus for a shift in curriculum from a Euro- to Tropical Pasifika-orientation. Paralleling the national priority of attending to 'north-side' neighbours, there is an opportunity in the French classroom to develop international-mindedness through attention to more proximal 'east-side' neighbours. Based upon the recent French national curriculum developments, it is timely for this curriculum transformation to take

place and to empower other French-language educators to challenge the France-centric status quo by using the regional context for developing students' French-language capabilities and international-mindedness.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This research project investigates French-language pedagogy and how it can be used to develop knowledge of Australia's ESN and correspondingly contributes to the international-mindedness of young Australians. International-mindedness can be challenging to define, despite being a popular term espoused in the philosophies and policy documents of a range of schools that offer international programs. In fact, the literature, as will be shown in Chapter Two, indicates that there is no single definition of this term. For this research project, I will use qualities commonly associated with international-mindedness, as discussed in my previous research in this area (Boulard, 2013). The common qualities of an internationally-minded person will be presented in section 2.3 of the literature review.

In brief, this project aims to transform the curriculum through a participatory model to assist teachers to teach French to Australian students ensuring the linguistic features set by the Australian curriculum are met, while at the same time developing the students' international-mindedness, including their knowledge of Australia's ESN. In Chapter 2, I will define the term 'transformative curriculum', drawing from scholars such as Apple, Ball, Connell, Dewey, Giroux and Mezirow. Further, in addition to determining the influence of the curriculum's influence on students, the research seeks to understand teachers' experiences with the development and enactment of such a curriculum.

The four research questions in this study are:

1. What are the current understandings of Australia's East-side neighbours amongst high school students in North Queensland?

2. What are teachers' views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia's East-side neighbours as a context for French-language instructions?
3. Can explicit teaching about Australia's East-side neighbours in a French-language context contribute to knowledge about Australia's East-side neighbours and greater international-mindedness? If so, what are the features of such instruction that contribute to such mindfulness?
4. How can French-language teachers transform their current teaching practices to allow a focus on developing students' knowledge about Australia's East-side neighbours and international-mindedness?

### **1.6 Significance of Research**

The 2014 inclusion of most of Australia's Francophone ESN in the Australian Curriculum: Languages: French Foundation to Year 10 makes it likely that the research questions outlined above have not previously been explored. However, it is important to acknowledge Professor Barry Leal, who in 1997 warned his colleagues that unless a convincing argument was presented for Australian students to learn French, its relevance and popularity at university would decrease. At the time, Leal said that French studies at university should be promoted from an Australian perspective rather than from a European one (Cryle, 2003), which foreshadows the possibility of using Australia's ESN as a context for French-language learning. This context provides an opportunity to reform and transform French-language learning and, commensurately, French educators at a time when the geographical proximity of Asia to Australia is also being used to privilege Asian languages. As Peter Cryle (2003) acknowledges, the decline in enrolments for French is attributed to the political priority to Asia:

A governmental tendency to favour Asian languages over European, especially in Queensland and New South Wales, was often used as an excuse by local managers to dismantle or neglect established programs (Cryle, 2003, p.3).

As Lo Bianco (1987, p.9) explains “It is in Australia’s interest to develop high levels of competence in languages of geo-political significance”. The languages listed as part of the Lo Bianco Report in 1987 were Chinese, Indonesian/Malay, Japanese, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Arabic and Spanish. The geographical position of Australia and its closeness to the French speaking territories to the east of Australia places French-language educators of Australia in a unique position to develop students’ knowledge of what is, in a curriculum sense, an invisible part of the world. It is also possible to use this context to grow students’ international-mindedness and with this, positive attitudes towards some of Australia’s closest neighbours.

Whilst the population of ESN is significantly smaller than Asia, the population growth rate of Pacific Islanders in Australia in 2011 was close to six percent, which was more than three times that of the total Australian population growth rate of just under two percent (2011 Australian Census, ABS). In addition, the environmental ramifications of climate change in the Pacific Islands, as well as higher levels of migration from the ESN to Australia, demand an increased engagement between Australia and its ESN (State of the Tropics Report, 2014). Australia has a history of providing regional assistance in times of need. For example, Australia contributed over \$1 billion AUD following the 26 December 2004 Boxing Day tsunami that devastated many of Australia’s northern neighbours (Department of Parliamentary Services, 2005). Australia also assisted the Ni-Vanuatu following Cyclone Pam in 2014. With an increase in the severity of tropical cyclones in the South Pacific, Australia will likely provide a lead role in immediate support and long-term recovery in the future (Department of Foreign Trades and Affairs, 2017). As important and necessary as the financial aid is the relationship between Australia and ESN that demands more collaborative engagement to enable a mutually sustainable engagement and development.

The 2014 State of the Tropics Report also outlined several other key issues of regional prominence in the South Pacific that will likely be the focus of the collaborative engagement of the Governments of Australia and the affected countries. Rates of diabetes and mosquito-borne diseases are very high in the South Pacific, and this impacts on a number of French speaking ESN. The educational outcomes of young people, especially those of young females, are currently a high priority within Vanuatu. Already Australia has begun engaging with the region around these issues (Department of Foreign Trades and Affairs, 2017). This curriculum provides the opportunity to develop knowledge of these current and future issues among Australia's school-aged children, some of whom may one day be tasked with working with the peoples of Australia's ESN to develop and implement solutions to these challenges.

For an increased student engagement with the ESN to occur, the teaching of French in Australia needs to be transformed, with an approach that can be seen as directly relevant to the future of young Australians rather than from its current France-centric perspective. It is also important to note that although this project focuses on the Francophone countries, the significance of the research extends beyond the French-speaking ESN and prompts questions about the study of all ESN within the wider Australian curriculum.

### **1.7 Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. In this chapter I have provided an overview of the research project drawing attention to my background and recent curriculum developments in Australia that promote the possibility of using the French-speaking Pacific Islands as a context for teaching the French-language. Chapter Two presents an overview of the literature that informs the study. It begins by reviewing historical and current representations of the Pacific Nations. This includes a focus on the visibility of this region in the Australian political and education landscape in comparison to Australia's northern neighbours. The chapter also highlights the links between the geographical position of Australia and its ESN with a focus on

the bilateral relationship of these countries with Australia. The chapter continues with a review of previous research in international-mindedness, articulating what it is, why it is important for schools, how it can be developed and measured. The literature review also includes key elements of the Australian language policy landscape and considers the challenges associated with cultural hegemony in the school's curriculum. Chapter Three explains the chosen methodology and presents the participants, methods and instruments that have been used for data collection in this research project. Chapter Four discusses the findings of the reconnaissance stage. Chapter Five discusses the intervention of this action research. Subsequently, Chapter Six evaluates the impact of the aspired transformative curriculum on students and teachers, and explores the implications of the research findings for the current and long-term integration of the ESN into Australian French-language classrooms. Finally, Chapter Seven draws the research to conclusion and outlines a series of recommendations for transforming the French-language curriculum to challenge the France-centric approach to French-language instruction and increase the engagement of Australian students with the ESN.

### **1.8 Summary**

The introductory chapter has outlined the problem and purpose of this research project and presented the research questions. This study was principled on the researcher's personal experience with the limited awareness of Australians to its ESN, likely due to restricted exposure to this part of the world in their schooling experience. The study was also driven by the possibility afforded by the recently released national curriculum that the French-language classroom can have a focus on the ESN, cover the linguistic features outlined in the National French Curriculum Foundation to Year 10 and, concurrently, develop students' knowledge of the ESN as well as their international-mindedness. Finally, although this may seem an admirable possibility, it is unlikely to occur without challenges. My own experience and that of my French-language colleagues implicitly suggest that such a possibility will be fraught with

difficulty because French-language instruction is entrenched in a one language context, France, and can easily be argued to be, in its current state, an adequate approach, not needing change.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature that articulates the opportunity and need for this research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### **2.1 Introduction**

In Chapter One, the study was introduced. As noted, this project is grounded in an intent to explore the possibility afforded by the recently released Australian Curriculum: Languages (French) to facilitate a more diverse representation of French, in particular, through the use of neighbouring French-language contexts as a curricular resource in the teaching of French in Australia. As will become evident in this chapter, this approach is epistemologically underpinned by a social reconstructionist curriculum approach whereby there is an effort to achieve social change through the development of French students' international-mindedness, with particular emphasis on their knowledge of Australia's ESN. This chapter reviews the literature that argues the relative 'invisibility' of the ESN is to the detriment of both Australia and ESN. Further it will demonstrate that there is little attention to the ESN in the Australian curriculum and, not surprisingly, there is no documented research on French colonies in the South Pacific as language contexts for teaching French to young Australians and, simultaneously, developing international-mindedness.

Given the minimal research in the field, this literature review deviates from a typical literature review in exploring the existing knowledge in the field. Instead, it begins with an inquiry into the representations of the relationship between the ESN and Australia in section 2.2: firstly through the cartographic representations; secondly through the geo-political construct of Oceania; and thirdly through a review of their bilateral relationships with Australia that reveals an under-developed relationship, and supports a more diverse production and understanding of their interdependency. In particular, the relatively low visibility of the ESN establishes the basis for, and challenges of a transformative curriculum engagement. Section 2.3 presents an analysis of international-mindedness and its relevance to the language classroom. Section 2.4 follows with a consideration of curriculum construction and in particular language and culture in

curriculum studies. Section 2.5 focuses on a review of French-language curricula documents in Australia, in particular the Australian curriculum for French that is the site for this curricular intervention. The last section is 2.6, which explores resistance to curricular changes and seeks to identify and explain the implications of new curricular constructions. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the literature in section 2.7, foreshadowing the research approach to be outlined in Chapter Three.

## **2.2 Representations of Pacific Nations**

The Pacific is a unique ocean by its size, land composition and people. Although its southern region, often referred to as the South Pacific, is well known around the globe, especially for its tropical tourism allure, its history and people are not well known by the general public (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009). This section provides some evidence from classical cartography that illustrates how representations of the South Pacific have evolved through time. Such a review shows, through its cartographic representations that the South Pacific has, and continues to be, an ambiguous concept geographically – both from a physical and social perspective. This ambiguity warns of the challenges in overcoming not only the lack of focus on the ESN in the curriculum, but also the wider lack of clarity and depth of knowledge of the Pacific Islands amongst Australians.

The Pacific was the last area on Earth to be ‘discovered’ by Europeans, although Austronesians were the first to have explored this part of the world more than 5,000 years ago (Stanley, 2000; Fischer, 2002). Therefore, the cartographic representations of this part of the world are relatively recent, and the early representations, as will be evidenced, woefully incomplete.



Figure 2.1 Map by Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu representing Hollandia Nova in 1659.

Some of the earliest representations of the South Pacific are depicted in the maps of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman who identified Hollandia Nova in 1644, later named as Australia. However there was very little attention to and detail of the islands east of Hollandia Nova as illustrated in one of the earliest depictions created by Joan Blaeu, a Dutch master cartographer in 1659 (Figure 2.1). These early representations were limited by the lack of exploration of this part of the world amongst European cartographers, which might be attributed to the challenges of exploration in 17<sup>th</sup> century. Increasing capacity to map the world in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century saw this change, and the representation of the Pacific became more detailed.

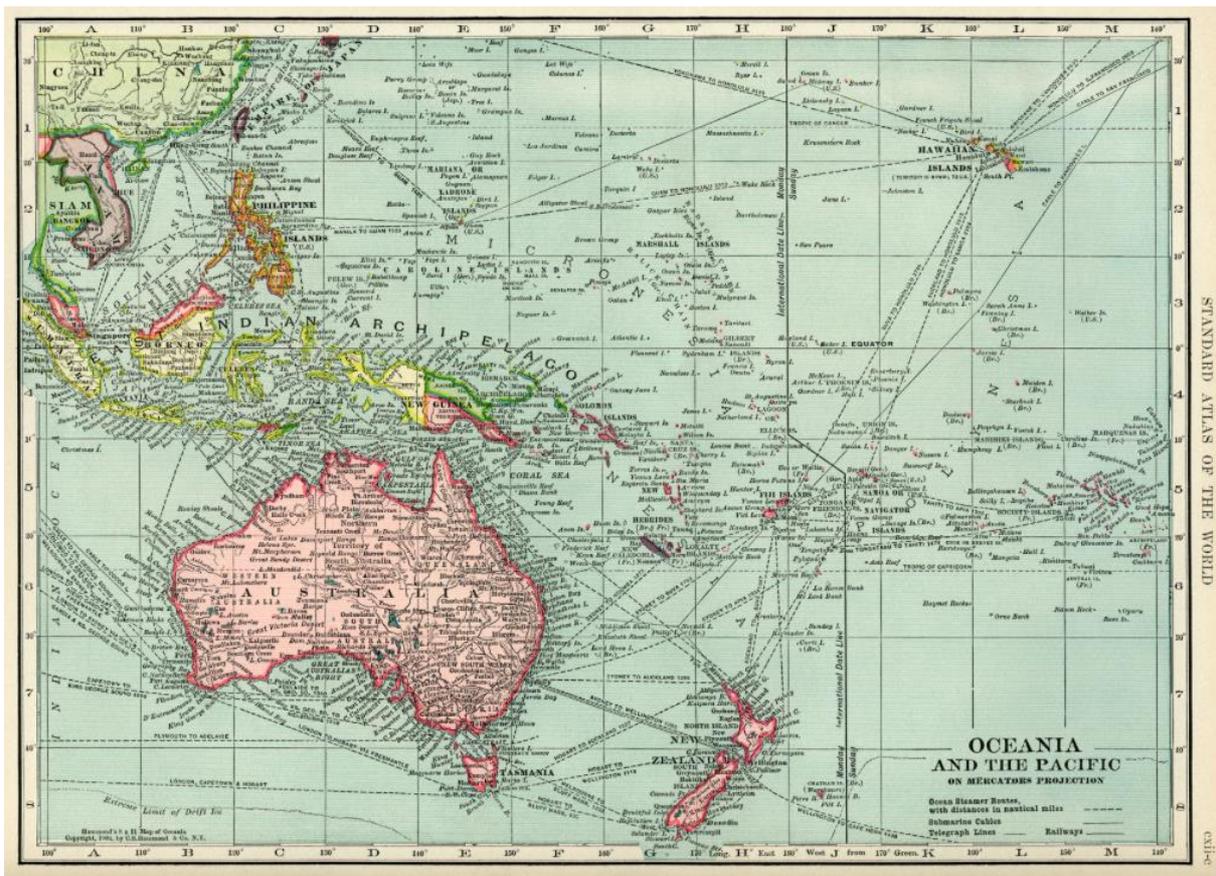


Figure 2.2 A 1906's C. S. Hammond map of Oceania and the Pacific.

Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, maps of the Pacific region began to show quite detailed mapping of the islands and archipelagos scattered across the ocean. This clarity of representation did not always progress in parallel with the technological development. Although these nations and islands are populated and hold rich history, their place on the map has not been assured in digital representation in 21<sup>st</sup> century, most notably in Google maps. Although the distance between Brisbane and New Caledonia is closer than Brisbane is to Wellington or Port Moresby, the Pacific is invisible unlike New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia on Google map's default representation of Australia and its proximal neighbours. The omission of the ESN on Google Map might be attributed to relative diminutiveness of New Caledonia; however Google Maps is a ubiquitous tool that is taken to reliably represent reality, yet the entire Pacific region is absent next to Australia (see figure 2.3). The visibility of Pacific nations requires

intervention; specifically, the reader must zoom in to the map to see them. As Fotiadis (2009) argues, a map represents the relative size and position of countries and signals who is worth knowing about and who is less so.



Figure 2.3. A screen-capture of a 2016 Google map of the Pacific region.

This is even more problematic for the increasing number of people for whom Google Maps has become essential. In fact a presentation from Ed Parsons, Geospatial Technologist at Google Research in London, reported the massive presence of Google Maps through over one billion monthly users, with 41% of Internet users worldwide using Google Maps services, and that 30% of Google searches have a geographic aspect (Privat, 2014). If a search of Australia on Google map does not immediately identify the proximal presence of Pacific Nations as their ESN and requires intervention by zooming in the image to reveal their relationship, it suggests

that a pedagogical intervention is necessary to stir the imagination, understanding, affiliation and empathy of young Australians towards their ESN.

### 2.2.1 Representations of Oceania

There are three main sub-regions of islands that are of importance in developing a clear understanding of Oceania and its inhabitants, and therefore of relevance to this research. Linnekin (1997) explained that the most popular paradigm for discussing this sea of islands has been the regional division of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. These three main sub-regions with over 30,000 islands are collectively known as Oceania (Stanley, 2000).



Figure 2.4. Map showing the three regions of the South Pacific Islands - Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia from Australian National University.

According to Hau'ofa (1993), Oceania was not common to the vocabulary of English speakers; rather 'Pacific Islands' was the prevailing terminology used to describe this region:

Hardly any Anglophone economist, consultancy expert, government planner or development banker in the region uses the term “Oceania”, perhaps because its sounds grand and somewhat romantic, and may connote something so vast that it would compel them to a drastic review of their perspectives and policies. The French and other Europeans use the term “Oceania” to an extent that English speakers, apart from the much maligned anthropologists and a few other sea-struck scholars, have not. It may not be coincidental that Australia, New Zealand, and the USA, Anglophone all, have far greater interests in the Pacific and how it is to be perceived than the distant European nations (p.8).

When trying to define the space in which this research is situated, I wanted to create a new paradigm to describe it. I wanted to make the ocean less dominant and instead place its people at the front of the discussion. As Hau’ofa (1993), in his “Our Sea of Islands”, explained, smallness is a state of mind. He argues that the reason why one sees the Pacific as this vast expanse of water is because of the Europeans explorers who had to cross it. But the Pacific must be seen beyond its water. The Pacific is not made of islands in a far sea but it is rather a sea of islands, most of which are inhabited (Hau’ofa, 1993, p.7). Therefore, key to developing Australia’s capacity to engage meaningfully with the Pacific nations is a transformation in the representative imagery of the Pacific.

Important to this dissertation was also the idea of developing positive, meaningful, and deep relationships with nations close to Australia. As a result, in this thesis, I decided not to use the common terminology of Pacific Islands, South Pacific or Oceania. Instead I made the deliberate decision to refer to this part of the world in direct reference to Australia, as Australia’s ‘East-side neighbours’. I use this term to give prominence to the historical and geopolitical significance of the relationship between Australia and the islands located in the Pacific while

also leveraging the political discourse which draws much of our attention to what politicians commonly describe as our northern neighbours: Asia.

The intent of this explicit neighbour reference is to counter the dominant exotic representation of the 'Pacific Islands' as a mere tourist destination that underrepresents their ties to the countries around them. As Stephen Henningham, expert in Pacific Islands affairs, notes:

For most Australians the phrase 'the Pacific Islands' still mostly prompts images of swaying palms, sparkling lagoons, suns setting into tropical seas, and happy smiling 'natives'. But beyond the picture postcard and tourist brochure image, the Pacific Islands region is diverse and complex (1995, p.5).

Quanchi (2013) contends that this imagery of the Pacific continues to be construed as true by Australians despite their geographical closeness and linked histories. He suggests that despite continued exchanges initiated more than 120 years ago, Australia has not yet fostered a profound neighbourly relationship with its Pacific Island neighbours:

Tourism continues to be the common personal relationship for Australians with Pacific Islands. This began with the offering of cruises through the islands in the 1890s and took on new forms each decade as cruising, resorts, package tours, jumbo jets, backpacking, surfing and eco-tourism become popular to each new generation of Australians. These Australians claim to know the Pacific on the basis of a honeymoon, package trip, cruise or short resort holiday (Quanchi, 2013, p.29).

As articulated by Percy Spender, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, in 1950: "No nation can escape its geography", but each nation has the liberty to construct meanings of their geography. Although Asia is geographically situated to the north of Australia, which positions Indonesia as one of Australia's closest neighbours, the majority of the Australian population do

not reside in northern Australia; instead, they congregate in capital cities in the eastern states of Australia, particularly Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. These capital cities are closer to the capitals of Port Moresby, Honiara, Noumea and Port Vila than to Indonesia (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009). With just over 11 million people living in the ESN, and a projection of 15 million by 2035, the population pales in comparison to Asia (Pacific Regional Information System, 2011). However, given the geographical proximity, engaging with the ESN offers a relevant and authentic curricular context to widen Australian students' understanding of themselves as global citizens.

### **2.2.2 Relationship between Australia and French East-side Neighbours**

Australia's engagement with ESN is represented predominantly by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Whilst DFAT's role is important and necessary, it is inadequate in creating and sustaining a mutually beneficially long-term partnership. The vehicle of education, particularly in a mass scale through schools, is integral to enhancing the relationship. This thesis contends that it is in Australia's best interest to create a generation of young Australians fluent in the language and culture of the ESN and are willing and able to engage with them.

The results of the 2015 World Risk Report reinforced the need for creating a long-term vision between Australia and the ESN. The report shows that the island neighbours of Australia have been rated as some of the most vulnerable to natural disaster, in particular, the francophone archipelago of Vanuatu. Under such circumstances these islands nations have no choice but to seek help from other close neighbours. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian government invests heavily in developing partnerships with the Pacific region. In 2016-2017 DFAT stated that Australia would provide approximately \$149.8 million to the Pacific in order to improve economic growth, support initiatives led by regional institution in the Pacific, increase resilience in the Pacific region and improve gender equality. Specific examples include the case of Vanuatu, which received over \$60 million in Official

Development Assistance (ODA) in 2016-17 by the Australian Government. This included an estimated \$41.9 million in bilateral funding to Vanuatu managed by DFAT. In addition, following the devastating cyclone Pam, Australia committed \$50 million to support Vanuatu in 2014–15. DFAT explained that in recent years Australia’s aid has comprised more than 60 per cent of total ODA to Vanuatu. A particular example of the benefits of Australian aid is the positive impact it has had on helping increasing school enrolments rates to 87 per cent.

Although foreign aid plays a key role in managing and reducing risks to human life, there is a fine line between being “part of the Pacific” through dominance, via foreign aid, and being in partnership with the Pacific (Brown, 2012). Teaching young Australians about this part of the world will assist in developing empathy towards the ESN and increase capability to cooperate with them in times of need. This, in the long-term, might support Vanuatu to mitigate high levels of natural disaster. The missing link between the intention of DFAT and the reality described by Quanchi and others such as Rose, Moore and Henningham lies in developing Australians’ knowledge and understanding of the ESN, and concomitantly the nature of their relationship. Whilst DFAT’s New Colombo Plan aims to “lift the knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia”, the opportunity is exclusive to university students. Raising the prominence of ESN in school curriculum, on the other hand, makes the knowledge available to all young Australians. If more of those advocating for, shaping and enacting the policy governing Australia’s engagement with the ESN came from a place of deeper understanding, the engagement could be of greater mutual and strategic benefit.

As experts in Pacific Studies continue to warn that this bilateral relationship must go a step further:

We need to pre-empt and prepare for changes that will occur in the region, rather than responding with knee-jerk reactions and a fly-in, air-drop mentality towards

emergencies as they arise. We need to move forward to a new level of understanding across the school and tertiary sector, and to create a critical mass of expertise on the region that will guide us towards a more neighbourly and rewarding relationship with the region. Australians generally, but specifically governments, agencies and institutions need to know more about their Pacific neighbours, especially considering Australia now spends one billion dollars a year in development assistance in the Pacific Islands and expects to have a commensurate level of political influence (Quanchi, 2013, p. 29-30).

Meaningful partnership can be achieved through embracing the Pacific people and their culture and making it an “integrated unit” within our current Australian education system. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2010, in a media release by Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, the then Greens spokesperson for Human Rights, she stated that Australia is one of the richest and most stable countries in the Pacific region and consequently it is Australia’s duty to be a good neighbour in order to continue being regarded as a leader in the region (*The Green*, 2010). Similarly, as published by *The Australian* on 19th February 2013, Dr Jonathan Schultz from the University of Melbourne has expressed his frustration towards Australia’s neglectful relationship with Pacific Island nations. Dr Schultz explained that Australia’s engagement with its Pacific Islands neighbours lacks any real long term vision, and he even proposed that the Australian Federal Government should appoint a minister for Pacific Island affairs to improve the situation. Previously, in his PhD thesis, entitled *Overseeing and Overlooking*, Schultz (2012, p. 244) had already pointed to the volatility in Australia’s foreign policy toward the Pacific and called for actions to transform Australia’s engagement with the Pacific Islands so that “the engagement cycle” can be sustained to generate stronger partnership and commitments.

Quanchi (2013) explained that Australians have always had a good geographical sense of place  
- Australians know that there are islands nearby but they lack knowledge about the region.

The sense of being in, or close to, the Pacific originated in Sydney's and Hobart's role as founding ports on the western edge of the Pacific and *entrepôt* in a global trade that linked the islands, Asia, Europe and the new Australasian colonies. This understanding of place was later expanded through travelogues, illustrated newspapers, lantern-slides, postcards and exhibitions that were popular at the end of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century (2013, p.28).

Henningham (1995) supported the opinion that Australians had a sense of association with the Pacific Islands region. He makes reference to the feelings of outrage at the French nuclear tests in the Pacific, and the sense amongst Australians that this was our "backyard". However, he also explained that the knowledge and understanding amongst Australians about this region is limited.

[...] except among a small number of people with special interests in the Pacific Islands region, knowledge and understanding among Australians of 'our backyard' is mostly sketchy. For their part, many Pacific Islanders regard the 'our backyard' notion as patronising. For most members of the Australian public, and for many Australians in senior positions, the small countries of the region are possible destinations for tourism, and little more. Despite such relative indifference, the region is inescapably relevant to Australian security and political interests (Henningham, 1995, p.1).

There is no doubt that Australia has a significant role to play in the future of the Pacific Island nations, but it will only be able to fulfill this role if its political leaders as well as its wider community possess a deep knowledge and understanding of this region:

Australia has diplomatic and security interests in the Pacific Islands, and many Australians have a sense of association with the islands' region. Meanwhile the international community expects Australia to play a prominent and constructive role in the region. Yet most Australians, including many in senior positions, have only a vague, 'picture postcard' image of the Pacific Island states and territories (Henningham, 1995, p.iii).

Teaching young Australians to become better aware of the complexity and diversity of their Pacific Islander neighbours will be mutually beneficial, as the region is likely to throw up policy questions requiring a deep understanding of this part of the world (Henningham, 1995). By focusing more on the invisible east, the French-language classroom can assist in making visible this vague image of the Pacific Island states and territories as a rich French-language resource that has deep historical and political connection to Australia. French-language teachers can complement the work of Asian language teachers, who are building knowledge of Australia's northern neighbours, by helping to foster a richer understanding of the interconnections between Australia and, both, its North and East regional neighbours.

To summarise, although there are some strong bilateral engagement examples between the Pacific Island nations and Australia, the curricular direction to develop knowledge of the ESN in young Australians has not been as strong. Australian educators are well positioned to educate young people about this part of the world, and the ESN explicit mention in the French curriculum encourages this. In addition, just like Asia, the ESN of Australia offer important current and future bilateral relationships. Leaving it to politicians to develop a sustainable partnership between Australia and the ESN is not sufficient (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009). Education is key to changing Australia's engagement with these Pacific Islands and the French-language classroom offers an effective starting point.

### **2.3 International-Mindedness: An Introduction**

This section of the review of literature pertains to international-mindedness, which is a central construct of this thesis. Enabling an increased international-mindedness in students that includes understanding of our ESN is the primary aim of this research project. Literature on international-mindedness and the role of school curriculum in the development of international-minded young people is the focus of this section.

Five databases were used to conduct a search on the term IM using the key terms international and mindedness. These were ERIC, Informit A+ Education, Scopus, Google Scholar and ProQuest. The journal database searches sourced 77 publications for the key terms ‘international’ and ‘mindedness’. Of these, 59 were excluded after reading the abstract on the basis that they had no link to the concept of international-mindedness, or due to repetition between the databases. The remaining 18 were collected from online journals, other Internet sites in the case of theses and reports, or the university library in the case of conference proceedings and book chapters.

The literature identifies that publications in the international-mindedness area are predominantly linked to four main categories:

1. History of international-mindedness
2. Definition of international-mindedness
3. Measuring international-mindedness
4. Developing international-mindedness

The first category, history of international-mindedness, includes the history of international-education and the development of the term ‘international-mindedness’. Although current educators may be under the impression that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is associated with strong advocacy for the development of international-mindedness, it is in reality nothing new (Stewart, 1972;

Hayden, Thompson and Walker, 2002; Knight, 2004; Hill, 2012). More specifically, Hill (2012) in *Evolution of education for international-mindedness* recapitulates the continuously evolving concept of international-mindedness tracing it back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He explains that international education can first be observed through the work of Comenius, a Czech educator who, dramatically ahead of his time, philosophised about the value of scholars of different countries coming together to form a Pansophic College in the 1650s. Through this movement, Comenius was aspiring to create an education system that would promote exchange across frontiers and bring populations out of ignorance through education. International-mindedness continued to develop through time as technology facilitated exchanges and reduced travel time between countries. However, despite the richness of some of the international-mindedness practices of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was only in 1965 that the first educational framework was designed and implemented to explicitly teach the development of international-mindedness in schools (Cause, 2009, Hill 2013). Prior to that time, international-mindedness had not been explicitly associated with a curricular or pedagogical approach, but rather manifested itself through student exchanges (Hill, 2012). The literature now refers to the International Baccalaureate Organisation as being the leading authority focusing on the explicit teaching of international-mindedness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A historical examination of international-mindedness provides important context to the current understanding in the literature. Its historical presence within the literature belies the fact that no clear, consistent definition of the term has yet been established by scholars. The definition of international-mindedness is, in fact, the second main category of research found in the literature that was reviewed for this thesis.

Although definitions can be seen as the arena of theorists and philosophers, such as Socrates, who always valued definitions to help avoid disputes, sharing a common understanding of a

term through a definition is also of high importance to researchers (Srinagesh, 2006). As will be evident in Chapter 3, agreeing on a definition of international-mindedness was essential to creating shared learning goals and outcomes for participating teachers when planning and executing the aspired transformative curriculum, and in fostering growth in teacher capacity when reflecting with participating teachers during the later stages of this project. Prior to 2010, definitions of international-mindedness were relatively limited.

The International Baccalaureate Organisation is arguably the key educational driver of the notion of international-mindedness. A former Deputy Director General of International Baccalaureate Ian Hill (2012, p.259) defines the term as:

Education for international-mindedness is the study of issues which have application beyond national borders and to which competencies such as critical thinking and collaboration are applied in order to shape attitudes leading to action, which will be conducive to intercultural understanding, peaceful co-existence and global sustainable development for the future of the human race.

This definition emphasises both the knowledge and skill components of international-mindedness and frames them in an optimistic, inclusive and exploratory view of the world. There is a strong understanding of the application of international-mindedness being a force for positive change and that the capacity to be internationally minded is measured through the capacity to implement a range of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

On the other hand, Harwood and Bailey (2013) developed a less pragmatic definition that was tied to 'a state of being'. They argued that someone who is internationally minded is able to:

[...] transcend the limits of a worldview informed by a single experience of nationality, creed, culture or philosophy and recognise the richness of diversity a multiplicity of ways of engaging with the world (p. 19).

Their definition differs from Hills' in that it incorporates an international-mindedness perspective, with a strong, optimistic view of global diversity, as well as a focus on engagement with this diversity. Of particular relevance to this research, Harwood and Bailey discuss the need to move beyond one's own cultural existence before it is possible to achieve this wider perspective. This is in part the purpose of the later to be described aspired transformative curriculum, to connect students to a bigger, richer and more diverse world by increasing their understanding of what lies beyond their own experience of the world.

In 2013, Michael Singh and Jing Qi published a report entitled *21st century international-mindedness: An exploratory study of its conceptualisation and assessment*. Their report offers an extensive analysis of the conceptualisation of international-mindedness and existing instruments for assessing it. They concluded that:

International-mindedness is an educated mind-set that understands, and acts on the understanding that 'we-humans' live on a life-filled and life-giving planet. Being planetary creatures we must be persistent in educating ourselves into 21st century international-mindedness, so we understand – and can imagine – more about how we are bound to – how we are truly accountable to - so much that is above and beyond our reach (Singh and Qi, 2013, p.81).

This definition aligns more closely with Harwood and Bailey in that it relates to a sense of perspective about our place and interconnections on the planet. But unlike Harwood and Bailey, it ties this state of being to a sense of responsibility and accountability. The focus of Singh and

Qi is on awareness, and unlike Hill, they do not set out key skills that are essential for the enactment of international-mindedness.

Across the majority of the literature that seeks to define international-mindedness, there is a clear sense that international-mindedness can be transformative, in that it can make a positive change in the world. Singh and Qi (2013) suggested that by incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century characteristics to the concept of international-mindedness may lead to positive transformation in the present as opposed to the future. In fact, they explained that in informing what 21<sup>st</sup> century international-mindedness looks like, one should take into account these five key concepts:

1. Planetary intellectual conversations: affect the transcontinental, transnational sharing, borrowing and use of resource portfolios that include institutional developments, key ideas and technological discoveries.
2. Pedagogies of intellectual equality: start with the presupposition of “intellectual equality” between Western and non-Western students, and between Western and non-Western intellectual cultures, then set out to verify this premise.
3. Planetary education: involves (re) imagining the planet in its entirety, wherein there are no ‘others’ — no ‘them’ — only ‘we-humans’ who are committed to redressing the impacts of ‘we-humans’ on the world as a whole.
4. Post-monolingual language learning: works to pull multilingualism free of the dominance of monolingualism through teaching for transfer based on the cross-sociolinguistic similarities between students’ first language and the target language.
5. Bringing forward non-Western knowledge: works to verify the presupposition that Western and non-Western students can use the linguistic resources of Western and

non-Western intellectual cultures to further international-mindedness, and in particular planetary education (Singh and Qi, 2013, p.77).

Whilst Singh and Qi made an effort to depart from a binary of 'them' and 'us', and frame the interconnections of 'we-humans' as global citizens, ironically inherent in their view of the planet is the binary of Western and non-Western students and cultures. This binary conception reflects the economic and political ascension of Asia in 21<sup>st</sup> century, and underplays the potential international-mindedness and intra-cultural understanding within Western, as well as within non-Western cultures. Western cultures are neither a completed 'we-human' project nor a less potent site to build and further international-mindedness. Nonetheless, the promise and potential of the transformation at the heart of this research incorporates the essence of these key concepts but framed within the context of Australia and French Islands in Pacific nations which by broad geo-cultural division would not sit very well as Western and non-Western. While many of the positive outcomes of international-mindedness are seen as being a generation for the future, the characteristics described above by Singh and Qi are representative of transformation of students and teachers in the short term.

Overall, it is clear that within the existing literature, international-mindedness can be defined in different ways, principally due to its complex nature and the various factors that can contribute to its development. Similarities and differences between definitions create challenges for teachers and students and point to the need for educational institutions to refine their own definition and understanding of this concept to shape more effective and consistent teaching towards seeing its realisation.

According to Hacking, Blackmore, Bullock, Bunnell, Donnelly and Martin (2016), 'international-mindedness is an overarching construction related to intercultural understanding, global engagement and multilingualism'. They articulated that both connection and interaction

with others were key elements of international-mindedness. The definition of terms such as intercultural understanding is also debated in the literature. Lo Bianco (2003) explained that because culture is so complex, even if we think we know what it means, the various definitions that have been published can be confusing. Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler (2003) proposed that intercultural understanding implies that students develop their ability to empathise with others after they have gained a better understanding of themselves and others. This aligns with the views of Young (2015) who suggested that international-mindedness helps develop empathy because empathy is developed through active listening to others. Listening to stories about others or listening to others as they speak to you in the target language will lead to an increased level of empathy (Young, 2015). Cause (2012) also identified the strong link between international-mindedness and compassion. In other words, being internationally minded means that someone is capable of demonstrating more empathy and compassion towards others. Because "others" could be the people who appear to be thinking and looking different to who we, "the self" are, Skelton (2007) warns that young children must first develop a sophisticated understanding of "self" before being capable to understand the meaning of "others". It is perhaps this notion of "otherness" that is creating challenges when defining, promoting and measuring international-mindedness because the relation one has amongst people would depend on how they position themselves and their own identity. In this dissertation the use of the term "others" does not intend to subaltern, alienate nor discriminate those referred to but rather initially identifies those with cultural differences who would later, through the development of international-mindedness, be embraced. This project, as will be described, aims to grow international-mindedness, because it creates connections and interactions between Australia's young people and their ESN. As Hacking et al (2016) explained, connections and interactions with others are keys to international-mindedness.

As a result of the overarching construction of the term international-mindedness, another way of looking at international-mindedness and therefore understanding what it means and what it looks like in students can be found in observing common attributes or qualities of an internationally-minded student.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) programs outline that the development of international-mindedness in students is connected to the growth of the following 10 attributes: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. The International Baccalaureate Organisation recommends that educators focus on developing these attributes in order to develop international-mindedness. Wasner (2016) argues that the IB Learner Profile attributes are the IB's "mission in action". However, the IB does not frame these attributes in an international context. In fact, one of the criticisms found in exploring the literature on IM is that the 10 attributes of the IB Learner Profile do not provide practical instructions for enabling practitioners to develop international-mindedness (Wasner, 2016, Cause, 2009, Skelton, 2007). In addition, Skelton (2007) concluded that the IB Learner Profile did not provide explicit enough learning outcomes and that further consideration of the learner's age was needed in order to develop realistic targets that would allow students to demonstrate international-mindedness. Based on Hacking's et al (2016) conception of international-mindedness, it is possible to argue that although IM is an overarching construction, students who are not provided with opportunities to connect and interact with other people who have different cultures to theirs, will not necessarily develop their international-mindedness, even if they are capable of showing the 10 IB attributes.

In 2011, I conducted a research project on international-mindedness as a requirement for my Master of Education. Because of the limited literature at that time, I drew on the work of Baker and Kanan's (2005) research on how to measure international-mindedness in Qatar, as well as that of the International Baccalaureate Organisation to investigate the effectiveness of

cultivating international-mindedness in a local high school. Based on the literature and research findings in the study, I identified the characteristics of international-mindedness:

An internationally-minded person is someone who is able to understand the diversity and richness of the world through its history, people and cultures. It is to be flexible in various situations yet caring and capable of showing respect towards all cultures and people. It is also knowing how to interact with all people in a respectful manner irrespective of citizenship. Being internationally minded is more than just being culturally aware. It is a constant learning process; it has no limit and can continue to develop through time and experiences. What differentiates international-mindedness from other concepts such as intercultural understanding and global citizenship is that international-mindedness moves beyond accepting or tolerating others. It entails an active engagement with international perspectives and diversity of cultures (Boulard, 2013, p.6).

My thesis identified three main domains of international-mindedness: communicating ideas and feelings; being responsible global citizen; and developing intercultural knowledge. Each of these subsections has defined attributes that are common amongst internationally minded people.

Table 2.1. *Qualities of an Internationally-Minded Student drawn from Boulard 2013*

<b>Communicate ideas &amp; feelings</b>	<b>Responsible global citizen</b>	<b>Intercultural knowledge</b>
Students communicate their ideas and feelings effectively with a diverse audience.	Students are active citizens who do not just discuss ideas but take actions and responsible risks.	Students are aware of their own culture and demonstrate strong intercultural and interpersonal skills.

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Students understand verbal and non-verbal communication in different cultural settings	Students go out of their comfort zone when required to help others	Students speak more than one language fluently
Communicate clearly and articulate well	Create and plan together to solve problems or improve a situation	Explain to others what characterises his/her culture
Listen carefully to others and think before responding (pay particular attention to the language used)	Be courteous to all and reflect on his/her actions	Embrace different cultures and their people and strive to understand those differences
Understand the factors that accompany culture and the way it impacts on one's communication	Demonstrate appropriate leadership in a wide variety of situations	Be compassionate and possess deep knowledge of the world
	Believe he/she can change the world and make it a better place	

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Both the definition I developed and published in 2013 and the qualities outlined in the table above, as will be described in Chapter 3, were selected and used as the common definition to inform the intervention phase of this participatory action project. As will be described, this definition and the qualities of IM had been developed in and previously used by the research school, Callistemon SHS. Therefore there was already an element of common understanding and familiarity with its definition. As a common understanding of international-mindedness was a critical tool in this research, it was necessary that I, as the researcher, understood the construction and underpinning research of the definition and was capable to explain it clearly to the French-language teachers' participants. Srinagesh (2006, p.25) warned that if the researcher is not familiar with important relevant definitions, "his or her job may become difficult, if not impossible". Moreover, as I indicated in my review of other definitions, my definition was developed at a similar time and contained similar and complementary notions of international-mindedness to the more recent definitions discussed in the literature review.

The definition of the term leads logically to the third main focus in the literature, which revolves around how to measure international-mindedness and the research around instruments enabling

its assessment. In the work of Baker and Kanan (2005), three main categories were described as part of their instrument for measuring international-mindedness. These were: (1) awareness of other cultures, (2) cultural tolerance and (3) universal affiliation. Their work also made reference to the global mindedness scale (GMS) developed by Jane Hett (1993) which was later reproduced in another study by Duckworth et al. (2005) when attempting to measure the level of international-mindedness of a group of teachers.

Singh and Qi (2013) also used a range of diagrams to illustrate the arguments outlined in their report. The first one, shown below aligns with the definition identified in my 2011 case study- that international-mindedness is a life-long learning process and demands an active engagement in international perspectives and diversity of cultures.



Figure 2.5. Critical steps when developing International-mindedness by Singh and Qi (2013 p.42).

As international-mindedness can be defined through a combination of other concepts, such as intercultural understanding or global citizenship, tools developed for assessing international-mindedness in students can use a combination of instruments designed to assess the subcomponents that are part of the concept of international-mindedness.

As illustrated in the diagram below (p.44), Singh and Qi have also described the various levels of scaffolding required when teaching and learning about international-mindedness.

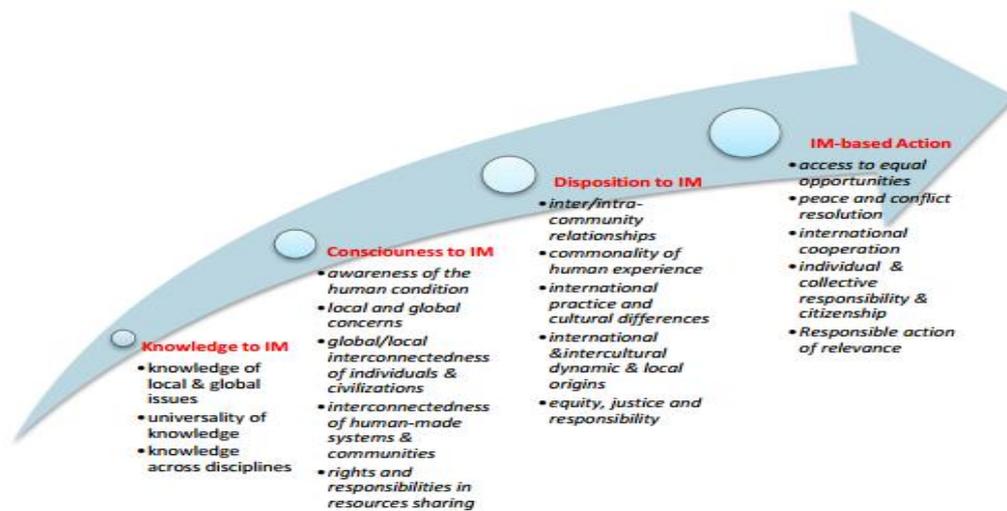


Figure 2.6. Knowledge is the first critical component of the development of International-Mindedness by Singh and Qi, 2013, p.44.

This diagram emphasises the importance of firstly teaching students about the world, prior to further developing their international-mindedness by connecting them with the world and its peoples before finally providing students with opportunities to act and transform the future.

Singh and Qi (2013) explained that at their date of publication there were only two instruments that had been used to assess international-mindedness. The first one was *The Global-Mindedness Scale* (GMS) developed by Hett (1993) and the second is a two-dimensional framework for assessing international-mindedness developed by Harwood and Bailey in 2012. Harwood and Bailey's framework assesses students across five main learning areas: worldviews, global issues, language, culture and human society, and across four different levels of participation named: me, my school, my country and the world (Harwood & Bailey, 2012, p.81). They explained that because the concept of international-mindedness is complex and subject to change, schools can adapt the framework to suit their own needs and contexts when attempting to assess international-mindedness in their students (Harwood & Bailey, 2013). Below is a diagram of the two dimensional instruments from Harwood and Bailey:



*Figure 2.7. Me and My World: A two-dimensional framework for assessing international-mindedness (from Harwood & Bailey, 2012, p.79).*

Harwood & Bailey suggest that when assessing students' international-mindedness, educators must provide opportunities for students to demonstrate a holistic understanding, not just concepts that are world-related but also attitudes, beliefs and actions at a personal and local level (Harwood & Bailey, 2012, p83). The literature also discusses the need to include both ideas of Western and Non-Western knowledge when teaching using an international-minded approach. Educators who want to develop international-mindedness in their students need to make a conscious effort to represent the best knowledge from many different countries rather than privilege the exported knowledge for one source (Singh and Qi, 2013 p.3).

Lastly, Skelton (2007) asked “What does developing international-mindedness mean in practice for curricula and schools?” He explained that:

It means that curriculum outcomes or international-mindedness must be defined in terms of what most children of different ages can achieve rather than what the gifted few demonstrate to us. It means that in order to help children develop those outcomes we have to create practices that take into account where those brains are developmentally (p.14).

The above quote reflects the influence of biological developmental on how young people become internationally minded. This is paralleled in terms of the social learning influences on how international-mindedness develops. Cause (2012) and Hacking et al (2016), described international-mindedness as a lifelong learning process, and because of this there is legitimacy in children identifying those who are different to themselves as “others” because as they move through their schooling years, those who were initially “others” progressively become part of the “self”. This has implications for curriculum development in schools as it means that cultural differences are often explored through the learner’s comparison to self, often resulting in broad cultural differences, or stereotypes, being an effective starting point for cultural engagement (Seeber, 2001; Matusitz, 2012; Clyne, 1997). Through her research, Wasner (2016) suggested that a critical pedagogy that uses a participatory approach with a specific social justice aim is one of the best approaches to develop global citizenship and international-mindedness in students. She argues that the “students as researcher” methodology is an important way forward in developing international-mindedness.

Michetti, Madrid and Cofino (2015) argued schools that provide students with opportunities to engage in action-orientated tasks are enabling their students to become change-agents for the world. In developing a curriculum that increases students’ international-mindedness it must be action-orientated because this is one of the key qualities of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education (Michetti et al, 2015).

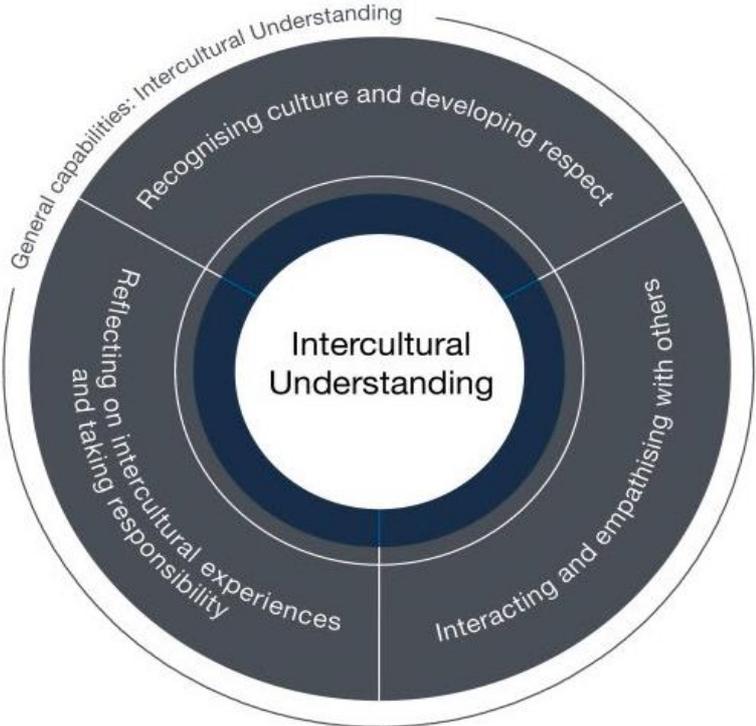
The fourth category of published literature about international-mindedness, and perhaps the most limited category and most relevant for this research, is the specific role of language education and how it can help develop international-mindedness. Sears (2004) emphasised that for international-mindedness to flourish in schools, all students must be exposed to the learning of other languages irrespective of whether the students are monolingual or already bilingual. In addition, a 2011 publication by the International Baccalaureate Organisation emphasised the critical role of languages in developing international-mindedness: “Educators need to understand the important potential role of language in cultivating intercultural awareness and international-mindedness” (p.4). Finally, language education is a tool to overcome cultural barriers (Liddicoat et al, 2003; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009; Ingram, 2003), suggesting that this will assist in developing international-mindedness.

It is important to note that research outside of the IBO that focuses specifically on language education and the development of international-mindedness is very limited. In addition, no specific studies that focused on international-mindedness in the context of the French-language classroom were found. This is because as Cause (2009, p.44) explained “literature on international-mindedness is a relatively new addition to education discourse”. Hill (2010) reflected on the essential role of the language classroom in promoting international-mindedness. He argued that language education is a strong factor that can develop international-mindedness because it provides learners with genuine opportunities to discover other ways of thinking:

Through language structures and vocabulary we can see that people think differently; this can lead to confusion or conflict. It can also lead to fascinating insights into different thought processes; this facilitates international understanding (Hill, 2010, p.17).

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that there have been numerous studies, which have previously explored and identified the language classroom as an essential place to develop

intercultural-understanding or global citizenship, which as identified earlier, are both important components of international-mindedness (Liddicoat, 2004; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Dema & Moeller, 2012; Tochon & Harrison, 2017). It is worth noting that the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority have included intercultural understanding as a general capability for all young Australians. The figure below shows the key ideas for intercultural understanding across three interrelated elements in the learning continuum, as developed and supported by ACARA documentations.



*Figure 2.8.* Intercultural understanding is a general capability supported by ACARA

Like the definitions of international-mindedness presented earlier in this section, the ACARA key ideas around intercultural understanding include both knowledge and skills components, as well as a positive perspective on diversity and a call to take responsibility. Intercultural understanding is a constituent in the definition of international-mindedness, and ESN provides a language and cultural context to promote intercultural understanding, global engagement and multilingualism (Hacking et al, 2016).

In fact, Atay, Kurt, Camlibel, Ersin and Kaslioglu (2009) explained that recognition of the cultural dimension, as a key component of the language class is one of the most significant changes in language learning and teaching.

To learn another language is quite simply and profoundly one of the best ways of learning to recognise the world and to see how others and otherness inhabit it. It is an education in difference as a pathway to understanding how to contribute to [...] global citizenship (Worton, 2010 p.39).

This view is also supported by Professor Yong Zhao, Presidential Chair and Director of the Institute for Global and Online Education, University of Oregon, who explained that:

Bilingualism is the foundation of multicultural competency. Because by learning a foreign language, you are interacting with another culture, that is, you are trying to understand how other people think, what they value and their history (DETE, p.4).

The above quote was published as part of a 2015 consultation draft by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, *Global Schools – Creating successful global citizens*, which identified the language classroom as key to the development of global citizens. In addition, Tochon (2009) argued that languages are key to global peace and understanding.

However, although there appears to be a consensus amongst scholars in the literature that language teachers are best positioned to create a deep engagement between their students and other citizens of the world, many educators continue to perceive language teaching as a separate element to culture teaching (Reid, 2015; Liddicoat and Kohler, 2012; Byram, 1989). This foreshadows that teachers may regard teaching about the ESN as an additional task to fit into their teaching routine.

In addition Skelton (2013) also warned that:

[...] languages are important [...] but language isn't a guarantee of anything. The good news is that as we continue to refine and agree what we mean by international-mindedness and as we develop our curricula, our practice in classrooms and our mindsets as school leaders and parents, there is much that is worth working for. International-mindedness is way too important an idea to deserve anything other than a rigorous, collective struggle (p.14).

Nevertheless, there are many techniques that can help educators to teach culture, and one of the key strengths of international-mindedness is its focus on relating, understanding and connecting with others, therefore provides purpose for languages beyond communication of simple greetings and counting to ten, but as a social connecting act in language classrooms. Liddicoat (2005) recommended that one consider the ways in which culture can be categorised. He explained that the teaching of culture can be done through a static approach, that is, teaching students about factual knowledge associated with the culture, or it can be done through a dynamic approach, that is, providing opportunities for an active engagement with a particular culture and its people. In teaching culture, teachers must engage students in tasks that enable them to explore, problematise and redraw the borders between themselves and “others” (Scarino & Liddicoat, n.d).

To summarise, international-mindedness is not a new phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the attributes that underpin an internationally minded person continue to evolve. Although the conception of international-mindedness came from the need to create a more educated and peaceful society particularly following the atrocities of the First World War, international-mindedness is not simply a utopian idea that educators will raise peaceful citizens who will cease international conflicts. Rather, international-mindedness is best viewed or described as a teaching philosophy that grounds the core goal of education in promoting empathy without borders, positive respect and regard for diversity and appreciation of human interdependency across nations. International-minded individuals work together to improve their knowledge of the world by developing a shared understanding of local and global realities, and accepting the responsibility to take appropriate corresponding actions (Singh & Qi, 2013). It could be argued that international-mindedness is about acting on dreams of peace in the present.

Finally, although scholars have argued for many years that foreign language education has the potential to contribute greatly in educating for intercultural and global citizenship or international-mindedness, there is, to my knowledge, no study that has investigated explicitly how the French-language classroom can be used as a vehicle to specifically develop international-mindedness. However, there are many studies that have investigated how to develop intercultural competency and it is the application of this research, within the space of this PhD, which has supported not only the rationale for the aspired transformative curriculum, but also its development, implementation and evaluation.

## **2.4 Curriculum construction**

As this research seeks to develop a transformative curriculum, it is important to review the literature on French curriculum construction. An historical analysis approach has been taken in order to better understand the evolution of the French curriculum in Australia. Formal opportunities to learn a language other than English have been available in Australian primary

schools since the mid-nineteenth century. According to Logan & Clarke (1984), the curriculum in the 1850s consisted of reading, writing, grammar, geography, object lessons, and scripture lessons and in the final year, mathematics or language such as Latin or Greek. Although the population of French immigrants was less significant than those from Britain, Cryle (2003) traced evidence of French being taught in some schools in the 1800s.

From the 1800s until the 1960s, students of French were expected to develop knowledge of French literature. In other words, learners of French were not necessarily able to convey meaning in the actual French-language. It was the early development of second language acquisition (SLA) research in the 1960s, in particular the work of Selinker in 1972 on interlanguage, that gave an additional pedagogical dimension to the language classroom, including the French-language classroom.

From the 1960s, the aims of French programs offered in schools and at universities started to transform allowing a focus on both language acquisition and literature, hence providing students with practical language knowledge (Watson, 2010; Cryle, 2003). From that point onward, it was mandated that all learners of French would progressively develop competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Later, in the 1980s a third dimension was added to the discipline of French studies. From this point on students were not only learning the literature and the language, but also studying the culture with close attention. Watson (2010) explained:

[...] the rise of cultural studies challenged the hegemony of literature. In French, this regime-change manifested itself with the emergence of Francophone studies, French cultural studies and the addition of cultural competency to the original four skills of language study (reading, writing, speaking, listening) (p.477).

Whilst the French-language might not differ extensively across French colonies and nations, French cultural studies is a far more contested curricular space. According to Anne Freadman, when integrating cultural studies into a French program, it is important for teachers to learn to teach the French colonial empire and not merely about France alone (Cryle, 2003). The French culture is almost impossible to define, complicated by the history of French colonisation and the wide diversity of francophone countries. However, Chambers (1996) talks about the concept of “Frenchness” - this “*âme française*” that helps to homogenise and ground both the pedagogical and scholarly practice of French studies. The homogenisation of Frenchness is very much focused on mainland France. Chambers also states that the way the French discipline, with its central focus on “Frenchness”, is constructed is because all disciplines like to valorise their object. The Frenchness concept is important because it links up to a bourgeois ideology of what Bourdieu would call “distinction”. It is chic to be able to order in French in a restaurant explained Chambers (1996). On the other hand, Watson (2010, p.477) explained that French culture has undergone a redefinition which ‘now includes Francophone and minority cultures in a happy multicultural mix’. However, this thesis will later argue that in Australia, the study of French in schools is still tied to the concept of Frenchness (Ritchie, 2003).

Petrey (1995) said “without something like a concept of French identity, French departments and French majors simply make no sense.’ – In other words the basic structure of courses depends on what policy-makers and French teachers believe makes the French culture. French educators are accustomed to teaching this homogenous Frenchness. In addition, students expect and demand to be taught this Frenchness (Chartier, 1985). On the other hand, Watson (2010) denies the existence of Frenchness. She noted that nowadays the concept of “Frenchness” or even “Francophone-ness” does not make sense due to globalisation and immigration, which bring together people, products and lifestyles from all over the world. Yet, teaching about French colonial countries would bring a focus that some would consider to be “less-French”

into an understanding of French people across the world. However, such change is never without resistance:

We have spent a great deal of time building up our subject [i.e. French], we have got it established on a firm basis of literary history, and we're not going to let it be dismantled for the sake of contemporary fads (Lloyd Austin 1983 in Forsdick 2015, p.317).

Chartier (1985) argues that this enduring Frenchness has been a necessity for the discipline of French studies, as it creates the needed unity that assures its own existential coherence. Similarly, Petrey (1995) feared that transformation that moves away from teaching traditional literary studies might impact negatively on the conferred prestige of French, which traditionally attracted highly academic students. However, Watson (2010) points to the transformative potential offered by the 21<sup>st</sup> century French-language educators:

The contemporary language classroom transforms France and la Francophonie into a museum of aesthetic and ethnographic artifacts, treating France as a work of art, an aesthetically pleasing lifestyle which is reflected even in its government, institutions, and economy, with Francophone studies added as a new wing to the French *musée imaginaire* (p.482).

Modernising French studies to become more distinctively connected to Australia is possible from a contextual and resources point of view. It is also a transition that has been replicated many times across the world. There have been numerous papers published in the field of French studies that reflect on and discuss the content and evolution of French studies. In particular, the work of Charles Forsdick who noted the evident transformations in teaching approaches of French across the centuries. Although these transformations are fraught with challenges, Hargreaves, Forsdick, and Murphy (2011) argued that the discipline of French Studies is undergoing an inevitable wider re-conceptualisation pointing to some exciting times ahead for

scholars in that field. In addition, Forsdick (2015, p.313) argued that it is the work of Christophe Campos in the 1990s that tracked the evolution of French studies in the UK that led to a “rapid expansion of French studies beyond its initial gallocentric, hexagonal and primarily literary focus into the multifaceted and geographically variegated set of practices it seeks to encompass today”. Hargreaves, Forsdick, and Murphy (2011) explained that the discipline of French Studies in Great Britain and Ireland was essentially constructed by French nationals who therefore constructed and still encourage a persistent Francophilia. While in Canada, Thompson (2008, p.15) explained that “Imagining new possibilities is required for the transformation, perhaps even the survival, of Canada and the Francophonie”. A similar discourse articulating the need for a “trans-Francophone” teaching approach is being discussed in America by Veronique Maisier (2014). Finally, Forsdick (2015, p.327) makes references to Belgium, essayist Marc Quaghebeur who proclaimed that the Francophone space will need to become pluralistic or it will disappear.

It is clear that there is a strong impetus for broadening the focus of French Studies globally. However, the research focus associated with each statement in the above paragraph is on the tertiary and literary study of French. The research presented does not answer the question of whether the idea of teaching a possible “less-French curriculum” would enthrall most French-language educators in schools? It does not consider whether the teachers and students would grasp onto this counter hegemonic movement. Nor does the above research give examples of school French curriculums that have been transformed. Therefore, while the need has been clearly articulated for the transformation of French studies, the implementation of this transformation at a school level has apparently been untested.

#### **2.4.1 Language & Culture in Curriculum Studies**

Languages are precious as each not only represents a unique set of linguistic systems, but also

because each conveys a particular culture and therefore a unique belief system. All human beings interpret the world through their language and through their culture. Without language, we risk losing our identity (Calma, 2008).

However, the understanding of what language is by individual teachers will play a significant part in their decision to incorporate culture as part of their daily teaching to their language students. This is important, as this research is underpinned by the premise that the context of the French-language classroom can influence and promote the teaching of specific cultures. As explained by Scarino and Liddicoat:

Our understanding of language, as languages educators, becomes part of our professional stance and, as such, influences our curriculum, planning and classroom pedagogies. Teachers who view language simply as code make acquiring grammar and vocabulary the primary, if not the only, goal of language learning. Within such a limited approach, students do not begin to engage with language as a communicative reality but simply as an intellectual exercise or as a work requiring memorising (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009, p.16).

Clearly identified in the above quote is the risk contained in transforming the French-language curriculum; that is, it will make no difference to the teaching of knowledge about the ESN because some teachers do not identify the cultural element to the language classroom as being explicit or important. Yet, it is well established in the literature that since the 1990s language learning aims to integrate the teaching of culture and that doing otherwise would be considered an important neglect of language transmission (Harrison, 1990). Kramsch (1993) explained that culture is viewed from the perspective of the fifth dimension that has been added to the four macro-skills consisting of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Research on teaching culture has shown that language and culture are closely related and are best acquired together (Dema & Moeller, 2012; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009; Kramsch, 1993; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Schulz, 2007). Dema & Moeller (2012) made reference to the previous research of Brown (2007) who also argued that it is impossible to separate culture and language, that the two are interrelated:

[...] one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition [...], is also the acquisition of a second culture” (p. 189-190).

In addition, Z Moore (2006) asserts that the teaching of culture should be considered an essential objective of successful communication. Moreover, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) support the vital role of culture in language classrooms and define culture as a fundamental part of the second language (L2) learning process. As Harrison notes,

[...] teaching a language is not a value-free, or transparent, activity. What we do in the language classroom is affected by who we are, the views we hold, and the societies we are part of. This will be so however askance, as individuals, we may look at dominant views in these same societies (Harrison, 1990, p.1).

In the context of French, what teachers do in the language classroom is affected not only by who they are, but also by their awareness of their personal subscription to a hegemonic French curriculum which privileges France as the definitive cultural and language source. This form of hidden curriculum manifests in their selection of resources to represent French, and concomitantly, the extent in which their students are provided with a varied representation of the cultural contexts of the language. The Frenchness that teachers will share with their students

will depend on their own life experiences as explained in Chapter 2 sections 2.4.

The Pacific region is not well presented in the school curriculum (Crawford, 1961; Moore, 1997; Rose, Quanchi, Moore, 2009; Hempenstall, 2009; Wood, 2012). This is despite Australia having had an international reputation for being a leader in South Pacific Studies in the 1960s (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009; Hempenstall, 2009). These researchers identified the expertise that existed in Australia in both teaching and research about Pacific Island Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. According to Hempenstall (2009), Pacific experts were spread across every state and territory.

However, this reputation was mainly due to the work conducted at a tertiary level at the Australian National University where there was a strong focus on research and teaching about the history and cultures of the Pacific Islands. However since the early 1990s:

There is no longer a critical mass of scholars working on Australia-PNG or Australia-Oceania relationships and Oceania generally. From a position in which units were offered by most universities, there is now only one university with a committed « package » of Pacific units and only one university that offers a unit specifically on Australia-Oceania relations (Quanchi, 2002, p.3).

Since this time, there has been no standardised approach to teaching about the Pacific in either the tertiary or school sector, and research has focused on the strategic and security concerns of government (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009; Hempenstall, 2009). This focus has played out through numerous Pacific experts, plans and organisations, but has not transferred into a visibility with Australia's various levels of education, and especially not in the school curriculum (Quanchi, 1996). As described by Hempenstall in 2009 (p.10), over the last quarter century Australia has 'dropped the ball it used to hold tightly in regard to knowledge of and

engagement with the Pacific.’ To pick and run with the ball, emphasising the ESN in the French-language curriculum is a necessary intervention. It should, in fact, be an expected part of the language curriculum, in which French-language educators should be teaching students about French culture. It brings the French-language into the students’ backyard and connects them to the language with an enhanced sense of relevance, purpose and identity. However, as explained throughout this literature review, the existing cultural hegemony privileging without question a France-centric curriculum and teachers’ established identities uncritically perpetuating this privilege are only some of the factors that may prevent this curriculum transformation from happening. The aspired transformative curriculum aspires to develop both knowledge of the mind and the heart towards the ESN, and through this, promote student international-mindedness.

#### **2.4.2 French-language curriculum in Australia**

The more recent development of the languages curricula in the context of the Australian Curriculum was a complex undertaking. Angela Scarino (2012) explained that the formulation of the Australian Curriculum for Languages represents a major chapter in the history of language education in Australia. Prior to the Australian curriculum, curriculum documents such as the generic curriculum framework, language-specific curriculum frameworks and language-specific syllabus documents, were managed by the Australian and State/Territory governments (Liddicoat, Scarino, Curnow, Kohler, Scrimgeour and Morgan, 2007). Liddicoat et al. (2007) provided an extensive report, *An Investigation of the State and Nature of Languages in Australian School* on the curriculum in each state. With the exception of Northern Territory, French was taught across the remaining states and territories. Queensland and New South Wales were the only two states that had a specific French language curriculum, but neither states made a reference to ESN. This history explains the influence of the curriculum on the relative invisibility of the ESN in French classes in Australia.

Liddicoat et al. (2007) also drew attention to a series of national documents that informed curriculum development in schools. The 1988 Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines written by Scarino, McKay, Vale and Clark was the basis for language curriculum development. These guidelines were not written for a particular language, but, were rather, general strategies and goals used by all language teachers, irrespective of the target language taught. The 1994 Statement and Profile for Languages other than English developed by the Australian Education Council on the other hand, made visible the outcomes for languages learning. Liddicoat et al. (2007) attributed this document to have had a significant impact on the ways that language curricula were developed. In 2003, the Report on Intercultural Language Learning supported the integration of an intercultural stance within the language classroom. In the context of this research, it is this change that provides the opportunities for the French-language curriculum to develop student understanding of the different cultural aspects of the French-language, including those associated with the ESN.

In Queensland, where this study is situated, the 2000 *Year 4 to 10 French syllabus* articulated the link between language, culture and power in its rationale for learning French:

For Australians who wish to participate effectively in global affairs, an understanding of the French-language and cultures is essential. A proficiency in French gives access to the living and working language of some 300 million people around the world. It is the first or second language in more than 40 countries. A knowledge of French also gives access to a culture that has enriched that of others. Its contributions to such fields as art, philosophy, architecture, music, literature, film, fashion and cuisine are significant. French and English are closely related since a high proportion of English words are of French origin. The learning of French lends itself to the extension of learners' vocabularies and structural knowledge of English. French is an official

language of the United Nations Organisation and is used for the negotiation of treaties, agreements and accords. It plays a substantial role in international areas of law and diplomacy. France continues to be a world leader in aeronautics, computing, medicine, telecommunications, engineering and scientific research. Professionals in these fields with a working knowledge of French benefit directly from this expertise (p.3).

This rationale was adapted from the French Senior Syllabus, Board of Senior Secondary School Studies written in Brisbane in 1995 and it is also highly similar to the Queensland French Senior Extension rationale of 2009. The rationale for studying this “valuable language” (p.3) is highly focused on the concept of “Frenchness” as described in section 2.4 of the Literature Review. It is a rationale that could be applied to the teaching and learning of French in any location around the world because it is a rationale almost entirely devoid of the context of the learner.

Until recently, little was done to expand the curricula to include a diverse representation of French, particularly that of neighbouring French colonies east of Australia. Ritchie (2003) argues that the general public in Australia ignores the geopolitical importance of the French-language despite the proximity to French-speaking countries in the Pacific. In the broader social context, the dominant media representation of this part of the world is that of the environmental calamities in the region. Far less is said about the peoples and cultures of this region (Quanchi, 2013).

Tokenistic references to ESN entered the French curriculum about than a decade ago. The 2008 Queensland Senior French syllabus noted French to be spoken in the Pacific region, and that “tourism to the South Pacific, in particular New Caledonia and Vanuatu, continues to expand” (p.2). The New South Wales, 2003 K-10 French syllabus as well as in the NSW 2009 senior French syllabus made more specific references to ESN by naming the Pacific islands and nations:

[...]French is one of the major languages in the world. It is used in parts of Europe, Canada, North America, Africa, the Middle East, the West Indies, the Indian Ocean region and the South Pacific region close to Australia, namely New Caledonia, Tahiti and Vanuatu... French has been, by tradition, the language of diplomacy. It is an official language in a large number of international organisations including the United Nations Organisation, the European Union, the South Pacific Commission, the Organisation for African Unity and the Olympic Games...For more than 200 years, Australia has had strong connections with France (p. 8).

In the NSW document, teachers are reminded of the close region of the South Pacific and it then lists three of the four Francophone countries in this region. Whilst the rationale notes Australia's history with France, it overlooks its history with the ESN and misses the opportunity to expand on Australia's current and future engagement with the ESN.

Although the number of students learning French in the senior years is often relatively small (for example, typically under 1000 in Queensland), there are larger numbers of students who study it in lower year levels (QCAA, 2015). For two generations now the rationale that has shaped the French-language classroom experience of the majority of Queensland French students is strongly based on the representation of French from a France, and more specifically a Parisian perspective. These curricular representations of France and the ESN illustrate the marginalisation of the ESN as a valuable language site.

### **2.4.3 The Australian Curriculum: French-language**

The recent development and release of a national curriculum in Australia by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Agency (2012) provides evidence that its content is not a simple neutral assemblage of knowledge, but is rather a selective tradition (Pinar, 1992; Apple, 1993; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996) that illustrates how Australia, as a

nation, seeks to define itself through the curriculum experience provided for its youth. In placing Asia as a cross-curricular priority, the curriculum shapes the ontological representation of Australia's relationship with the world, and more specifically with its ESN.

The report, *A National Strategy for the Study of the Pacific* (2009) recommended "specific reference to the study of Australia's relations with the Pacific Islands, Australian South Sea Islanders and Australia's Pacific Islander communities" but the curricular response suggests a hesitance in building knowledge and understanding of the region (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009. p.13). A search for the word 'Pacific' in all the learning areas of the Australian curriculum, version 8.3 Foundation to Year 10, depicted only 46 mentions compared to 205 for Asia. The word Pacific was present in 3 learning areas (Science, Humanities and Languages) whereas the word Asia was present across 9 learning areas (English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, The Arts, Technologies, HPE, Languages and Work Studies). In addition, out of the 46 occurrences of the word Pacific in the Australian Curriculum, only three were explicitly asking teachers to teach about the Pacific nations. These included Year 3 Geography, which asks students to map the Pacific nations, year 8 students to study the Polynesian expansion across the Pacific (c.700 – 1756) and the rationale for French-language F to 10, which mentions some of the Pacific Islands. Jonathan Pryke, who reviewed *The Embarrassed Colonialist*, a book by Sean Dorney, critiqued the Australian curriculum, demanding why Australia does not want its children to learn about the Pacific Island countries (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Nonetheless the French curriculum provides a small opening through which teachers could, at their discretion, expose their students to an interpretation of French that does not reside solely in the cobbled streets of Paris. The first paragraph of the context statement for this curriculum includes the following passage:

French is a major world language, spoken as the first language in more than two dozen countries on five continents and as an official language in 33 countries. First language speakers include the 67 million inhabitants of mainland France; those living in the territorial communities of New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and the Wallis and Futuna Islands, as well as in French overseas departments such as French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe and the island of Réunion; 80 percent of the inhabitants of Québec; and significant communities in Luxembourg, Belgium, Monaco, Switzerland and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ACARA, 2014, p.1).

It is remiss to overlook Vanuatu in this context statement, which is one of Australia's closest French-speaking neighbours. Later, also in the context statement, a further, albeit brief, emphasis on the ESN can be found:

Current links between Australia and the French-speaking world are strong, characterised by bilateral relationships in trade and investment, educational exchanges, research and development in science and technology, humanitarian and environmental initiatives, and communications, strategic and defence priorities. The Pacific region is a particularly important focus of bilateral engagement. France is a leading destination for Australian travellers, and a partner in work-exchange opportunities in hospitality, tourism and international relations. Large numbers of young Australians visit France and other French-speaking countries each year on student or working visas (ACARA, 2014, p. 1).

The context statement remains similar in the latest iteration of French curriculum. Not only does this curriculum outline specific guidelines for the teaching and learning of French that are common to all state and territories in Australia, it also focuses French-language educators towards the ESN within the first lines of the document. In addition, it points out a clear link to

the importance of the Pacific region as a focus for bilateral engagement and yet does not attach the tourism label to the ESN that was often described in the literature.

Although the word “Pacific” was found throughout the national curriculum, it was often in front of the words “and” or “or”, indicating an area of focus in the curriculum in which the Pacific was one of a number of language sites. This has the effect of giving teachers a choice about whether to teach about the Pacific, even when it is identified as a potential area of focus within the curriculum. This limited and tentative endorsement in the national curriculum tacitly legitimises a tokenistic consideration of ESN with very little attention on the Pacific, or on Pacific Islanders in Australia (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009).

If the purpose of a curriculum is to address the priorities of a nation, even if those priorities are defined at least in part by its political leaders, then the current French curriculum is identifying a need for the French-language to be more than a pathway to engagement with France and its people. It points to a need for the French-language to be a language of regional engagement, where the authentic link to Australia’s ESN is meaningfully explored in French classrooms across Australia. Although there are some teachers who do teach a French curriculum that is orientated toward the ESN, in particular New Caledonia, the explicit teaching of the Pacific region in general is isolated and very much reliant on the experience and enthusiasm of individual teachers (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009).

My argument for the focus on the ESN is justified by the missed opportunity demonstrated by the many previous curriculum documents used by French-language teachers across Australia. This missed opportunity can now be seized by the most recent ACARA inclusion, which challenges, or at least encourages, French teachers in Australia to question why they teach what they teach and propose to them alternatives that can change their French classroom. As Ingram (2003) stated, today’s language teachers, which include French-language teachers:

[...] must remain convinced of the worth of their activities, they must recognise the value of joining together as a respected profession, and they must be ready to assert to others the importance of language learning to the education of all children, to the society in general, and to the security of the world (p.162).

Whilst policy-makers offer various reasons for learning French, far less consideration is given to why students choose to learn French. Ditchburn (2012) raised questions about whose interest the national Australian curriculum serves. Using Gramsci's work on hegemony, Ditchburn (2012) leads us to understand why there has been a lack of debate regarding the benefits of the Australian curriculum and almost an immediate acceptance of its value by communities around Australia. In addition, she denounces the national curriculum to have an almost entire focus on fostering Australia's economic needs. She explained the need for future research projects to review specifically the knowledge and understanding found in the syllabus documents of the Australian curriculum and to question these using questions inspired by Gramsci and Apple such as "Whose knowledge is valued? Who decides? And who benefits?" Ditchburn (2012) argues that such future discussions will allow:

[...] all voices and perspectives can legitimately contribute to a curriculum that does more than focus on global and national economic needs and instead shifts to a curriculum that has at its centre the needs, identifies and multiple futures of those for whom it is designed: the students. (p.268)

## **2.5 Resistance to Curricular Changes**

As Puamau (2005) pointed out, whenever discussing resistance to curricular changes in the Pacific, one must make mention of Professor Konai Helu Thaman who in the early 2000s developed *The Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative* (RPEI) with Dr Ana Taufe'ulungaki and Dr Kabini Sanga. This initiative advocated for a departure from the European-based curriculum, which is often attached to the economic agenda (Thaman, 2001). In advocating for change

within the schooling agenda and the curriculum relevance for Pacific Nations children, educators and academic experts in the Pacific continue to advocate for formal education systems to be more culturally inclusive for both students and teachers living in the Island Nations (Thaman, 1997; Thaman, 2001; Puamau, 2005).

While multiple database searches indicated that a wide range of research has been conducted on students, teachers and the wider school community regarding the focus on Asia in teaching and learning, similar research focused on the ESN is almost entirely absent. That is not to say that no one teaches about these countries. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the AAAPS report written by Rose, Quanchi and Moore (2009) have commended some teachers for including elements of Pacific studies within their own teaching area but that is, as they said, at the discretion of the teacher only.

Data provided by the *Centre de Rencontres et d'Echanges Internationaux du Pacifique* (CREIPAC) in Noumea shows that despite the discretionary nature of including the ESN, there are some Australian schools that do engage their French students with the ESN. Between 2014 and 2016 an average of 417 Australian high school students toured Noumea each year. This indicates that there is a foundation for curriculum transformation to build upon with significant scope for growth. For instance, additional data provided by Education Queensland (EQ) in email correspondence indicated that over the same time period only one EQ school travelled to New Caledonia, whereas 76 EQ schools travelled to Japan.

It is also important to note that there is support from academics regarding the teaching of the ESN and advocacy for their inclusion within the Australian school history curriculum. In particular, Max Quanchi's work stands out in the literature, with his enthusiastic advocacy for the inclusion of the Pacific within the school curriculum for history. He identified what he described as an 'alarming lurch' away from the Pacific, influenced by the 'pressure of national

obsession with making money in Asia' (Hempenstall, 1999). Quanchi's plea for historians to become involved in resourcing and inspiring the education of future Australian's about Australia's history with the Pacific mirrors the purpose of this research and curriculum intervention.

Inspiring teachers to change their practice to include ESN as a language site is possible but it is also a challenge. There has been extensive research conducted in the field of educational change and the associated resistance by educators (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2009, Ball, 2009; Hargreaves, 2005; Baum, 2002). Hargreaves (2005) for instance, argued that teachers respond differently to change depending on their age and length of teaching career, and general curricular change can be compared to going to war (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2009). This section explains how teachers can be agents of change, while also reviewing the challenges that are linked to curricular changes.

Processes countering this resistance to change is summarised by Terhart (2013) as a three phase process. Firstly he considers the argument for change. Change can sometimes be regarded as an attack on professional competence and therefore the rationale behind the change must be carefully articulated, taking into consideration the feelings of the teachers that one wants to involve in the change. Second, the process and how the change will be put into practice is considered. The clarity of the delivery plan to put an idea into practice can impact of the level of resistance to change. Finally, he asks about the 'why' for teachers. In other words, what's in it for them? Those whom we ask to change must see how the change could benefit them (and generally, this means their students) to some extent. If they can't see any benefits, then challenging them to change would be highly problematic.

In the 1980s, Fullan explained that although any major transformation requires a whole school approach, any change must begin within individuals. This, in the word of Fullan, is "the starting

point”. He argued that the role of the school principal is to provide vision and leadership. It is their job to work with and use the resources around them, especially the teachers, to focus on the most important outcome of student learning. Curricular changes should only take place if it is of benefit to the students. As educators, students should always remain our most important focus. In fact, Fullan recommended that the first question one should ask before considering any educational change is will students benefit if the changes are made?

Specifically in the context of language education in Australia, Endicott (2011) warned that responding to mandated curriculum changes in Queensland will not be an easy task for language educators whose fate would inevitably be faced with varied challenges due to the Australian Curriculum. In preparing for this anticipated change, back in 2011, she recommended that language teachers become involved in various professional networks. Her research demonstrated that language teachers’ participation in peer-mediated professional learning when implementing new language programs led to greater teacher confidence and better learning outcomes for students. It is worth mentioning that according to Terhart (2013) the number one argument that teachers use when faced with the task to change their practice is the “No time” argument. As a previous high school teacher myself I can relate to this comment and must acknowledge that I have used it too and that sometimes it felt genuinely justifiable. Teaching is recognised internationally as a high-stress occupation, in part due to time pressures (Yong & Yue 2007), and Australia continues to experience a consistent rise in the incidence of teacher stress related incidents (Garrick, Mak, Cathcart, Winwood, Bakker and Lushington, 2017).

However, in the context of French-language, it is possible that there is more than just a pragmatic explanation of “lack of time”. Teachers’ pedagogical and ethical decisions form the hidden curriculum, which Apple suggests is “the tacit teaching to students norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years” which is difficult to identify,

define, scrutinise and challenge (Apple, 1979, p.14). Cultural hegemony informs the basis of this cultural normative bias, which influences the teachers' beliefs, decisions and actions. According to Brookfield (1995),

Hegemony is the use of cultural and social relations to impose or maintain power. It is the process whereby ideas, structures and actions come to be seen by the majority of people as wholly natural, preordained, and working for their own good, when in fact they are constructed and transmitted by powerful minority interests to protect the status quo that serves those interests (1995, p.15).

Cultural hegemony is a form of invisible domination and manifests itself at different levels such as the political, economic, social and cultural terrains of society (Chisholm, 2015; Heywood, 1994; Pitsoe and Dichaba, 2013; Morton, 2003; Purvis and Hunt, 1993; Lears, 1985). With respect to the teaching of French, it manifests as a form of curricular hegemony by the dominant practice of focussing on France, and as identified in the rationale of various French curricula, its power as a language context rather than presenting a more diverse representation of French which includes ESN. This is despite evidence pointing to an inevitable interwoven future between Australia and its ESN, which therefore adds more relevance to this context for teaching French. To counter the dominant representation of French, the teaching of marginalised French-language contexts is essential. As Chisholm asserts:

Content and pedagogy are oftentimes sources of domination that invite resistance. At the content level, there is an opportunity to examine issues from the perspective of those who historically were the silenced voices, from the perspectives of groups that were historically invisible or left out of the reckonings (Chisholm, 2015, p.4).

As a result, Chisholm proposes that in order to achieve any transformation in the curriculum, incorporating active and interactive pedagogical approaches that are dialogical should be

implemented. Chisholm (2015) refers to the work of Blake-Hannah (1997) as he reinforced the importance of “reasoning” and how dialogue such as story-telling can be used to enable adult learners to re-evaluate why they do what they do, to reconceptualise their pedagogical approaches and practices. He argues that only an approach to teaching and learning that foregrounds reasoning will be transformational:

Many adult educators readily affirm that they teach for social justice and they teach for their students to develop agency. However, many do not see their work in terms of activism. [...] I am proposing that we utilise emancipatory transformative learning as a tool to foster change (Chisholm, 2015, p.7).

bell hooks (1994), often cited in cultural education, explained that a teaching approach that aims to counter the dominant hegemony should be done through a participatory space. Fullan (2001, p.3) supports that view as he explains that change requires a sense of ownership, participation and interaction between educators. Leading change in schools requires a ‘reculturing’, that is a transformation in the moral purpose. Fullan (2003) explains that moral purpose is more than just passionate teachers trying to effect a difference in their students. Teachers must have a clear understanding of their moral purpose or in Hattie’s words, “their impact,” for change to be effective. Out of the many factors that can influence positively students’ success, the collective work between a group of teachers to build on their expertise and help them understand what impact they, as professionals, are making on students’ life, is the most powerful (Hattie, 2013). Ball (2009) also affirms that view as he acknowledges the importance of facilitating the professional development of teachers as agents of change to achieve students’ success.

In previous sections, we defined a curriculum as a human construct. Curriculum study poses difficulties by its intellectual nature, which sees its foundation lying cross-different fields such

as philosophy, psychology, sociology and history. The word itself, curriculum, comes from Latin, meaning “a race”; a race that is influenced by those who construct it but also by those who interpret and deliver it. Giroux (2015, p.172) compares the curriculum to ‘a terrain of contestation over which forms of knowledge, history, visions, language, culture and authority will prevail as a legitimate object of learning and analysis’. He explained that a curriculum represents a narrative or voice, one that is multilayered and often contradictory because of the multiple interest groups, such as politicians and curriculum writers on one hand, and on the other teachers, schools, students and parents, which influence the curriculum construct. A curriculum is therefore politically complex; it “empowers and disempowers, authorizes and de-authorizes, recognizes and mis-recognizes different social groups and their knowledge and identities” (Connell, 1994, p.140). With the recent inclusion of ESN in the French curriculum, this thesis argues that challenge against historical “de-authorization” of the people and culture of the ESN resides in the pedagogical decisions of teachers.

Counter-hegemonic French teaching requires a more diversified representation of French-language sites that offers young Australians a more international-minded awareness of the diffusion of the language and culture. According to Flesicher (2009), creating a culture of change that would lead to counter-hegemonic teaching is possible through the use of positive and collaborative powers, such as daring to imagine the familiar in unfamiliar ways. To develop a counter-hegemonic pedagogy, Chisholm (2015) recommends that educators, in this case French teachers, make use of critical pedagogy through a participatory approach. Teachers must be encouraged to think critically about what is currently being taught and how it could be challenged. If successful, French teachers could well contribute to the start of a generational movement which will develop emancipated learners who can act as agents of change upon the

hegemonic culture.

If languages are a political affair in Australia then French-language teachers need to become, in the words of Gramsci below, their own politicians so that they may influence the future.

So one could say that each one of us changes himself, modifies himself to the extent that he changes the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher is, and cannot be other than, the politician, the active man who modifies the environment, understanding by environment the ensemble of relations which each of us enters to take part in (Gramsci, 1971, p.352).

French-language educators should be provided with opportunities to re-evaluate their practices so that they can actively contribute to developing caring global citizens opposed to what Lee Elliott Fleischer (2009) said “future competitive wage earners and avid consumers” (p.2). There is a sense of urgency to lead both teachers and students to develop knowledge that would counter the dominant hegemony. As Clarke and Clarke (1990, p.31) explained “It has long been realised that the very fabric of language is constructed by and constructs the world view of its users”. To challenge the dominant curricular hegemony, policy alone is inadequate; it requires teachers to critically reflect on their hidden bias in their cultural representation of French.

Transforming French-language education in Australia to shift focus to the East will require pre-service and in-service teachers to experience not only a shift in thinking, but also a shift in practice. Therefore, it is important to explore the theory of transformative learning, which has evolved over time. Initially transformative learning through the work of Mezirow focused essentially on the individual, but expanded to the community through the work of Freire and then later to a planetary view with research conducted by O’Sullivan in 2008 (Singleton, 2015).

The literature often draws attention to the work of John Dewey and Jack Mezirow when discussing transformative learning and pedagogy. Dewey's transformative learning model can be summarised into three main characteristics: motivated use, expansion of perception and experiential value. Dewey argues that all transformative experiences are significant because each allows the learners to reflect, drawing together connections and relations, making the educational experience more significant. On the other hand, O'Sullivan (2003, p.328) explained that transformative learning is 'a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions'.

Mezirow's work (1978) has been applied to several research projects in education, most specifically to professional learning where new curricula required thinking and action. As Howie and Bagnall (2013) explain, his theory also continues to remain popular amongst educational practitioners. As a result of his seminal study, Mezirow and his team of researchers have identified ten crucial phases that are associated with perspective transformation and, subsequently, actions. Each of these stages are commonly associated with the transformative learning experienced by educators in their professional learning ((Mezirow 1995, p. 50).

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning of a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisionally trying out new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

In addition, French-language teachers might not think or know that locating France as the sole language context is problematic. As Mezirow claims, one of the problems of the adult educator lies in them not thinking that ‘there is anything the matter with them’ (Mezirow, 1978). The conventional practice of French-language teaching is the result of long-lasting, accepted societal beliefs about French-language teaching; that is, adhering to a France-centric focus. The way we see and engage with the world in every aspect of our daily lives is, according to Mezirow (1990), influenced by ‘meaning schemes’, the expected outcomes of cause and effect relationships and event sequences, and ‘meaning perspectives’, that are often well-established by socially accepted and rarely questioned ways of thinking and associated actions. While both provide a context to how French teachers view the Francophone world, the meaning perspectives of teachers help to predict how they might view a broader interpretation of the French language and why this might be so. As Mezirow asserts,

A meaning perspective is the structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to – and transformed by – one’s past experience. It is a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our relationships (1978, p. 101).

As a result, adult learning, as a transformative experience, is a challenging experience because a transformation in personal paradigm is needed to create a long-lasting change in action. Nohl (2015, p.39) explains that this transformation often has a ‘nondetermining start’. That is, a novel event ‘neither anticipated nor planned, breaks into life,’ although the nature of the transformation is not affected by this ‘first experience’. Once adults have been in a routine of seeing, believing and doing things in a certain way, it appears that adults are literally incapacitated from critically reflecting or challenging the role they play in society, unless, as Mezirow (1978) explained, one becomes confronted with a disorientating dilemma, which is an external force that is so strong causes adults to reconsider their pre-conceived assumptions

and to reflect critically on their own habits. This confrontation is also described by Ball (2009) as the “awakening” which can usually be achieved through reflection and “the narrativization of personal experiences”. Building on Vygotsky's construct of mediation (1978) which highlights the powerful use of language as a cultural tool, Ball (2009), developed a model of generative change, which presents five phases teachers and students must go through in order to achieve change: develop voice, generativity (connecting personal and professional knowledge with knowledge gained from students), and efficacy in their thinking and practice. Her model can provide a foundation for understanding teacher change and development but can also be used as a framework to guide professional development programs to ensure positive learning outcomes for all learners.

In the case of this particular research project, which has the aim of transforming the French-language classroom to increase knowledge of Australia's ESN and enhance international-mindedness, providing opportunities for educators to become aware of the unquestioned existing condition, that is, the Eurocentric and Paris-centric focus, should be encouraged. This is because, as the literature review has revealed, it is highly likely that, considering the history of French-language education in Australia, French teachers have internalised the practice of a Eurocentric and Paris-centric curriculum. Therefore, to create greater autonomy, control and responsibility for their own teaching, they first must be confronted by their own “absurdity” (Mezirow, 1978) through encouraged reflection on their practice (Ball, 2009). From there, the new perspective can either be rejected or embraced to the next level. This transformation in perspective must also be mirrored in the thinking of curriculum writers and, more broadly, politicians who have the positional capacity to encourage the French-language classroom to consider a broader context of inclusion and utilise the possibility of the Pacific region, in much the same way that Asian languages can educate about the Asia region.

As Dirkx (2006) suggests, it is personnel enlightenment that enables people to bring the unconscious to consciousness. Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator and philosopher, explained “conscientisation” is a necessary to guide adults to reorder their view of reality and to redefine their own possibilities and actions (Mezirow, 1979, p.103).

In order to transform the way teachers’ view the purpose and intent of French-language learning, a shift in meaning perspectives must occur, because it will create more than just a way of seeing, it will bring the unconscious to consciousness that will enable both teachers and students to alter their own decision-making, and therefore their action (Kroth & Cranton, 2014). Transformative leaders can help others to restructure their reality so that these people can see the urge there is for action. Mezirow warns that the will or determination to persevere in carrying out one’s plans may require special support and assistance.

Implementing needed action may require trials, role testing, compromises, competencies to be learned and the willingness to accept at least temporarily, a less satisfying solution while making way for the solution of one’s choice. One may also decide not to act; it is the choosing, the deciding, that is crucial for personal development. [...] Moving to a new perspective and sustaining the actions which it requires is dependent upon an association with others who share the new perspective (1978, p. 105).

Drawing from Mezirow’s theory, it is vital that in the process of curriculum reconstruction, teachers must experience a reconstruction of thinking and ensures this is assured through sustained relationships with French-language teachers by encouraging learning groups, possibly through educational mentorship (Mezirow, 1978).

To summarise, in this study, the learners will not just be the students, but also the teachers, and the product of their labour can be found through a developing self-awareness of their own teaching and the resultant perspective change.

## **2.6 Previous work in promoting curricular transformation**

In understanding curriculum transformation that incorporates opportunities to develop student international-mindedness, in a review of the literature some studies were found to be of particular interest in informing this participatory action research project.

It was found that curriculum transformation to incorporate minorities is a worldwide debate that is being addressed at various levels, from advocates of all backgrounds. There are common lessons from the research on these struggles across the world about the power of hegemony and the multifaceted challenge of establishing and sustaining transformation. However, what is also evident is that the curriculum transformation that is sought often focuses on advocating for minority cultures within their own country, which differs from this research, which focuses on teaching about neighbouring minority cultures.

In examining the literature focusing on altering the established focus of instruction, it was found that no studies were specific to transforming the French-language, or for that matter, any language. By extending the review to include other curriculum areas or approaches, other studies of relevance surfaced. Five studies were of particular relevance as parallels could be drawn to the proposed research, with attention to disrupting the hegemonic nature of curriculum and how particular peoples were ‘invisible’ in the learning experiences provided. Although not within the context of French language acquisition, Kuokkanen (2003) sought to understand if teachers problematised the pedagogy and practice found in their schools in teaching issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples and cultures in a meaningful way. His study “Knowing the Indigenous Other Beyond the Arrogance of Conscience” indicates that the prevalence of cultural hegemony explained why some teachers might be reluctant to transform their teaching

approach, because challenging the episteme may be considered as inappropriate because of ‘assumed’ practice. However, no matter how important the epistemic and pedagogical changes and challenges involved might be, Kuokkanen (2003) believes that “there must be room for both new information and practices of disrupting hegemonic ways of seeing” (p.6). Kuokkanen (2003) also asserts that the decisions teachers make about the curriculum experience they provide may not be reflective of the curriculum students might be open to experiencing.

Additionally, a critical analysis by Watters (2007) of Aboriginal issues in the Ontario High School curriculum found that hegemonic practices in education were responsible for the marginalisation and lack of attention to Aboriginal people. Using a series of interviews, Watters (2007) aimed to gain a deeper understand of high school students’ opportunities to learn about Canada’s colonial legacy. Her work was guided by a critical emancipatory agenda and was rooted in Neo-Marxist approaches to critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory. She found that out of the students she interviewed, 36 percent did not remember learning about Aboriginal issues in high school. Overall, she concluded that the average Canadian knows very little about Canada’s colonial history and ongoing Aboriginal struggles as a result of the lack of opportunities provided by the current school system. Based upon student and community response, she calls for a more meaningful future as a result of a more purposeful curriculum experience that counters the hegemonic culture found in schools.

Similar stories can be found in Africa. A study conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo by Luamba (2011) denounced the Eurocentric focus in the school curriculum, in particular the English language classroom, and called for a more inclusive Afrocentric curriculum for English language learning in Congo’s classrooms. In advocating for the infusion of an Afrocentric curriculum, Luamba (2011) pointed out the commonly cited issues with the inadequacy of teacher training, textbooks and instructional materials for supporting a more Afrocentric approach. As an experienced English language teacher herself, she used a participatory action

research process to work with teachers to design a ten-week unit for ninth graders, providing teachers with a unit of work and variety of instructional strategies that would enable a better incorporation of the Afrocentric perspective and help promote an Afrocentric consciousness.

In England and Wales, curriculum as a ‘form of alchemy’ was debated by Armstrong (1998). Her research reviewed the impact of the introduction of the National curriculum in both countries and questioned its hegemonic role as it diminished the opportunities for the inclusion of minority perspectives. Armstrong (1998) argues that “curriculum in schools treats children as base metals which need transforming” (p.145) and that “teachers take on the role of an alchemist assistant” (p.146). Using a combination of classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students she denounced ‘the invasion of the state into schools and educational processes’ (p.158). She argues that the national curriculum in England and Wales placed less emphasis on the culture of minorities and was a hegemonic instrument responsible for the political struggle that both students and teachers find themselves standing next to.

In Australia similar debates can be found in research that plead for better inclusion of Australian Aboriginal peoples and cultures in school curriculum. It was only in 1967 that Aboriginal people in Australia were first accorded full citizenship rights, which included education rights (Burrige & Chodkiewick, 2012). Considering the recency of this legislative change, the later inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as a national priority in the most recent national curriculum is a success story in itself, when compared to the international debate and advocacy for counter hegemonic curriculum and the inclusion of indigenous peoples in curriculum. However, despite the social changes toward Indigenous peoples in Australia, the curriculum changes that have occurred have not guaranteed transformation in teacher practice. A study by Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) explained that the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island content in the Australian National Curriculum is tokenistic and not well delivered within the schools. Their study evaluated the ACARA curriculum documents and the content associated

with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their findings raised serious concerns about both the accuracy but also genuineness of the claims made in the curriculum documents intending to provide all students with opportunities' to develop a deep understanding of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They conclude their report by stating, "ACARA has failed to fulfil this promise" (p.11). Although acknowledging the benefits of the shift in perspective, their findings reported that teachers are often ill-resourced and unsupported by the curriculum approach advocated. As a result teachers are left to create their own teaching materials and learning experiences for all students. They acknowledge that although some teachers may well be teaching about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, they are a minority. Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) urge ACARA to establish a panel of Indigenous academics and a long term plan to support teachers in developing their own knowledge and teaching strategies for a more meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content across the curriculum (p. 13).

As demonstrated in this brief review, and previously discussed in section 2.3 of this chapter, disrupting the hegemony of the orthodoxy of teaching practice to encourage a broader inclusion of perspectives, requires a shift in focus, which is not easy for teachers to enact. The research summarised above has focused on curriculum transformation to emphasise a cultural focus, or 'shift', to give attention to peoples 'at home'. The emphasis of this research is aligned to this approach in that it is attempting to transform the curriculum to bring attention to a particular cultural focus proximal to the setting in which the teaching occurs. However, it differs in that its contextual focus is French-language and beyond, not within, Australia's borders. These inward and outward foci are both important in developing student international-mindedness.

## 2.7 Summary

Despite a past in which languages other than English were not prioritised and were accompanied by low student retention in language programs, Australia is now recognising the critical importance of language learning for the development of young global citizens. As stated by Skelton (2013), the language classroom is a significant environment that favours the expansion of international-mindedness. The way a discipline is taught constantly changes, and this change will vary depending on the country, type of education and institution (Chambers, 1996). Since 2010, the curriculum and language policy focus on Asia reveals a tension between Asian and European languages leading to a presumption that the study of one is of more 'value' than the other. This project acknowledges the opportunity that has recently been made explicit within the national French-language curriculum to teach about Australia's ESN, and the increased prominence that this brings to this part of the world within the curriculum.

Overall, this project is guided by a very specific purpose, which is teachers developing international-mindedness of their French-language learners but within an alternative and, more likely, never-considered context. This personal, institutional and political desire for international-mindedness drives this research, which seeks to develop such mindedness through the context of the ESN of Australia through the French-language classroom. It is important to note that although the development of intercultural understanding has certainly been addressed throughout the literature on language education, there is no evidence of research focusing on the development of international-mindedness in the language education context. However, one study of particular relevance to my research is the work done by Hardwood and Bailey (2012) and Singh and Qi (2013) who sought to provide broad conceptual frameworks for the purposes of monitoring, developing and evaluating international-mindedness in students. Although their framework was not tested in the context of French-language instruction, it provided some grounding in the approach to this study.

Additionally, a systematic investigation of the literature indicated that the French-language context has not been used explicitly to develop international-mindedness with attention to a context outside of France. There is also no evident research that has used the ESN context of the French-language nations as a context for developing international-mindedness. Therefore this study is novel because it is using a non-conventional context for the development of French-language acquisition and international-mindedness through a participatory action research approach.

In closing this chapter, the current attention and initiatives that are currently supporting the promotion of Asian languages in Australia can be replicated in emphasising other close geographical areas of focus within the curriculum. I believe that such a re-orientation from 'north' to the 'east' will contribute to the future positive relationships between Australia and its ESN, so that Australia can continue to be a leader and good neighbour in our region. However, transformative learning theory warns of the significant challenge associated with adjusting the paradigm of a well-established cultural hegemony.

The next chapter presents the methodology used in this research. The chapter starts by re-introducing the four research questions and the purpose of the study. Then it introduces the theoretical framework and the methodology. This is followed by a description of the context of the study, the selection of participants and methods used.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section describes and justifies the methodological aspects underpinning this research project. The methodology chapter is composed of twelve parts. First section 3.2 presents the purpose of the study. Then, section 3.3 introduces the theoretical framework followed by section 3.4 which describes the methodology used. This is followed by section 3.5 which offers a description of the context of the study and section 3.6 providing information on the selection of participants. Next is section 3.7, which focuses on the methods. This particular section of the chapter is divided into three parts correlating to the three phases of the study: reconnaissance, intervention and evaluation. Subsequently, section 3.8 describes the approach to data analysis, section 3.9 focuses on issues of probability and validity while in section 3.10 the research limitations are explained. Section 3.11 reviews ethical issues. The chapter ends with section 3.12 a proposed timeline and section 3.13 a summary.

Since 2014, all states in Australia have begun implementing a common standardised curriculum (ACARA, n.d). The Australian Curriculum determines the content expectations that all schools in Australia must provide to Australian students (ACARA, 2013). All of the specific curriculum areas, specifically, English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography as well as Languages, The Arts and Health and Physical Education, have been informed by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians which was officially adopted in December 2008 by the council of State and Territory education ministers (MCEETYA) (ACARA, 2013).

The aim of this research is to investigate the potential of the French-language classroom in using the 2014 Australian French-language Curriculum (Foundation to Year 10) to transform traditional teaching practices to offer a Pacific-centric focus, in order to impact on students'

knowledge towards their ESN and develop their international-mindedness. Specifically, the research will investigate the following questions through a three-phase process and culminating section:

1. What are the current understandings of Australia's East-side neighbours amongst high school students in North Queensland?
2. What are teachers' views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia's ESN as a context for French-language instructions?
3. Can explicit teaching about Australia's ESN in a French-language context contribute to knowledge about Australia's ESN and greater international-mindedness? If so, what are the features of such instruction that contribute to such mindfulness?
4. How can French-language teachers transform their current teaching practices to allow a focus on developing students' knowledge about Australia's ESN and international-mindedness?

If a significant goal of Australia's education system is to develop its young people to become global citizens through the teaching and learning of different cultures and beliefs, then it seems reasonable to explore how to maximise existing opportunities within the curriculum to foster young Australians' knowledge of all of their closest neighbours whilst developing their international-mindedness.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the methods used in the study and how these methods related to the four proposed research questions. Table 3.1 also lists the participants, means of analysis and potential limitations of each phase of the research, the latter of which will be described in the latter part of the chapter. Each of these methods and means of analysis will be described in

the sections that follow. This overview assists in framing the study's description to be elaborated on in the sections that follow.

Table 3.1

*An Overview of the Research*

Phase	Research Question	Methods	Participants	Limitations
Reconnaissance	1, 2	Focus Group 1	9 French teachers	Sample size
	1	Focus Group 2	5 year 8 students	Participant's age
	1	Questionnaires	25 year 8 students	Sample size
Intervention	3	Ongoing teacher and student conversations about design and implementation	4 French teachers	Sample size
		5 year 8 students	Sample size	
Evaluation	1, 2, 3, 4	Focus Group 3	4 French teachers	Sample size
	1, 3, 4	Focus Group 4	5 year 8 students	Sample size
	1, 3, 4	Questionnaires	25 year 8 students	Statistical limitation

Note: Students involved in the focus groups were the same in all phases of the research. Similarly, the four French teachers involved in the Intervention and Evaluation were also the same teachers working at Callistemon SHS at the time the research was conducted.

### **3.2 The purpose of this study**

This research project aimed to develop a transformative curriculum that sought to assist French teachers in teaching Australian students in a way that develops their knowledge of Australia's ESN and their international-mindedness while remaining responsive to the French-language learning requirements set by the Australian Curriculum.

The current Australian education priority of Australia's engagement with Asia mandates educators to provide students with opportunities to not only become proficient in an Asian language, but also to learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of Asia. The Australian curriculum also advises that students will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world. On the other hand, as Rose, Quanchi and Moore (2009) outlined:

[...] the teaching of Pacific content at primary and secondary school levels is eclipsed by studies of Asia, and where it can be found it is largely based on the interests of individual staff members who inject Pacific content based on their personal interest (p.143).

As a result, drawing upon a similar opportunity as provided by the engagement of Australian students with Asia, this research project aims to use the context of Australia's ESN as an authentic vehicle for teaching the French-language and knowledge of Australia's ESN, while developing student international-mindedness.

### **3.3 Theoretical framework**

Although, in general, research often consists of a systematic and seemingly objective investigation (Burns, 1997, McKenzie & Knipe, 2006), involving problem identification, methodological selection and implementation, data collection, analysis and interpretation, the uniqueness of each is influenced by the researcher's own beliefs and values. This subjectivity is typically evidenced in the underlying motivation and reason for the study, which is in turn evidenced in the underlying theoretical framework informing the study. It is important to identify and describe the theoretical framework underpinning the research because as Merten (2005) explains, it is the researcher's selected theoretical framework (also known as a paradigm) that will provide the 'special flavour'. Weaver and Olson (2006) define a paradigm as "patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished" (p.460). This means that it is through the theoretical framework that data will be analysed and findings established. Moreover, paradigms will influence the choice of methodology that the researcher will make (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

As a researcher, I define myself firstly as a teacher. As illustrated in Chapter One, I also identify strongly with my own European, Asian and Pasifika origins and see the potential of a new curriculum opportunity posited by the national curriculum. My identity as a researcher impacts greatly on my choice of paradigm and the way I will conduct this research project. I believe that education is about making a positive change to students so that our society can continue to prosper in a world where people do not just have to live next to each other but also learn to live together. The main goal of this research project was to increase students' knowledge of Australia ESN and, through this context, promote the development of their international-mindedness. Because of this, the main paradigm informing my research project is the transformative paradigm. Mertens (2005) pointed out that the transformative paradigm

commenced in the 1980s as issues of social justice and minority groups became popular research topics. Creswell (2003, p.9) explains that transformative researchers “[...] believe that inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda” and “[...] change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life”. In 2014, the political agenda shifted strongly towards developing a stronger partnership with Asia for economic reasons. This political orientation has had a strong influence on the education agenda and the intention of the more recently released national Australian Curriculum. The Australian curriculum expects students to become Asia-literate and learn to understand and appreciate the cultures and beliefs of people in Asia (Australian Government, 2012). This strong focus on developing language and intercultural competencies emphasises the northern neighbours of Australia, with only some space for the teaching and learning of Australia’s ESN. The choice to use the East-side context has become a possibility because it is explicitly stated in the Australian French-language Curriculum.

Furthermore, this research project draws on a critical theoretical lens to analyse the dominant ideological and cultural factors that promote a curricular hegemony (Apple, 1979). It recognises education as inherently political, and contends that the transmission of France as the dominant cultural and language site in the French language curriculum overlooks the ESN as a source of French culture and language for young Australians. In this way the study was informed by the four major orientations of critical theory: critical, changed-orientated, interventionist and political.

Although critical theory has evolved from many sources, Bronner (2011) explains that critical theory is not just about rejecting ideas that go against social justice, human rights and to some extent the construction of a utopian world. Critical theory is also about being skeptical about proposed reforms while at the same time advocating for alternative ideas that will transform the way things are being seen or done in everyday life by everyday individuals (Bronner, 2011). In

education, critical theory is often associated with the work of Giroux, Kincheloe and Simon and underpins critical pedagogy approaches (Willinsky, 2007). This research represents an application of the critical pedagogy approach because it seeks to disrupt a group of teachers and students' intentional and unconscious subscriptions to an ideological hegemony in the teaching and learning of French (Giroux, 1981; Kincheloe, 2004). This research project recognises both the possibilities and political implications that influence schooling. For educational alternatives to have any real impact, educators must move beyond reproductive approaches driven by cultural hegemony (Hudson, 1999).

This research is not just about critiquing, but also about the development and implementation of a response that is counter-hegemonic and moves towards a transformation of dominant practice. Prior to the Australian curriculum, ESN had minimal to no mention in French curricula. While the new Australian curriculum includes a cross-curricular priority on Asia, it pays little attention to the ESN outside of its discretionary inclusion within the French language. Although I support some of the philosophical ideas leading to the current focus on Asia in schools (that is, connecting with our regional neighbours for peaceful growth and a more democratic future with the Eastern world), it is the lack of attention given to the other close neighbours of Australia that is my research focus. The study will investigate the possibility of the development and implementation of a curriculum that aims to influence knowledge, attitude and perception of young Australians toward their ESN and develop their international-mindedness.

In Chapter Two I provided a historical overview of language curriculum development in Australia and identified through this analysis that Australia's ESN should also be prioritised within the French-language curriculum. This would support positive social transformation and sustainable futures between the future generations of Australia and all of its closest neighbours,

no matter what economic prospects they can bring to Australia. Drawing from research grounded in participatory action, my effort to transform the curriculum would be done in partnership with other language educators in identified schools from both Australia and countries located on the eastern coast of Australia. Ensuring that diverse voices were included in the development of such curriculum aligns with the transformative paradigm within which this study is situated. The main motivation and expectation of this research is to address a situational societal and educational need. That is, the east-side neighbours are not sufficiently visible from the Australian curriculum at a time when a strong push for global citizenship is being led by the government and other educational authorities.

### **3.4 Methodology**

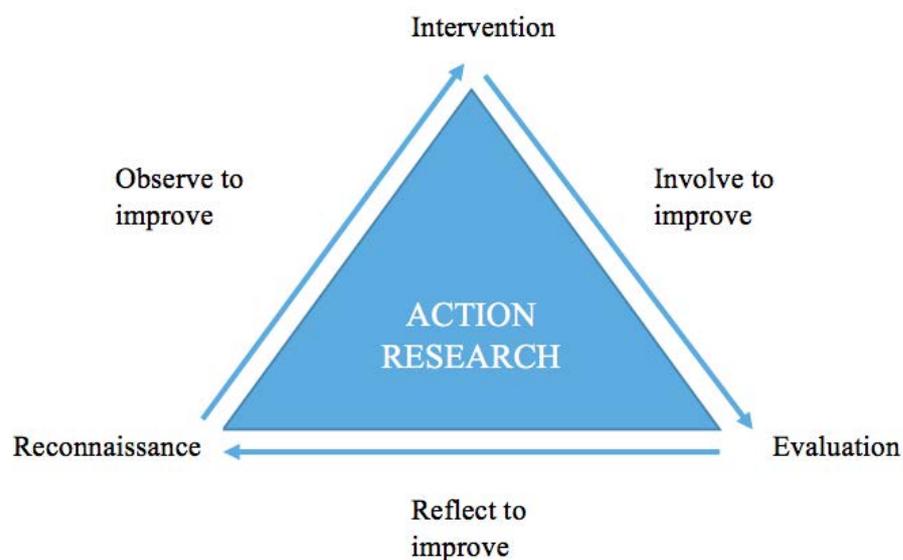
Because I sought to develop a transformative curriculum experience for both teachers and students, it was critical that I worked with other language instructors similarly interested in exploring the potential of using the east-side French-speaking nations as a context for French-language instruction. As stated by Pinar in Trifonas (2000):

Curriculum, understood as *currere* is a form of social psychoanalysis, a complicated conversation with myself and others, the point of which is movement: autobiographic, political, cultural [...]. It is clear that autobiography is not just about oneself but also about the Other (p.30).

As the focus of this inquiry is a curriculum intervention in which the researcher is a participant, the study will take a participatory action research approach (PAR). The fundamental purpose of PAR involves working with others to explore social realities (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014). PAR brings together researchers and insiders who become partners as together they work on a common problem by collecting data, analysing, reflecting and engaging in “transformational action to improve things” (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014, p.12).

In the 1950s Kurt Lewin led the development of action research as a methodology; however, it is Stephen Corey who adopted this methodology to explore educational issues (Koshy et al, 2010). According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), lead Australian researchers in Action Research:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. In education, action research has been employed in school-based curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programmes and systems planning and policy development. (p.162)



*Figure 3.1.* Cycle of action research (adapted from Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

Based upon my interpretation of the Carr and Kemmis (1986) definition of action research, the proposed model in Figure 3.1 above illustrates the methodological sequence applied in this

study. Carr and Kemmis (1986) explained that there are two essential aims for all action research, the first one is to improve and the second is to involve.

Action research and participant action research share many similarities (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). However, PAR encourages creative surprises through its inclusion of participants with their first-hand knowledge, and the integration of ideas across disciplines. As Bell, Cheney, Hoots, Kohrman, Schubert, Stidham, & Traynor, (2004) argue, the advances of PAR have the capacity to not only develop theoretical understanding, but also impact on the very way organisations operate. Given the capacity-building intention of the collaborative work, and the transformational intention of the associated curriculum, PAR provided an authentic fit for the purpose of this research.

This research project aims to improve students' understanding of our ESN by changing how the teacher participants represent the French language and culture in their pedagogy. It seeks to transform teachers' thinking about their actions in adjusting practice to an alternative context for delivering French-language instruction. For this to happen through an action research approach, a range of parties were involved in the design of the proposed curriculum. It was a collaborative project involving French-language teachers, as these people are best placed to develop an engaging and authentic curriculum that could transform the current situation. In addition, according to Dewar (1961):

An essential aspect of a good school and one of its most rewarding enterprises is the involvement of teachers in curriculum planning. When a person becomes involved in planning the curriculum for the students he is to teach, he has a personal stake in the matter and usually does a better job of teaching (p.5).

Therefore, the involvement of French-language teachers in the development of the transformative curriculum was a deliberate strategy to empower these teachers to embed this

approach to teaching French within their practice, and ultimately re-orient their attention for using the context of the ESN to develop students' French-language capabilities and international-mindedness.

In line with Lewin's cycles of action research inquiry, the project was divided into three parts: reconnaissance, intervention and evaluation, each phase corresponding to particular research questions.

Questions 1 and 2 were explored in the reconnaissance stage. The questions were: What are the current understandings of Australia's ESN amongst high school students in North Queensland? And, what are teachers' views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia's ESN as a context for French-language instructions?

Question 3 was explored in the intervention stage. The question was: Can explicit teaching about Australia's ESN in a French-language context contribute to knowledge about Australia's ESN and greater international-mindedness? If so, what are the features of such instruction that contribute to such mindfulness?

Question 4 was explored in the evaluation stage. It reviewed the effectiveness of the transformative curriculum and based upon this evaluation provides suggestions on how French-language teachers can best transform their current teaching practices to allow for a focus on developing students' knowledge about Australia's ESN and international-mindedness.

To summarise, the first step of this action research involved an initial reconnaissance to better understand the current situation, which then informed the intervention. During the intervention the researcher worked with participants in engaging in the subsequent cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Finally, the effectiveness of the change orientated curriculum in increasing students' knowledge of the ESN and international-mindedness was evaluated.

### **3.5 Context of the study**

This participatory action research project was conducted in secondary schools in an urban centre in regional Queensland. Although the project involved teachers from several schools, data was collected at two schools sites only. The first school, which I refer to in this study as Callistemon SHS, is one of the largest public secondary schools in Queensland, Australia. It is in this school that most of the research was conducted. The school is a co-educational school that first opened in 1979.

In 2012, Callistemon SHS had a student population of over 2200 and well in excess of 100 teachers. The school community is diverse, and includes a large population of approximately 450 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, many students are from low socio-economic backgrounds. The school is well known for its successful sports excellence program and its dynamic involvement with the Arts. In 2010, this school began to build a reputation with its active involvement with International Education through its participation in the Education Queensland International Program. The late Executive Principal of this school explained in a 2010 (Asia Education Foundation conference video recording):

Our school is quite a complex environment; a lot of these students do not bring lots of cultural capital and a lot of knowledge about international affairs or culture, so we took it upon ourselves to let them see the world outside – and as part of an all school program, we decided to make our school more internationally-minded.

The school officially became an accredited member of the Council of International Schools in 2011. It currently offers two languages other than English: French & Japanese, and students can study both languages if they so choose.

The second school, Tiaré SHS, is an independent co-educational school in regional Queensland. It offers French and Japanese as a second language to its students. This school was only used to test the instruments developed for this research project.

These two schools were selected in part because of their demonstrated willingness to engage in educational research, but also because the schools' epistemic beliefs fit with the focus of the study. Both schools provided me access to French classes and French teachers with a range of experiences, along with a diverse student population, and aspired to provide a program that promoted students' international-mindedness. In addition, I had previously worked with both schools, and had a positive working relationship with the teachers and administration.

### **3.6 Participants and Their Selection**

As mentioned previously in Table 3.1, this study is composed of three distinct phases. The first one is the reconnaissance, the second is the intervention and the third is the evaluation. During each phase, data were collected through two main means: questionnaires and small focus groups. Across this research, I collaborated with nine French teachers and one class of Year Eight students from Callistemon SHS in North Queensland. In addition, I worked with one class of Year Eight students at Tiaré High School to pilot test the two questionnaires used in the research.

In selecting the teacher participants for the reconnaissance, I contacted French teachers to identify their interest in the project, through the established North Queensland French Language Teachers' Network (NQFLTN). It was necessary to identify practising French teacher participants because, as Khresheh and Barclay (2007, p.447) pointed out, 'research aimed at practical systems change cannot generate knowledge or improvement without engaging with practitioners'. Fortunately, the support for the project was strong and the researcher began working in collaboration with nine teachers from five schools; four of whom were from

Callistemon SHS. These five schools represented a majority, over 60%, of the schools who offered French in the North Queensland region at that time. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, all participants were informed through a consent form at the outset that participation was strictly voluntary. Although all participating teachers were working in Australia, four were migrants from other countries, specifically France, Mauritius, Canada and New Caledonia. While all nine teachers participated in the reconnaissance phase, only four teachers who worked at Callistemon SHS participated in the intervention with their Year 8 French Class. These four teachers also participated in the evaluation, while one Year 8 French class was selected to gather student data for the reconnaissance and evaluation. As Gay and Airasian (2003) explained, it is the interactions between students and teachers in a single classroom that are often the focus of action research.

In selecting the student participants, I first contacted the principals of the schools involved and received written permission to conduct research on site at the two schools. The Callistemon principal recommended the class selected for the reconnaissance and evaluation after she became familiar with the requirements of the study. The recruitment process required that the parents/guardians of all students read and sign a student consent form. All 25 students in the class provided consent for participation in the curriculum intervention; only five students were required to provide consent for participation in the small focus groups. If consent for these focus groups was refused, the researcher returned to the list of students provided by the classroom teacher, and invited the next student until five volunteers had accepted the invitation to join the focus group. Once the letters were signed and parental permission given to start the research, I worked closely with this class and the four classroom teachers from Callistemon SHS.

This research project used a small focus group, consisting of 5 students from Year 8, to strengthen the capacity of the participants to objectify their own experiences (MacDonald, 2012). Qualitative research allows for elucidation of phenomena from the frame of reference of

the participant (Mason, 2006). Because the intent of this thesis was to understand how teacher and student participants respond to using the Pacific Islands as a French language context, the small number of individuals created a highly supportive environment from which data was drawn. As explained by MacDonald 2012, a small group size ‘facilitates an environment for optimal communication amongst all participants, thus increasing the potential for useful data to be generated.’ In this case the focus group sort to ensure that student voice was meaningfully captured as part of the curriculum transformation process, and this was enhanced by the small size of the student focus group.

The inclusion of the class of 25 to trial the implementation of the transformative curriculum allowed the inclusion of some statistical analysis of quantitative data. However this study did not intend to be an experimental study. It was a participatory action research, which aimed to improve the practice of those involved in the study. Its primary purpose was neither to measure the impact nor generalise the findings widely. Although this aspect of PAR is often subject to criticism, MacDonald (1991) argues that these criticisms are misguided. PAR focuses on answering questions within a particular context, with hard data and generalisation not being major features (Gay and Airasian, 2003; Young 2006).

As previously described, student participants were also recruited from a different school organisation, Tiaré High School, to test the instruments prior to using it at Callistemon SHS. The recruitment process in this school was identical to that used in Callistemon SHS.

### **3.7 Methods**

According to Walliman (2010), research methods are the techniques that one will use to do research. He explains that research methods are the tools of the trade that provide the researcher with the means of collecting, sorting and analysing information so that conclusions can be drawn and the frontiers of knowledge advanced. He also emphasises the importance of selecting

the right methods for a particular research project as the methods used will influence the validity of the new knowledge claimed as result of the research.

Information sheets providing an introduction to the project and invitation forms to participate in this research project can both be found in Appendix A. In the reconnaissance and evaluation phase, I collected primary data through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. During the intervention phase, I collected data through interviews and small focus groups only. Therefore, the data was collected through measurement (for example, students answering questions in the questionnaire to find out what they already knew of the ESN of Australia) and interrogation (for example, asking students during the small focus groups more specific questions about what they knew about the ESN). I gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. This combination of data gathering is referred in the literature as a mixed method approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Walliman, 2010). According to Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003). “The emergence of mixed methods as a third methodological movement in the social and behavioural sciences began during the 1980’s.” (p. 697). They also explain that some, such as De Lisle (2011), Morse (2005) and Niglas (2009) describe the mixed method approach as a possible sign of masquerading a poor quality research project and/or a novice researcher not showing a deep understanding of either method. While this criticism of the mixed method approach exists, Bulsara (n.d), Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Walliman (2010) alternatively explain that a mixed method approach can enhance and validate one’s research, and in the context of this study it was identified, as will be explained, there was significant value in both the quantitative and qualitative data that could be collected.

In addition, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Walliman (2010) explained that research in the field of humanities and social sciences often combines the examination of both qualitative and quantitative data and that what is important is the way in which this data is analysed. For

example, they argued that qualitative data might be more challenging to organise and analyse in comparison with quantitative data. When compiling quantitative data, the researcher generally organises the results in the format of a table or graph. However, when organising the data resulting from the qualitative method, the researcher follows the steps proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) which first involves some data reduction, then data display and finally conclusion drawing and/or verification. In all, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data was seen to be a prudent and effective means to understand a phenomenon- that is, the experiences and effects from both a teacher and student perspective of the enactment of a transformed learning experience in the context of the French-language learning classroom.

In the next section each of the three data collection phases will be described.

### **3.7.1 Phase 1: Reconnaissance**

The reconnaissance stage was the first phase of this action research project. The data collected from this phase aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current understandings of Australia's East-side neighbours amongst high school students in North Queensland?
2. What are teachers' views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia's ESN as a context for French-language instructions?

These questions were explored through small focus groups with teachers and students. As explained by Liamputtong (2011), focus groups allow the researcher to listen to other voices and points of view on the particular research topic. In addition, Graiser (2008) explained that the interaction among the participants provides valuable contributions to the research questions. Cook & Crang (1995) in Liamputtong (2011) also add that a focus group is more than a means

of collecting data from individuals, it provides a space for negotiation of meaning and debates. In summary, focus groups were an ideal way to begin the exploration of this topic, and helped shape to informing the intervention stage of the research.

The teacher focus groups were conducted over three one-hour meetings with a total of nine different teachers at the two participant schools. These took place one term prior to the implementation of the curriculum intervention at Callistemon SHS. The student focus groups took place over two meetings, one four weeks prior to the implementation of the curriculum intervention and, the second, one week prior. In both focus groups I asked a series of questions and encouraged the five participants to converse freely.

These focus groups also offered a great opportunity to “get closer to the data” by listening to teachers and students in order to develop an understanding of their perceptions of the research topic (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006, p.126). In addition, Liamputtong (2011) argues that research needs tend to be met through the involvement of both individuals and groups:

Focus group interviews allow group dynamics and help the researcher capture shared lived experiences, accessing elements that other methods may not be able to reach. This method permits researchers to uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method (Liamputtong, 2011, p.3).

Two quantitative instruments were also used in this phase of the research project. The first surveyed students about their knowledge of Australia’s ESN while the second solely focused on the international-mindedness of students (Appendix B). Both the first and second instruments were developed incorporating findings from the work of Hett (1993), Harwood & Bailey (2012), Boulard (2013), Hill (2013) as well as Singh and Qi (2013). These instruments were administered to allow later evaluation after the intervention of the effect of the aspired

transformative curriculum on student knowledge about the ESN and their international-mindedness.

The next two sections describe the instruments used during Phase 1 Reconnaissance of the research.

### **3.7.1.1 The East-side neighbours instrument**

The first instrument used in Phase 1: Reconnaissance, was inspired by a study conducted by The Assessment Research Centre at the University of Melbourne in 1999, which was commissioned to conduct a survey of Australian students' knowledge and understanding of Asia. In this survey, researchers used questionnaires that included multiple-choice items. In the report of this survey, entitled *Australian Students' Knowledge and Understanding of Asia*, Griffin, Woods, Dulhunty and Coates (2002) explained that the decision to use such an assessment method was to allow objectivity of marking, and also because of the familiarity of this type of task amongst students. In general, they proposed four possible response options for students to choose from, consisting of one correct and three incorrect answers. In this research project, similar questions and assessment techniques as the one described above were used. Griffin et al (2002) proposed that one of the disadvantages of using such methods was that students who did not know the answer still had a 25% chance of selecting the correct answer. To overcome this criticism, students were provided with clear verbal instructions at the start of completing the instrument to write '*I don't know*' when they did not know the answer. This provided a clearer indication of where students had a known gap in their knowledge.

**Instrument 1 ESN: *What do Australians students know about Australia's East-side neighbours?***

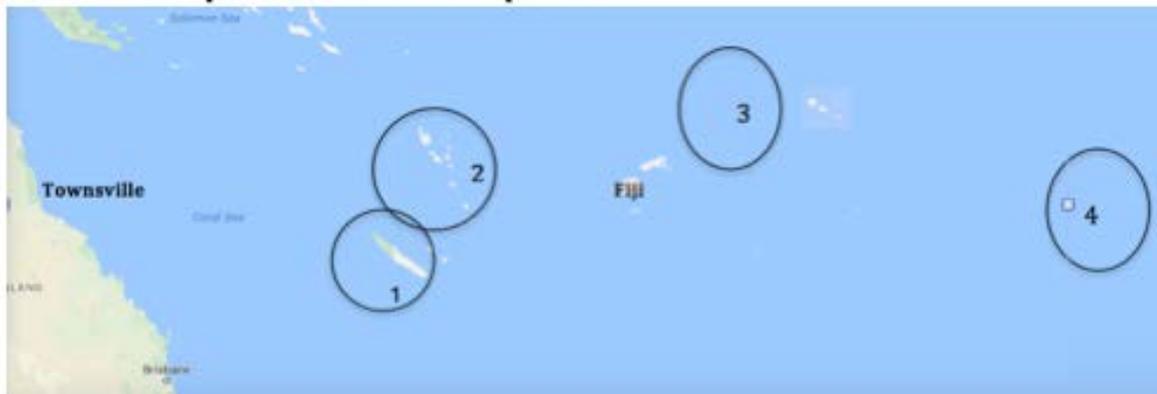
**Question 1**

**If you were to go on a French trip with your school where would you expect to go?**

- New-Caledonia
- Canada
- France
- Tahiti

**Question 2**

**LOOK at the map and then answer the questions**



**What is the name of country 1?**

- New-Zealand
- Philippines
- New-Caledonia
- I don't know

**What is the name country 3?**

- Wallis & Futuna
- Hawaii
- Solomon Islands
- I don't know

**What is the name of country 2?**

- New-Caledonia
- Vanuatu
- Norfolk Island
- I don't know

**What is the name of country 4?**

- Wallis & Futuna
- New Caledonia
- French Polynesia
- I don't know

*Figure 3.2.* Sample of questions of instrument 1 “East-side neighbours Instrument”.

**3.7.1.2 The international-mindedness instrument**

The second instrument in Phase 1: Reconnaissance was used to measure students’ international-mindedness. It is important to remember that the literature clearly states that there is a need to develop purposeful statistical instruments to measure international-mindedness. The instrument used in this study was developed using the results of a range of previous studies on

international-mindedness. The instrument is a questionnaire made up of four parts, each guided by a specific context and function.

The IM questions were drawn from the ten attributes of an internationally-minded student raised in the IB ethos. However, only five of these attributes were selected to restrict the instrument to an appropriate length for the age group of students and the areas selected by the participating teachers to investigate that would be addressed in the intervention curriculum. As international-mindedness is a lifelong skill and continues to develop over time and through experiences, it would not be expected that teachers would cover all ten attributes in a single unit of work. In this questionnaire, the following student attributes were used: knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring and risk-takers. These were the attributes that aligned most closely with the new curriculum that teachers used with their students during the intervention. The decision of selecting these five attributes was made after discussions between the researcher and the feedback panel in regards to the curriculum content. Although discussion about incorporating all ten attributes took place, it was concluded that including all ten would have been challenging as it would have impacted significantly on the size and complexity of the survey taken by the participants, most of whom were children aged between 12 and 13 years old.

Next was the inclusion of statements that engaged students on Intellectual, Emotional and Behavioural levels. This inclusion aimed to the definition of international-mindedness which incorporates the cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal domains (Singh & Qi, 2013).

Finally, this questionnaire evaluated students' international-mindedness across four different levels following the work of Harwood and Bailey (2012) who initially discussed the idea of assessing international-mindedness across four different levels of participation: me, my school, my country and my world.

When designing the instruments, the researcher was mindful of the advice offered in the literature on research instrument construction. The literature, including Switzer, Wisniewski, Belle, Dew and Schultz (1999), emphasised the importance of considering participants characteristics when developing an instrument. Although the questionnaire is composed of 73 items, in order to reduce the completion time for most items, students were only required to select an answer between: strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. Each item was written using vocabulary that would be familiar to the register of a Year Eight student, and statements were kept brief to ensure no emotional distress would be experienced by students with low-literacy English levels. A negative item, that is those statements that have a negative voice, were avoided, as these are often misinterpreted by the respondent (Gay, 1996). In addition, the survey was made available online, as suggested by a literature review which indicated that using computers to collect data was a highly efficient means of collecting information (Wharton, Hampl, Hall and Winham, 2003). This was then discussed with the participating school-teachers and administrators to ensure that all students would be able to have access to a computer to complete the survey.

In order to determine their level of international-mindedness, students stated their agreement to the questions proposed on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. If they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, then it was implied that this represented a negatively their level of international-mindedness with the particular attribute. The questionnaire to assess students' international-mindedness was initially pilot-tested at one participating school with a group of 16 students. Using their school laptop, each student completed the survey online. It took students about fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire.

### **3.7.1.3 Validity of instruments**

Validity in PAR relates to the transferability of the research outcomes from one context to another in a way that demonstrates that the research does what it claims to do, and the results are relevant and to be believed (Titchen, 1995). As PAR involves the researchers identifying and solving a problem in a way that they determine to be most effective, the key challenge in ensuring validity lies in mitigating the influence of the researchers' own perspectives on the reality of others. It is the collaborative nature of PAR that best answers this challenge. As Titchen (1995) concluded, validation processes can be built into the collaboration involved in PAR. McTaggart (2007) argued that PAR is not valid unless it is defensible, has educational value, has political efficacy and moral appropriateness. These tests are more powerful when conducted from multiple perspectives beyond the sole voice of the researcher.

To ensure face and content validity of both the instruments used in Phase 1: Reconnaissance, the instruments were pilot-tested, and the researcher sought panel feedback about the content and clarity of the questionnaire

The ESN and IM instruments were pilot-tested with a group of 16 student participants at Tiaré High School to ensure its quality and receive additional feedback prior to using them with a larger group of participants. There were nine girls and seven boys who participated in the field-testing. All students were born in Australia with the exception of two. One was born in Papua New Guinea and the other in Germany. However, six students had parents who were born outside of Australia and four were speaking a language other than English at home. The students completed the instrument in approximately 20 minutes and, based upon the researcher's direct observation, did not appear to have any major difficulties completing the questionnaire. The main comments from the students were that the survey was "a bit long and sounded repetitive" – "questions looked similar". These comments were seen as confirmation

of the need to ensure that the instruments were focused on particular IM elements that were likely to overlap or maybe even correspond, something not unexpected when the instrument used has not been statistically validated.

In addition, feedback was also received on both instruments from a panel composed of Humanities and Social Science teachers, Year Eight students, school administrators in charge of the international department and a teaching and learning instrument developer.

Both of these instruments were adapted as a result of the pilot-testing at Tiaré High School and panel feedback. One change consisted of reducing the length of the questionnaires to facilitate its completion by students in a time-appropriate manner, especially those who may have literacy difficulties. Some questions were also found by students to be too repetitive. It was also advised that questions should be made low-inference, as opposed to high inference. The adapted post-field-testing version of the instrument is included in Appendix B.

### **3.7.2 Phase 2: Intervention**

The results collected from the small focus groups with teachers and students in Phase 1: Reconnaissance informed the second part of the study, Phase 2: Intervention.

First, the intervention involved a series of meetings during which the design of a transformative Year 8 French-language curriculum was discussed. At the core of those discussions with teachers was the selection of topics and learning activities that aligned with the curriculum expectation and also ensured multiple opportunities for students to develop knowledge of Australia's ESN and become more internationally-minded. All topics also had to be appealing to the target audience, children aged 12 to 13 years who were living in tropical North Queensland.

Throughout this intervention, following a transformative learning methodology essentially framed around the work of Mezirow, the study involved working with and listening to teacher participants from the North Queensland French Teachers' Network and one year 8 class from Callistemon SHS. The curriculum design was the result of planning conducted by the main researcher but also three French-language pre-service teachers, six French-language teachers (from the public and Catholic sectors) in Townsville and Cairns, who were members of the North Queensland Language Teachers' Network and some valuable input from four teachers from Australia's ESN (New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia). Recognising my own knowledge limitations of some of the ESN and with the goal of expanding and building on my learning network, I reached out to the expertise of local teachers in these countries to assist in providing myself and participating teachers with cultural topics that would be authentic, relevant and, as well, engaging for teenage students in North Queensland. This engagement with teachers from the ESN was important in order to alter the curriculum so that it reflected the opinions, cultural contexts and personal concerns of the Pacific Island people (Quanchi, 1996). Creating a list of topics without a voice from the Pacific would have lacked authenticity.

In addition, it was important that the aspired transformative curriculum which was part of a participatory action research was the product of the collaborative work of a team of engaged educators, as opposed to only one researcher. This alignment of the teachers' goals and ambitions for the unit was an important step in promoting student achievement (Marzano & Toth, 2013). It is also essential to remember the theoretical framework of this study, which is to transform the current situation, and that for transformation to happen, critical collaboration involving all parties is necessary (Alnefaie, 2016; Ayers, Quinn, Stovall & Ocheiern, 2008; Cohn and Kottkamp, 1993; Fullan, 2008; McKernan, 1991; Voogt, Laferriere, Breuleux, Itow, Hickey, & McKenney, 2015).

Collaborating beyond the classroom walls/school gates leads to a global learning network that empowers teachers, students and the learning culture. As educators in a global society it is vital that we access and build our personal learning networks. Explore successful strategies used to build and collaborate through personal global networks. Consider opportunities to apply this to the school environment and examine the potential to transform curriculum and the related teaching and learning opportunities (Foote, 2013, p. i).

Kotter (1995) supports these personal learning networks being of high importance in change management, and frames them as a guiding coalition. In this research, it was the collaborators who led the change.

As this research project is based around teachers' collaborative engagement in action research, it is important that the curriculum planning be highly informed by educational theories. Therefore, the planning and delivery of the aspired transformative curriculum were guided by the work of leading educational researcher Robert Marzano, and his publication *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), the pedagogical framework for planning and instructional delivery at Callistemon SHS. Using the work of Marzano ensured that a quality research-based and context-appropriate curriculum development process was employed to help ensure optimal results in students' achievement. The learning experiences were developed and sequenced using a backward mapping approach, in which the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2011), informed the collaborative approach as teachers identified desired results and evidence of success. These informed the development of clear learning goals, something that was identified as a priority by both the teachers and educational research (Suskie, 2009). The material developed is the equivalent of one term's (ten weeks) worth of learning activities and assessment for the students and their teacher to engage in as a curriculum experience. This curriculum experience, ultimately, aimed to incorporate learning experiences that ensured that the traditionally

important four macro-skills (Akran & Malik, 2010), cultural skills and international-mindedness were developed in alignment with the aspired curriculum intervention.

Once the aspired transformative curriculum entitled “Baguettes in Paradise” had been collaboratively designed, it was used as part of the intervention at Callistemon SHS. The change-orientated curriculum was used by all French teachers in all year 8 French classes at the beginning of Term 3 in 2014 at Callistemon SHS. However, quantitative data was only gathered from one year 8 class. Fortnightly meetings and discussions with the language teachers took place during the intervention stage, as I wanted to gather their stories around this process as it unfolded. These stories throughout the intervention phase provided a qualitative view of their thinking, giving indication of their tensions experienced as they enacted potential change in practice, and to document, through their commentary, the challenges and the successes that they were experiencing. A review of the aspired transformative curriculum development used in this research will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

### **3.7.3 Phase 3: Evaluation**

Finally, phase 3 Evaluation was the last part of the project. Barlett & Piggot-Irvine (2008) explained that any evaluation of action research needs to use appropriate methods and criteria, such as authenticity, relevance, involvement, methodological rigour, practical improvement, and transformation of consciousness; that is, understanding, learning, development, and personal growth.

Post-curriculum data was collected as part of Phase 3: Evaluation. Students were invited to re-take both the first and second developed instruments described in section 3.7.11 and section 3.7.1.2. The set of data from the post curriculum exposure was analysed using similar methods to the pre-curriculum exposure.

Teachers and students were also interviewed during Phase 3 and asked to comment on the intervention phase. This data was crucial in understanding the impact and the possibility of transforming the curriculum further to aim for a stronger ESN focus in the French-language classroom in Australia.

Finally, follow-up meetings with teachers and student from Callistemon SHS were also conducted one year post intervention and included as part of the evaluation phase.

In all, these processes served to address the assertions made by Kemmis (1980) who asserts that curriculum development “evaluation is the process of marshalling information and arguments which enable interested individuals and groups to participate in the critical debate about a specific program” (p. 3). In response to this claim, Chapter 6 of this dissertation offers a critical analysis of the influence of “Baguettes in Paradise” using the data collected from the pre-and post-curriculum data collection from students and teachers and during intervention data collection from teachers. This chapter ends with a series of justifications for actions but also of proposed recommendations to improve future educational outcomes when implementing ESN in the French-language classroom. It is important to note that any school change, including curriculum change, is complex and often unstable which may lead the aspired change to plateau or disappear after a short period of time (Thomson, 2010). Thomson (2008, 2010) also explained that changes in school are notoriously hard to sustain despite any evidence of positive learning outcomes. Conscious of these challenges, a series of final recommendations have been outlined in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

After the collection of the data for Phase 1: Reconnaissance, an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data was conducted. In order to obtain usable and useful information, both electronic and paper questionnaires were used and later manually transferred onto a spreadsheet. The

discussions that happened during the small focus groups were transcribed. Although the discussions were recorded, Walliman (2010) recommended that because of the qualitative nature of the data collected through discussions with participants, it is important to write short summaries of relevant parts as soon as possible following the small group focus as if left too long, important aspects of the conversation could be lost. When engaging in this process, the National Foundation for Educational Research (2013) recommends that researchers aim for this type of data transfer to be checked to ensure full accuracy of results. Therefore, teacher participants, within three weeks of the data collection, read through the transcripts of the interviews helping to ensure the accuracy of the recorded statements. Once this step was done, using inductive analysis, the researcher looked for emerging themes and patterns found in teacher and student responses gathered through small focus group conversations, and then classified and analysed them accordingly. According to Thomas (2003):

The purposes for using an inductive approach are to (1) to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format; (2) to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and (3) to develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data. The inductive approach reflects frequently reported patterns used in qualitative data analysis (p.1).

The two instruments used to collect data, the ESN instrument and the international-mindedness instrument mainly provided data in the form of numbers. The ESN instrument data are presented as graphs showing the change in the mean score of students between the pre and post intervention assessment. This shows the change in whole test score as well as the changes in the score for each individual question.

The results of the international-mindedness instrument required students' responses to the survey to be quantified by the awarding of a score to each response, with 2 points allocated when a student selected 'Strongly Agree', 1 point when the student selected 'Agree', 0 points for 'Neither Agree nor Disagree', -1 point for 'Disagree' and -2 points for 'Strongly Disagree'. In all questions a response of strongly agree was indicative of a more internationally-minded viewpoint. This allowed the researcher to tabulate the change in the mean score, or international-mindedness, between the pre-and post-intervention assessment.

A statistical analysis was conducted to provide an assessment of the validity of the results from the international-mindedness-instrument and was tested using a paired single tailed T-test.

*Statistics* are mathematical formulae that are used to organize and interpret the information that is collected through variables. There are 2 general categories of statistics, descriptive and inferential. *Descriptive* statistics are used to describe the collected information, such as the range of values, their average, and the most common category. Knowledge gained from descriptive statistics helps investigators learn more about the study sample. *Inferential* statistics are used to make comparisons and draw conclusions from the study data. Knowledge gained from inferential statistics allows investigators to make inferences and generalize beyond their study sample to other groups (Simpson, 2015, p.313).

This test calculated a *p* value, which indicated the statistical reliability of the increase. Finally, an effect size was also calculated.

Effect size (ES) is a name given to a family of indices that measure the magnitude of a treatment effect. Unlike significance tests, these indices are independent of sample size. ES measures are the common currency of meta-analysis studies that summarize the findings from a specific area of research (Becker, 2000, p.1).

This, along with the size of the increase of the mean, provided an additional indication of the size of any effect of the transformative curriculum on student international-mindedness.

### **3.9 Issues of probability & validity**

When conducting research, the outcomes are often unknown or at best uncertain. The probability of getting the expected results is not as neat as throwing a dice and getting a random number between 1 and 6. There are complex issues of probability and validity that accompany most research projects. According to Koshy, Koshy & Waterman (2011), one of the main challenges in regards to issues of probability and validity in action research, is that findings are not generalizable because the context in which the research is conducted may be too specific. However, they explained that the ideas and results that emerged from the action research project may be used in different studies. Parkin (2009) supports this idea as he explained that action research is about bringing a positive change, a transformation in a specific situation, meaning that the findings will be difficult to generalise and apply in different contexts. This project will not allow for generalisation but will rather be a snapshot of the current situation in a particular context.

To increase the validity of the research and the data collected, participants have been drawn from one school, all of whom are in the same class and exposed to the teaching of one language teacher. The questionnaire that assesses the international-mindedness of students toward their ESN was distributed to students pre- and post-exposure to the new curriculum. As described in section 3.7.1.3, the questionnaires were also field-tested at Tiaré High School and reviewed by a selected panel of teachers and academics.

According to Koshy (2005, p.87), questionnaires can be advantageous because they can “provide you with a simple means to collect information on student attitudes before any intervention takes place”. He also argued that once the questionnaires are completed, they assist

the researcher in two ways. First, completed questionnaires can provide baseline data on student attitudes before the intervention begins. Secondly, an analysis of the questionnaires may help to shape the nature of the questions you may want to ask during any personal interviews or observations you may wish to conduct (p .87).

However, Koshy (2005) also cautions using questionnaires to collect data from a large group of people outside of the researcher's institution, as the returns and response rate may not be large enough to certify a valid research outcome. Another issue raised by Koshy in regards to probability and validity issues of using questionnaires is that the researcher may be subjective and introduce bias in the types of questions asked. In the same way, responses to these questions may be interpreted differently depending on the personal belief of the researcher to the point that what the researcher will only really hear is what s/he wants to hear (Koshy, 2005). In this case, the researcher will share the results with the team of educators involved in the project, which should assist in ensuring all responses are heard rather than having been selected.

### **3.10 Research Limitations**

Through a participatory action research, this study aimed to accomplish a transformation in French-language teachers' practices by empowering them to develop and implement a transformative curriculum to allow students to develop their international-mindedness and knowledge of Australia's East-side neighbours. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. Price and Murnan (2004) define the limitation of a study or instrument as "...the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results" (p.66).

This study includes several methodological limitations.

First, as pointed out in the literature, the complex definitions of the concept of international-mindedness and the limited number of prior research studies focused on measuring

international-mindedness using a statistically validated approach, contributed to this study's limitations and any claims that can be made about the effect of the research enacted (Cause, 2009; Hill 2013; Boulard, 2013). Because of this, a new instrument was developed that primarily combined the work of Singh & Qi (2013), Harwood & Bailey (2012) and some of the learner's attributes of the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Although the instrument was pilot-tested, it remains a newly developed instrument and continues to require further investigation and refinement to continue to develop its statistical validity.

In addition, further research into the effects of the curriculum on international-mindedness and knowledge gains of ESN could have been conducted using a quasi-experimental approach with the use of control groups (Atieno, 2009). Controls were not used in this investigation because the mixed-method, participatory action research approach was focused on seeking to understand the world of the French language classroom and change it collaboratively. This research sought to detect the presence of an effect on student international-mindedness and measure its validity, but was cautious about making generalisations about the size of this effect. However, the use of controls would allow for a more robust investigation of the effect of the intervention using quasi-experimental methods and an increased focus on the statistical validation of both the international-mindedness growth of students, and the instrument itself (Atieno, 2009; Creswell, 2003). In the absence of the use of such a validation, the capacity to draw deep conclusions about the size and nature of any effect is limited. Therefore, this research recommends that the international-mindedness instrument continue to be tested by future researchers who will be able to make revisions so that methods for gathering data on students' international-mindedness can be further developed.

Secondly, the knowledge questionnaire, which included questions about the ESN, could be perceived as somewhat superficial. However, the age of the students (twelve years old on

average) limited the length and complexity of the instrument and led to a focus on descriptive knowledge appropriate for twelve year olds that could be recalled in the instrument questions (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Johnston, 2008). Further review and adjustment of the instrument questions to suit different contexts, along with analysis of more open, inquiry based assessment tasks, would both provide opportunities for further research into the effects of the curriculum transformation on deeper levels of knowledge.

Thirdly, although Merriam (2009) argued “there is no answer” to how many participants makes a sufficient sample size, findings from one Year eight class are statistically inconclusive. A small sample size creates a larger potential error and higher chance of anomalies in the data (Guetterman, 2015). However, as a participatory action research project, this study does not attempt to generalise the results to assess external groups, instead it only claims internal validity and is essentially the voice of only one particular school group. The data was only collected from one Year eight class because the research focuses on understanding students’ engagement with the resource to inform a large-scale study in the future.

Overall, this study was a small-scale participatory action research that sought to understand the opportunities the French-language classroom could provide to making Australia’s ESN more visible in the learning experience of young Australians. The data was collected using a mixed method approach that represented the experiences of students and teachers both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of this research have their own value and will contribute to the transformative learning of both my colleagues, and myself, by identifying some of the challenges and opportunities faced by French-language teachers. In addition, this research represents a substantial contribution to the minimal literature analysing French-language instruction through the lenses of the ESN.

### **3.11 Ethical issues**

Following the research confirmation seminar, the researcher submitted her ethics application to the university ethics committee. The researcher recognised that ethics are an important aspect of all research projects as it ensures the protection of all human participants (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). Despite the fact that participation is voluntary in what was perceived as a low-risk project, the researcher recognised that significant parts of the research involved children's participation in a school environment. Therefore, it was important to ensure that the researcher obtained parental consent as well as school principal authorisation prior to conducting any data collection for the research. A letter of introduction of the project and an invitation letter to participate in this research project can both be found in Appendix A. The American Educational Research Associate (2005) also explained that an educational researcher should be sensitive to the integrity of ongoing activities in schools and should inform school leaders about possible disturbances that may come from conducting research on site. In addition, the AERA stated that communicating findings of the research to other relevant research populations, institutional representatives and other stakeholder should be done with caution and always being mindful of the negative social consequences that may arise if the information is not shared ethically.

Issues of privacy also had to be addressed, as some of the data collected would be communicated to the language educators' team involved in the second part of this research (Intervention stage). Therefore, in considering the privacy of the participants' responses, I guaranteed to ensure that questionnaires did not divulge information that would enable specific individuals to be publicly recognised. For example, questionnaires would be anonymous.

To conclude, as a researcher I endeavoured to act professionally at all times, asking for formal consent from participants or their parents, considered issues of privacy and ensured that no ethical violation occurred during the research project.

### 3.12 Timeline

Initial discussions with my two research supervisors started in February 2013. Below is a template outlining the timeline that achieved the aim of this research.

Table 3.2. *Timeline of Personal PhD Journey.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>January - May</b>	Initial discussions	Reconnaissance Stage	Evaluation Collaboration with other educators	Results Chapter 4	Pre-Completion Chapter 1-4 completed Chapter 5,6,7
<b>June-July</b>	Start Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 Literature Review Methodology	Intervention in collaboration with other educators	Literature Review Mid-Candidature Review	Results Chapter 4	Submission
<b>August-October</b>	Confirmation Seminar Ethics Re-contact Participants	Intervention in collaboration with other educators	Literature Review	Literature Review	Ongoing Collaboration with educators
<b>November-December</b>	Methodology	Data Analysis Collaboration with other educators	Evaluation Collaboration with other educators	Literature Review	Ongoing Collaboration with educators

### 3.13 Summary

This Chapter has described the methodology for the study. The research is informed by a transformative paradigm. It employed a participatory action research approach informed by a

mixed-method data collection process. The research project involved participants from two schools, although one of the schools was only involved in the initial stage of the research for the pilot-test. Various language educator networks were involved in this participatory action research project.

In summary, the research was divided into three phases. The first was the reconnaissance, which was based around two questionnaires, one that measured what students knew about the ESN, and one measured student international-mindedness. The second research phase was the intervention. This part of the research focused on the development and enactment of the aspired transformative curriculum. A central focus in this phase was the collaboration of a team of like-minded educators working together to develop and implement an ESN-focused French-language curriculum for Year Eight students. To conclude the research project, the third phase was an evaluation. Identical questionnaires to the reconnaissance stage were once again presented to students of Callistemon SHS to evaluate both their knowledge of the ESN and their level of international-mindedness. The data collected was analysed through both statistical and non-statistical methods that informed the researcher about how successful the intervention had been and what lessons could be learnt for the development and application of “Baguettes in Paradise”.

In the chapter that follows, Chapter 4, the findings from the reconnaissance phase will be presented.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RECONNAISSANCE

### **4.1 Introduction**

Although there was no clear boundary between the ‘nondetermining start’ (Nohl, 2015, p.39) and the beginning of the reconnaissance stage for the researcher, formal data for this thesis was first collected through a series of focus groups. As previously explained in section 3.7 Methods, in this research project the focus groups served two main purposes. First, they ensured the project would be of value to teachers and students. The second was to identify particular individuals who were committed to transforming their current practice and who would therefore become part of the project. In this way, being able to get an insight into each teacher’s perspective was critical in contributing to the decision of selecting teacher participants.

Sections 4.2 will first describe the results from the reconnaissance phase with the teachers, while the second part, section 4.3 will focus on the results from the reconnaissance phase with the selected students. The chapter will conclude with section 4.4 to summarise the reconnaissance phase. The data collected from the international-mindedness survey will not be presented in this chapter, as its usefulness is only of significance when compared to the post-intervention data. It will be presented alongside the post-intervention data in Chapter Six.

### **4.2 Reconnaissance: Teachers Focus Group**

As part of the reconnaissance stage, and as described in Chapter Three, an initial focus group with French-language teachers was organised. Nine teachers from regional Queensland participated in the focus group. These teachers came from different schools and their teaching experience varied from a first-year teacher to a teacher with over 20 years of experience.

Despite the nine teachers having different educational backgrounds and working environments, common themes emerged from discussions with them. The results from the analysis of the focus group with teachers indicated three main themes. These were:

1. Teachers identified that a clear and valuable opportunity exists to focus on the ESN in the French-language classroom
2. Teachers acknowledged the Eurocentric focus in the French-language classroom
3. Teachers identified concerns with resources and self-doubt about their own professional knowledge of the ESN

Theme 1: Teachers identified a clear and valuable opportunity existed to focus on the ESN in the French-language classroom.

When introduced to the research project, all of these teachers agreed that it was valuable to develop young Australians' international-mindedness within the context of the ESN. These teachers were also in agreement that this could be undertaken effectively within the French-language classroom.

I think the curriculum is left fairly open for the teachers to use at their own discretion as to what you should teach or could teach [...] I think we would be commended on trying to do something like this because it has not been done really, very much at all before so it is very important and ground-breaking to try and to include these in our curriculum (Teacher 1).

This teacher's remark gives an indication of the possibility of using the context of the ESN because the curriculum, as she suggests, is "fairly open". This allows for teachers to select contexts for French-language study. Although there is value in leaving the curriculum open for teachers to adjust to their own context, this openness also implicitly invites teachers to select and emphasise their own preferences. As discussed in Chapter 2, Pinar et al (1996) explained that the school curriculum can be a medium that promotes the dominant hegemony. Chisholm (2016) agrees with Pinar et al (1996) that the curriculum content is often source of domination

but reminds that it is also an invitation to demonstrate resistance and educators should advocate for change using emancipatory transformative learning. In the context of French, as outlined in the work of Ritchie (2003), many teachers and the wider community continue to stereotype French as the language of France despite the fact that rationales emphasised the international nature of the language. This means that when the curriculum is left “open”, while it does provide a theoretical opportunity to focus on the ESN, the reality is more often a cultural privilege to France which is influenced by existing and unquestioned traditions, thus reduces the opportunity for students to be explicitly exposed to knowledge of the ESN. The literature refers to this type of teacher decision-making about the curriculum as ‘professional discretion’ (Apple, 1998, p.90). It is evident in this same teacher’s given comment below that this discretion or ‘trust’ (Apple, 1998, p.90) is likely negatively influenced by the unquestioned tradition of practice evident in language classrooms.

It would be great if what is currently happening for Asia was to occur for the ESN. I saw how the Japanese language has blossomed in recent years since this emphasis on Asia across various areas of the curriculum at my school. I can see how having a similar emphasis via the French-language for the ESN might not only teach the kids about the neighbours from the east but also help boost retention and transform the attitudes and perceptions that our community presently has of the French-language. I don’t think many students or parents or even colleagues would see it from this perspective. I think it’s a great opportunity and that we should find a way of embedding this new knowledge in our classrooms. (Teacher 2)

This teacher not only noted this opportunity but also drew comparisons between the proposed transformative curriculum and the current emphasis on Asia across the Australian Curriculum. She saw ESN as a new language site that has the potential to invigorate French and therefore “should” be embedded in classrooms. Her reservations that the school community values

knowledge of ESN suggests not only the subordinate status of French in the Asian Century, but also the subordinate status of ESN to France in French teaching. In this way, the teacher was highlighting the key difference between the current discretionary approach that French teachers can take when deciding to include the ESN in their teaching to the wider expectation to embed Asia literacy across the curriculum. It is explicitly expected through ACARA that teachers embed Asian perspectives to create meaningful, widespread learning opportunities and corresponding teacher support structures for enacting the intended cross-curricular priority. This points to the key challenge of changing the focus of French teachers to systematically include the ESN, as the ACARA inclusion of this focus currently stands as a possibility rather than an imperative. Any change must likely occur under an Australian French-language Curriculum that similarly makes links to the ESN explicit.

While teachers observed that the opportunity to teach about the ESN in the French-language classroom had existed for a long time, they acknowledged that it was something they could focus more on:

At the beginning, I always do a lesson to show students where French is spoken in the world. This is when I tell them that there are people who speak French on islands located only a few hours away from Australia. However, past that, I don't really do much. I think it is important that we try to connect our students better with this region. I think we should do it more (Teacher 3).

This opportunity to “connect” students in Australia and ESN, rather than merely “show students where French is spoken,” aligns with the research of Harwood & Bailey (2012), Singh & Qi (2013) and Hacking et al (2016) on developing international-mindedness. Another teacher also explained that it would be an opportunity to enhance students’ international-mindedness:

I expect the kids to get a lot out of it [aspired transformative curriculum focusing on East-side neighbours]. [...] A lot of them, they come from a background or a home environment where language and international-mindedness is not something that is treated as a priority. It brings in a new perspective. So, I think they would get a lot out of it (Teacher 4).

One of the points made as to why teachers believed that the proposed transformative curriculum focusing on the ESN was important was the expansion of students' current international-mindedness and in particular, their knowledge of this part of the world and open-mindedness. This was supported by another teacher's comment:

I think this curriculum is great because it is also going to break preconceived ideas. Students think, that people who can speak French, are only white people who live in France. The fact that we are teaching about all of these countries, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna etc, we are showing them that there are other people who speak French. French people are not necessarily white and living in Paris. Students think that only white people speak French. This unit is going to open their mind to something else and challenge the norm. When students look at me they don't understand why I speak French, they are very surprised [Vietnamese heritage]. I think it's really important we provide this opportunity (Teacher 5).

Despite the different backgrounds of the teachers, the teachers acknowledged their under-representation of ESN as a language and cultural resource. Underpinning this practice, is the hegemonic positioning of France as the only worthwhile language site. None of these teachers indicated they had previously attempted any meaningful transformation of their curriculum to focus on countries other than France, let alone the ESN. Each of these teachers had different experiences, different lenses for curriculum enactment shaped by their own histories and

cultural heritages, yet their teaching was clearly shaped by the dominating influence of an unquestioned tradition of a France-centric curriculum. The teachers identified that one of the exciting outcomes of the proposed curriculum was, 'to break preconceived ideas.' They also spoke of their students' preconceived ideas as well as their own.

The participating teachers also expected that students would have little knowledge of the French-speaking countries in the Pacific, although some stated that New Caledonia and the Polynesian triangle might be known by some students. Most doubted that their students would be able to say much apart from just knowing that French was spoken there.

I don't think students know much at all about the Pacific region, yet alone about the French-speaking countries. If anything I found students to always be very surprised when I tell them that French is spoken in New Caledonia. I have to say that it's not only the students though; it is the same for the adults (Teacher 5).

Another teacher shared a personal experience when talking about one of the ESN with her classes:

I am from New Caledonia and when I introduce myself to the class and I tell them where I am from they are always very surprised and confused about where I come from. Some of them know about it sometimes because I think there are some boats that go there and people may have heard about it that way. My general opinion is that people are confused about what can be found in this part of the world (Teacher 5).

This statement reflects a level of ignorance in students that could potentially be addressed through expanding the context of the curriculum to the ESN. It also hints at the limited knowledge of Australians more broadly, including some teachers of French, in relation to this part of the world.

Two of the French teachers were also History teachers and pointed out that they were currently teaching a unit on Polynesia in Year Eight, so they expected students to at least know that French is spoken in this part of the world. These teachers expressed their concerns about students not knowing much more beyond this fact. As indicated by these two teachers:

I suppose because in our year 8 unit in History we studied Polynesia, I expect them to, at least some of them, remember that the French-language is used there; however past that, my expectations of what and whom their ESN are quite low (Teacher 3).

I don't think students will be able to identify the countries located on the ESN despite having been exposed to the Polynesian unit in Year Eight (Teacher 4).

To conclude, the teacher participants agreed that the current Australian curriculum for French potentially provided a space for educating young Australians about the ESN, but this action was currently left to the discretion of teachers. Although acknowledgement was made that introducing students to the French speaking countries located in the Pacific was something that they were already doing, albeit in a cursory manner, they indicated that it was not made a priority and therefore they were not focusing on it in much detail. Overall teacher participants were able to see the possibility and the benefits of transforming their current practice to allow more explicit teaching about Australia's ESN.

Theme 2: Acknowledgement of Eurocentric focus in the French-language classroom.

The second theme that arose from the discussion was the unquestioned and maybe unconscious Eurocentric focus commonly found within the current traditional French curriculum. Teacher participants acknowledged that France was the sole source of cultural context in their teaching. Firstly, they identified that their teaching reflected the pedagogy they had been exposed to when they themselves were French-language students. Secondly, they felt that one of the main

reasons students liked learning about the French-language was because students aspired to travel to Europe and see France. Thirdly, some participants suggested that a Eurocentric approach was due to a wider misconception of what the French-language and “Frenchness” is and that children’s views are influenced by their parents’ ideas of learning about France in French-language lessons.

I have found that the students have a preference to learn about France. It is extremely stereotypical. The students all want to go to Paris and climb the Eiffel Tower. I think this new curriculum is going to be a good way to challenge their ideal of France and what it is all about (Teacher 1).

The above quote illustrates that students quite naturally start with ideas about French that are shaped by the influence of the dominant media messages and people they engage with. However, this quote indicates that this idea of French as France is not typically challenged in the French classroom as indicated by the teachers participating in this research. One senior teacher explained that the preconceived idea for many students is that studying French means studying France. According to one of the teachers, this unquestioned assumption held by students can be found not just in Australia but in other countries too:

I have been teaching French for over 40 years. I have taught in two different countries and I always tell my students that French is an international language but students are naturally curious about France. I think it does not come from them. I think it is a social phenomenon. In Canada, students were hoping to learn French so that they can communicate with their own people, their own francophone compatriots [in Canada]. In Australia, when students come to us they are hoping to learn French so that they can go to France. It is limited to France when they originally come to the classroom. They want to travel to France. I think that is a result of the influence of their parents.

I think that when their parents are saying to them, they probably say to the kids, when you go to France, you will be able to communicate and understand each other. I think it is the parents' influence. I don't think the students think about it very well, I think it is something that comes from home. I think students were just not aware of it. I think it is a general thing out there, people just don't appreciate that French is spoken in so many countries. I think it is just limited understanding about which countries speak French. I think that's a general population. I think it is beyond the child's world (Teacher 6).

There are two important points in this statement. First, the teacher perceives that most students come into the French classroom with a belief that France is largely the extent of the French-language. The teacher identifies the tension in reproducing France as a dominant language and cultural site for French, and connecting students to a wider world of knowledge than they already have, and in some cases, than their parents have. Second, the teacher points to a general ignorance of the global diffusion of French amongst the Australia community, which highlights the importance of providing post-colonial sites in the teaching of French. The contrast between the media and curricular representation of France and ESN is stark. As outlined in the Google map exercise in Chapter Two, intervention is necessary to zoom in on the connections between Australia and ESN.

Finally, teachers admitted that the Eurocentric focus in their pedagogical practice might come down to a personal bias grounded in their own fascination with France and desire to share their passion with their students. As one teacher indicated:

I think it is very difficult for teachers to teach students about the ESN because we don't have many resources to use. I tell my students that French is a global language but then I also focus on France because I know that for most, the reason why they are continuing

to study French is because they want to go to France on the school trip so I suppose I continue to teach towards the dream. Plus, I personally love France too so it's hard not to focus on it (Teacher 4).

This comment identifies the challenge of resourcing such curriculum transformation, as well as another key challenge, that of cultural bias, especially when combined with the earlier described notion of the current discretionary nature of the mention of the ESN in the Australian French-language Curriculum. Despite the context of the unit the teacher returns to the “dream,” which is the common Australian cultural imaginary of French as France only. The teacher refers to this “dream” as her understanding of the student motivation for studying French, without necessarily having tested any alternative focus. These comments again provided another example of this overlooked possibility within the curriculum because of professional discretion and privilege of France in their pedagogical practice.

This was reinforced further by another teacher who made the point that transforming the curriculum did not mean teaching less French or less about France, but that the ESN provided an extension or an alternative context with new learning opportunities about French speaking countries:

I think that teaching about the ESN would not be like teaching less French. I think it is about teaching the culture. I think the kids will like it. I think culture is very important. I think you can't and should not always teach about grammar. You need to make it interesting you know. I think culture is interesting (Teacher 9).

The Australian Curriculum supports teacher autonomy in pedagogical selection and according to the Australian Curriculum for French, teachers should incorporate cultural aspects in their teaching practice in addition to the linguistic features found in the target language. Teacher participants' comments indicated that they were favourable to such an area of focus through the

context of the ESN. However, it was also evident that such a possibility could be compromised by the hegemonic practice of essentialising France in the teaching of French.

Theme 3: Concerns with resources and self-doubt about own professional knowledge of the ESN.

The last theme observed in the focus groups was teachers' concerns regarding learning materials to teach about the ESN. Although teachers in this focus group demonstrated an interest in transforming the curriculum, most raised concerns about the lack of resources available to them if they were to teach and place an emphasis on the French-speaking countries in the Pacific. They said that they would need to develop their own knowledge before being able to teach it well to students and needed support in doing so.

I think currently, it is at the teacher's discretion to talk about the French Pacific Islands.

There are some opportunities in the curriculum because we need to teach about the language and the culture. However, often I have found that the resources are a bit lacking. It has not been done very much at all. I think it is very important to try to include it in our curriculum now. I expect the kids to get a lot out of it. (Teacher 1).

Overall teachers expected that transforming their curriculum to allow an emphasis on the ESN would enable the students to also become internationally-minded, as they noticed topics that would facilitate the development of not only knowledge but also empathy towards people. Because a focus on ESN had not been a part of their practice or their school's practice or initial teacher education experience, finding sufficient resources was frequently identified as being one of the obvious challenges for introducing a needed ESN-focused curriculum.

I have been to four different schools and worked with three different French teachers.

I have not really found that teachers were putting an emphasis on the ESN. I think

teachers are using what resources are available to them. I have noticed that when teachers ask students what they think of the French-language, students will automatically think of France. (Teacher 8)

Disrupting the discourse of French teaching does not appear necessary or easy, with the relative ease in accessibility to resources that position France as the dominant language site. Teachers across participating schools acknowledged ESN in their teaching but were not committed to focusing on developing deep knowledge and understanding about this part of the world. This resistance indicated that a need for professional learning opportunities for teachers in this area, which is reflected in the comment below:

I personally don't feel very confident about teaching my students new knowledge of Australia ESN. I know that it is something I will have to learn myself because I have not really done it before. I have told them about New Caledonia but I don't know a great deal about the other French-speaking countries in the Pacific. It's not really something that I had thought about before, at university when I was training to become a French-language teacher, we were studying the classical French novels and the program was very much focused on France (Teacher 1).

To create a change in the practice of French, teacher participants suggested a need for professional learning through both in-service and pre-service education. They also identified a need for ESN French-language teaching resources that enabled an alternative interpretation and enactment of the Australian French-language curriculum. Focus group comments indicated very few teachers currently possessed the knowledge, skills and confidence to do this independently in North Queensland.

To summarise, although the French-language teachers who participated in this initial stage of the research were at various stages of their careers and had taught in a variety of contexts, there

was a consensus that as a discipline they could and would be willing to try to transform the curriculum so that students could be challenged and develop a knowledge of Australia's ESN and, as well, be challenged in their pre-conceptions about French-language learning. Teacher participants acknowledged the current Eurocentric focus in their pedagogical practice was a result of personal experience and sometimes even personal preference. However, what appeared to them to be the most challenging aspect of this in supporting the enactment of an aspired transformative curriculum was their self-identified lack of teaching resources and expertise. In fact, despite the willingness of the teachers to transform the curriculum, concerns were raised about the lack of teaching resources available and about changing the focus of the curriculum away from the current interpretation of the curriculum, with its established knowledge and supporting resources.

The data demonstrated that ESN represents an aspect of the French curriculum where teacher knowledge is frequently minimal, and therefore so too is the capacity of some teachers to develop authentic learning resources for this context. These preliminary findings were likely to create challenges as described in the statements above and may ultimately lead teachers to abandon teaching from this perspective due to its perceived difficulty.

However, it is also important to remember that ongoing professional learning is an established and accepted professional standard for teachers (AITSL, 2011; MCEETYA, 2003). Therefore, limitations in teacher knowledge can be overcome, in part, through high quality professional learning and sharing of established resources. In addition, Grzega (2005) reminds that the best learning can come from teaching as Jean-Pol Martin's research attests.

It is therefore possible to imagine that when neither the dedicated teacher nor the interested students are highly familiar with the ESN, an ideal place can be created for stronger collaboration between teachers and students around the learning. Teachers can work alongside

their students as the lead learner, always providing expert guidance and maintaining clear authority in the knowledge and skills of the French-language, but exploring this new aspect of the French curriculum with their students. This pedagogical practice challenges the traditional dynamic of the classroom by making students and teachers work together and by giving students greater ownership of the learning. Challenging the dominant practice associated with the teaching of French requires a collective effort. The focus group results indicated that the proposed participatory nature of this study could act as a platform from which to develop professional learning for participating teachers in engaging Australian French students in learning about the ESN.

To conclude, this first step of the research was a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by teachers as they collaborated to improve the rationality of their own practices (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Two questions resulted from the teachers' interviews that would be essential for the participatory project. First, at a pragmatic level, what teaching resources and professional learning can be developed in order to assist French-language teachers to teach their students about Australia's ESN? Second, and likely of greater significance and challenge, how can teachers transform (but not abandon) the stereotypical fascination that students have for France/Europe so that it includes countries and people closer to Australia? Consideration of these questions became central to informing the intervention phase enactment described in Chapter 5. Through this research, clear responses to both of these questions were provided by both students and teachers, and these will be presented in Chapter 6, Evaluation.

The next section presents qualitative data from the student focus group collected in the reconnaissance.

### **4.3 Reconnaissance: Student Focus Group**

As described in Chapter Three, a group of students was invited to participate in a small focus group that focused on what students knew about Australia's ESN. Five students in Year Eight, aged between 11 and 12 years old, participated. The results from the analysis of the focus group with these students indicated two main themes. These were:

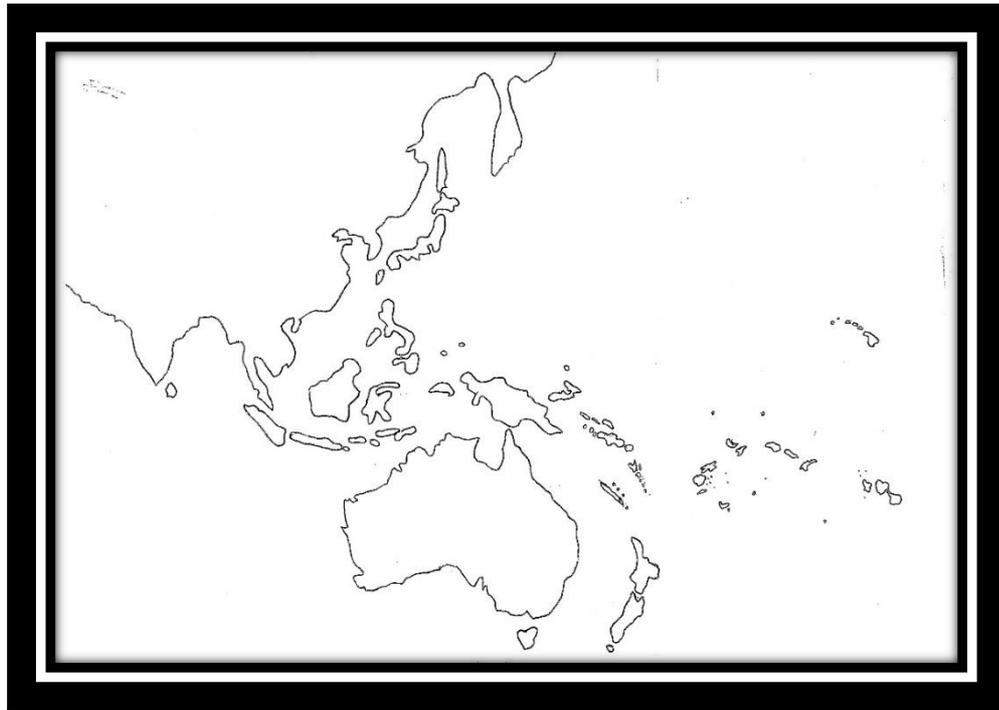
- 1 Students had uncertainty about who and what can be found on the eastern side of Australia, and,
- 2 Students held common learning expectations prior to starting to learn French.

#### **4.3.1 Uncertainty**

At the start of the focus group, students were asked to look at a map (see map below) and state the countries they could recognise. They were also asked to share any information they knew in regards to the particular countries they could identify.

Up there, is Asia with Japan and Korea and China, India. I think this is Indonesia. New Zealand is here and I think PNG is somewhere there. In Japan people speak Japanese and they eat some sushi and ramen. They have a different writing system to ours. We can wear kimonos. In China there is the Great Wall of China and people eat lots of rice there. I know that they have some pandas that are in danger over there. I would like to go there one day (Student 1).

Japan and China. I know some of the capital cities in Japan like Tokyo. Osaka is good too. There is some good snow in Japan in Winter. I can speak some Japanese (Student 2).



*Figure 4.1.* Map drawn by the researcher and used with participants during the interview for the reconnaissance stage.

During the interview, when the map was presented to them students' attention was automatically drawn to Asia. After identifying Australia, Asia was the first region they started describing. Although the knowledge they had about Asia was limited and at times superficial, it was clear that students had some knowledge of these countries.

When pointing towards the eastern side on the map, a student responded:

I know that there [pointing towards the map's eastern side] we have the Polynesian triangle because we learnt it recently in our history class. These islands look familiar but I could not put my finger on it. I am not sure, I think there are lots of little islands (Student 3).

Students acknowledged repeatedly that they had learnt about the Polynesian triangle, and they knew that this part of the world was made up of lots of smaller islands. However, they were conscious that their knowledge of ESN was superficial, as indicated in the following response:

Yes, we have learnt about the Polynesian triangle. There are many islands [laughs] but I don't know their names. Out of ten, my knowledge about this part of the world would be about a 2, I think (Student 2).

Prior to the curriculum exposure through the intervention phase of this study, students acknowledged their lack of familiarity of Australia's closest neighbours. They were interested in developing their personal knowledge of this part of the world but confirmed that they had not learned about it at school, other than in their Year 8 History and not to the extent they had learned about Asia. One student drew a comparison between his knowledge of Asia and his knowledge of Australia's ESN explaining that:

We know about Asia more because we have learnt about it before at school. We also listen to some of their music, which I like a lot. But I am not really sure about the ESN, I am not very confident about my knowledge with this part of the world. I think if I was to rate my knowledge about this part of the world I would give myself a 1 or a 2 (Student 4).

Although students appeared to know that there were people living on many small islands and were able to tell about the Polynesian triangle, they knew too that they had little knowledge about this part of the world and overall thought that they were more confident about outlining information about Australia's Asian neighbours. This was reinforced by this student's comment:

I would prefer to be tested on Asia because I don't feel confident about this part of the world [East-side neighbours]. I don't know much about it whereas I am interested in Asia and know a good deal about it (Student 2).

Perhaps what was more interesting was that at least two out of the five students interviewed felt like they would like to go to Asia and demonstrated some genuine interest about some of the countries located in Asia. Most said that they had learnt about Asia in class; apart from hearing about the Polynesian triangle in Year 8 History, they had not had the opportunity to learn about Australia's ESN. This qualitative data served to illustrate students' limited understanding of the ESN.

#### **4.3.2 Common Expectations**

When students were asked to share what came to their mind when thinking about the French-language and culture, they answered:

When I think about the French-language I think of Paris and croissant and the Eiffel Tower (Student 4).

I think about the flag blue white and red and I think about baguettes (Student 2).

Paris and the Eiffel Tower! (Student 1).

Same and poodles (Student 5).

Same, croissant, snails and Eiffel Tower, Paris (Student 3).

When it was explained to the students that the ESN included countries where French was the official language, students were surprised and to some extent found this fact both amusing and confusing:

I think that it is quite surprising that there are countries where people speak French there (Student 2).

It's funny that you have neighbours that can speak French. France is so far away from here. I don't understand, why do people speak French there? (Student 3).

I knew that some people spoke French around this area but I don't know why. Is it French like France? (Student 1).

The student participant responses suggest that ESN offer a proximal geographic site to illustrate the diffusion of language through colonization, as well as Australia and ESN in promoting international-mindedness.

#### **4.3.3 Summary of Student Focus Group**

The focus group asked to describe what they expected to learn in the French class the following term replied:

I expect to learn about Paris and France (Student 1).

Maybe learn about French people and what people eat in France (Student 3).

I want to learn about Paris and learn about the culture. Maybe learn to speak the language so that if one day I go there I can speak to people. I want to see the Eiffel Tower one day (Student 2).

Their responses aligned with the teachers' initial beliefs that students were coming to their language classes thinking that they were going to learn about France and, in particular, Paris. With the exception of one student who simply expected to "Just to learn French", students' perceptions of the French-language were France-centric and their surprise that the French-language could be taught from a different perspective endorses Chambers (1996) claim of an homogenous idea that French was all about France, which he refers to as the concept of 'Frenchness'.

Student responses indicated that children are sufficiently curious about French and display an interest in expanding their knowledge about French outside of a France-centric focus. Their

response counters teacher participants who held pre-conceived expectations about what students want to learn. Although students were puzzled that French was spoken in neighbouring countries, they indicated neither a disinterest nor disrespect to ESN as French language sites. Their curiosity about the presence of French-speaking countries within the Pacific opens up a new window to the language learning that many students would have been otherwise unaware of.

Further, as part of the reconnaissance stage, all students in one Year 8 class were individually invited to add information to a map showing Australia and some of its closest neighbours. They were instructed to provide as much detail as they could about the countries shown on the map.

Below are four examples of the students' work.



MAP COMPLETED BY STUDENT A



MAP COMPLETED BY STUDENT B



MAP COMPLETED BY STUDENT C



MAP COMPLETED BY STUDENT D

*Figure 4.2.* Map completed by Year Eight students during the reconnaissance stage.

Figure 4.2 above illustrates typical student responses to the map task. Most students were able to label Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and some countries located in Asia, especially Japan and China. However, only three students out of 25 were able to identify any information at all about the ESN (i.e., country name and approximate location). This aligned with teacher expectations from their initial focus group interview that students do not have a clear understanding of all of their closest foreign neighbours but also the literature review and in particular the work of Quanchi, Rose and Moore.

The student focus groups as well as map annotations provided a clear and consistent indication that prior to the curriculum intervention students knew little about Australia's close ESN, especially when compared to the countries located to the north of Australia. Students also lacked awareness of any link between this region of the world and the French-language, bringing with them into a Year 8 French class a traditional view of French as a language of France.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Overall, the reconnaissance phase indicated that although the ESN are not unknown to French-language teachers, they were not a priority or interest for these teachers when teaching French to their students and were largely absent in the French-language classroom. However, these teachers did see making visible ESN in French contributes to developing student international-mindedness. The student qualitative data from the small focus group, along with data from the mapping activity, reflected students' limited knowledge about Australia's ESN. Most significantly, consistent between the data of teacher and student is the hegemonic positioning of France as the only legitimate and worthwhile language and cultural context for teaching and representing French.

Although transforming the current traditional approach to teaching French might be challenging due to a lack of resources and hegemonic practices, both teachers and students showed a genuine interest in and curiosity about, or at least an openness toward, an adjusted curriculum.

In the chapter that follows, Chapter 5, the intervention phase will be presented.

## CHAPTER FIVE: INTERVENTION

### **5.1 Introduction**

The intervention was the second part of this participatory action research project. It included the collaborative planning stage and the delivery of the aspired transformative curriculum. It was done in collaboration with four French-language teachers from Callistemon SHS, all of whom had displayed an openness to such a possibility in the reconnaissance phase. The intervention was informed by two of the conclusions drawn from the reconnaissance stage: (1) students have limited knowledge of Australia's ESN, and, (2) teachers have limited knowledge, resource support and confidence in enacting a curriculum in the social context of Australia's francophone ESN.

Section 5.2 of this chapter will discuss the initial participatory planning sessions that were necessary in order to achieve the primary aim of the research. That is, we should be using the latest Australian French-language curriculum to assist teachers to transform their current delivery of the French-language curriculum to allow a stronger focus on Australia's ESN and, in doing so, develop students' knowledge of this part of the world and their international-mindedness. The sequence of learning and topics collaboratively planned for the curriculum unit are outlined in section 5.3 along with specific justifications for their implementation as part of this curriculum planning process. Finally, section 5.4 of the chapter summarises the intervention phase. It is noteworthy here that Chapter 6, Evaluation, provides an analysis of teachers' response to the intervention.

### **5.2 Participatory Planning**

Involving teachers in curriculum development is a well-established positive strategy expressed in the literature on curriculum design (Ayers, Quinn, Stovall & Ocheiern, 2008; Voogt, et al, 2015; Alnefaie, 2016). In addition, Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) argue that without teachers' involvement in curriculum planning as valued contributors, any educational improvements or

changes in school programs are useless. Alnefaie (2016) added that unlike most policy-makers, teachers know best their classroom environment and their students collective and individual needs and interests; it is this individual knowledge that enables them to make professional decisions about the quality of the curriculum: its strengths, its weaknesses and its usefulness. Drawing from these understandings, the planning stage of the aspired transformative curriculum involved all four French-language teachers from Callistemon SHS in an egalitarian participation that, as the literature on PAR indicated previously, aimed to transform some aspects of the situation and/or structure (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Bell et al, 2004). By collaborating to conceptualise a resource, teacher participants were able to co-reflect the rationale for this project and strengthen their commitment toward teaching students a more diverse representation of French.

Curriculum transformation involves change in the content of the curriculum as well as in the thinking of those planning for change, and ultimately, the students who experience the curriculum. Research on change management indicates that people respond differently to change, and many of the models indicate a need to articulate a clear message about the purpose and urgency of the change and to build a strong coalition of support when enacting the change (Kotter, 1995). This was kept in mind by the researcher who fostered an environment that would support the team engaging in a range of collaborative conversations about the curriculum development and enactment. These conversations focused on the curriculum content, accompanying learning experiences and corresponding teaching practice. As well, collectively, the participants and I considered assessment in response to the learning goals, including how the curriculum might be differentiated to meet the learning needs of students. The range of topics that were discussed were:

1. French curriculum learning descriptors and assessment
2. Unit goal and intentions

3. Specific learning goals, learning experiences & resources
4. Strategies for teaching including differentiation

It is important to note that during this phase, the researcher also took every opportunity to remind teachers of the purpose that was driving this curriculum transformation project, in line with Kotter's research on change management. As discussed in the introduction, the purpose, or "why" of this curriculum transformation is the development of student IM, which in this case strongly incorporated a focus on the building of student knowledge about the ESN. Therefore, central to this curriculum intervention was a common understanding of the term international-mindedness. Harwood (2007) encourages teachers to move beyond the IB learner profile and develop their own definition of the concept in the context of their own situation. To support teachers in developing their own way of thinking about international-mindedness, the researcher shared with them the definition she developed as part of her Master of Education when she was also a high school teacher:

An internationally minded person is someone who is able to understand the diversity and richness of the world through its history, people and cultures. It is to be flexible in various situations yet caring and capable of showing respect towards all cultures and its people. It is also knowing how to interact with all people in a respectful manner irrespective of citizenship. Being IM is more than just being culturally aware. It is a constant learning process; it has no limit and can continue to develop through time and experiences. What differentiates IM from other concepts such as intercultural understanding and global citizenship is that international-mindedness moves beyond accepting or tolerating others. It entails an active engagement with international perspectives and diversity of cultures (Boulard, 2013, p.6).

The teachers identified particular elements of this definition that were challenging for them personally and collectively. The notion of moving students beyond tolerating or accepting, to active engagement, was identified as a difficult mindset to explicitly teach. Parallels with this active engagement can be drawn with Art Costa's Habit of Mind, Responding with Wonderment and Awe (Costa, 2000). Finding Wonderment and Awe is a first step in developing active engagement. It creates a mindset of not simply tolerating future engagement, but being excited by the prospect of intercultural understanding and global engagement. Research indicates that one of the most effective approaches to developing student Wonderment and Awe is through clear modelling of this Habit of Mind. In this respect, the enthusiasm that teachers demonstrated in their own active engagement in learning about the ESN was identified as highly important. In addition, the definition highlighted to teachers the importance of integrating international-mindedness into the learning and assessment of the unit, as to do otherwise and try to teach it separately would create high levels of time pressure for the teachers.

Finally, during this planning stage, the teachers collaboratively developed a name for the unit - 'Baguettes in Paradise'. The title reflected student imaginary of the context, as well as both the traditional and new elements of French-language and culture that were to be included in the unit. Although the title risked being perceived as stereotypical, it was an intentional effort to resonate with student interests and imagination of French and the Pacific. How this title depicted our collective efforts will become evident in the four sections that follow.

### **5.2.1 French curriculum and Assessment**

The Australian Curriculum (2014 draft version of the Australian Curriculum: French), along with ideas for the unit's assessment were reviewed and discussed. After discussing the three stages of backward design described by Wiggins and McTighe (2011), the team utilised a backward mapping approach in designing Baguettes in Paradise.

Effective curriculum is planned “backward” from long-term desired results through a three-stage design process (Desired Results, Evidence, Learning Plan). This process helps to avoid the twin problems of “textbook coverage” and “activity oriented teaching” in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011, p.4).

Traditionally, the participant teachers had been assessing their French-language students each term on at least two of the four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are identified as an integral part of typical language proficiency and use. (Akram and Malik, 2010, p.231) Consequently, in *Baguettes in Paradise*, we sought to ensure that teachers would continuously be provided with opportunities to assess these skills as would occur in any other unit.

The achievement standard of the Australian Curriculum: Language French (7-8 sequence) outlines that grade 7-8 students, in addition to acquiring language competency and engaging in imaginative and creative language experiences, students should also explore closely the relationship between language and culture, understanding that personal and community identity are expressed through cultural expression and language use (ACARA, French Curriculum, p.35). These standards were made core parts of *Baguettes in Paradise*, and were embedded through all learning experiences and assessments. This focus was guided by the results from the reconnaissance stage, in particular the low levels of student knowledge of Australia’s ESN.

A summative assessment (listening test), which predominantly focused on the language features, was developed in addition to a formative assessment (reading & writing) that explored the relationship between the French-language and culture of the ESN. This formative task involved an investigation and poster presentation within the context of a travel expo that would showcase students’ developed knowledge of Australia’s ESN to the wider school community.

The formative task was collaboratively developed by the researcher with the teachers. It required students to demonstrate their French-language skills (reading and writing) and their knowledge of the ESN. Also, it provided an opportunity for students to be creative and demonstrate their internationally-mindedness at the Me, My School, My Country and My World level. The teachers were particularly enthused about the practical demonstrations of knowledge that were part of this formative assessment.

I expect the kids to get a lot out of it. I think previously they look at a map of the world and they go look we are so far apart and a lot of them they come from a background or a home environment where language and international-mindedness is not something that is treated as a priority. So, I think they would get a lot out of it (Teacher 4).

I think the kids will love it. It will be different to anything they have done before (Teacher 3).

Fisher (2004, p.11) reported that when students are assessed in ways that recognise and value their creative abilities, their academic performance improves. Creative activity can rekindle the interest of students who have been turned off by school, and teachers who may be turned off by teaching in a culture of control and compliance. In addition, this task provided students with opportunities to work on their face-to-face communication skills, which the literature outlines as one of the attribute of IM people (Cause, 2009; Boulard, 2013). Secondly, although guided instruction can be necessary at times, Tochon (2010) explained that providing students the opportunity to discover new knowledge without any organisers (teachers) should not be overlooked in the success of acquiring new knowledge. This task required students to explore various parts of the Pacific region, bringing to their attention other non-francophone neighbouring countries that may have otherwise been overlooked by teachers.

### **5.2.2 Specific Unit Goal**

Without clear goals, students' learning experiences and assessments are ambiguous and unsatisfactory (Suskie, 2009, p. 116). The teachers developed a specific unit goal for Baguettes in Paradise, agreeing that:

Students will develop knowledge of and positive attitudes towards the French speaking countries located to the East of Australia while developing basic language skills in French. In addition, they will develop a range of attributes, which will demonstrate their international-mindedness.

As part of a collaborative development of the unit goal, teachers were continuously reminded of the definition of international-mindedness and engaged in discussions around possible classroom activities to assist in the development of international-mindedness and knowledge about ESN. The unit goal was made explicit on the unit plan used by all French teachers at the school. It also addressed teachers' requirement that the unit develops students French-language skills that meets the new Australian French-language curriculum (Foundation to Y10) and develops student knowledge of the French-language, the ESN and their IM. As with all curricula, there was a limit to the range of knowledge and dispositions that could be included. The content selected was therefore based on the key elements of international-mindedness, and French-language curriculum requirements but framed within ESN cultures to engage students with issues of local and global significance (climate change, sustainability). The learning aimed to develop in students a sense of responsibility and respect for the people of the ESN, to make links between their own culture and personal histories and those of the ESN (comparing Indigenous cultures in Australia and the ESN) and to connect and interact with the ESN to want to make a positive difference in the lives of the people in this region (travel expo and

fundraising). Critically, we wanted students to view this region as an extension of their own place in the Pacific and consider a future engagement with this part of the world.

The clear communication of this learning goal to students was also discussed with the teachers, as explicitly teaching students the learning intention of a unit or lesson has been demonstrated to contribute to higher levels of knowledge acquisition (Hattie, 2007).

### **5.3 The aspired transformative curriculum Baguettes in Paradise**

Upon reaching a common understanding of the general “why” that was driving this curriculum transformation and the “what” in terms of French-language, ESN understanding and aspects of international-mindedness, we collectively identified the assessments, specific learning goals and resources to be used as part of the planning phase. At Callistemon SHS, French teachers have 140 minutes per week of teaching their junior French classes, made up of two sessions of 70 minutes. Details on the learning goals for each lesson can be found in the unit plan in Appendix C. As the researcher, I could not claim to be an expert on all four countries, therefore, the selection of topics was prepared collaboratively with the French-language teacher participants as well as in consultation with teachers living and teaching in New-Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna, and French Polynesia. It was important that these topics were culturally relevant, authentic, appropriately engaging for learners of French with no previous knowledge of the target language and that the content aligned with the desired outcomes stipulated in the Australian Curriculum for French.

The unit of work can be found in Appendix C. The topics for the term were planned across ten weeks, with all lessons placing special and specific emphasis on all three aspects of learning intent: the French-language, ESN and international-mindedness. In the section that follows, the weekly lesson plans are described. As well, the specific foci are presented. This is done to provide a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving its goals,

which will be discussed in Chapter 6. As well, some account of the processes used in developing the curriculum are discussed, with some attention to teachers' response to this collaborative process. A deeper description of their response to the intervention process is described in Chapter 6, Evaluation. The unit was delivered as follow:

### **Week One**

The intervention took place at the start of the new Term (Term Three) and it was the first time for the teachers to meet these students. As a result, the week one program was a school-based program of induction into the subject and the teacher's class. The curriculum intervention had not yet started.

### **Week Two**

<b>Primary Foci Week Two</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
Greetings	French as a global language	Knowledge, Principled, Open-minded and Caring

In the second week the intervention started. The students were introduced to the greetings in the target language, French as a global language and the definition of international-mindedness. Discussing the definition of international-mindedness with students, was important because it introduced key language to them, which they would need for future conversations.

The curriculum in week two aimed to impact on students' international-mindedness by focusing on developing four attributes: Knowledge, Principled, Open-minded and Caring. In the class's focusing on international-mindedness, students were first introduced to the idea of "self" and "others" as they first explore various stereotypical conceptions of French people and French-language. As Skelton (2007) explained children must have a clear understanding of self in order to explore the "others". Moreover, stereotyping was recognised as a significant issue in the

French-language class during the reconnaissance, especially considering the aim of the aspired transformative curriculum in challenging French hegemony. As a result, in the first week of teaching “Baguettes in Paradise” teachers engaged students in conversations focusing on stereotypes associated with learning French as they explored French as being a global language and in particular a language of relevance for the Pacific region. Challenging students’ representation of the French-language and its people was a necessary step in helping them to have an open mind toward learning French through an ESN focus. In addition, open-mindedness is one of the attributes of international-mindedness as described in the IBO learner profile. Research also shows that if not addressed, misconceptions and stereotypes could undermine the acquisition of academic knowledge and dispositional development and thus affect the overall impact of the curriculum (Seeber, 2001; Matusitz, 2012)

The incorrect information one may have about people of diverse ethnicities multiplied by their [students] use of stereotypes will lead to an unwillingness to let go of their old ideologies (Matusitz, 2012, p.92).

Addressing stereotypes was a step forward to challenging the status quo attached to the image of the French-language classroom. This week’s foci also enabled students to associate themselves with what it means to be principled as a French-language learner and to be respectful towards not just the French culture, but also French people around the world.

### **Week Three**

<b>Primary Foci Week Three</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
Basic self-introduction Numbers 1-20	New Caledonia	Knowledge and Open-Minded

In the third week of the intervention, students were taught to introduce themselves and count from 1 to 20. They were also introduced to New Caledonia through short videos and classroom discussions. New Caledonia was introduced first because it is the closest Francophone country amongst the other Francophone neighbours located East of Australia. In addition, it is also the country that teachers have expressed the highest level of knowledge about. This enabled teachers to start their teaching about the ESN in a more familiar context.

The key learning goals for New Caledonia were its location and common features of the culture of New Caledonians. The use of video resources recorded by the researcher, of New Caledonians introducing and talking about themselves, allowed the teachers to review key language features around French greetings whilst providing critical input about the culture.

A key activity this week involved students identifying similarities and differences between the Kanak people and the Australian Indigenous people, and comparing their respective cultures. This learning experience was chosen because of the high relevance to the school context, which had approximately 20% Indigenous students, and because comparing and contrasting is a highly effective strategy for storing and deepening knowledge (Silver, 2010). In addition, Costa and Kallick (2008) identified comparing and contrasting as one of the 16 Habits of Mind which encourages students to think flexibly, be open-minded and improve their overall communication skills (Silver, 2010), all of which are important attributes of international-mindedness as described in Chapter 2, section 2.3.

**Week Four**

<b>Primary Foci Week Four</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
Conjugation “Etre”	Vanuatu	Knowledge, Caring, Principled

In the fourth week of the intervention, students learnt what conjugating verbs meant and in particular they focused on “être”. In addition, teachers introduced students to Vanuatu. They learnt to identify its geographical location in comparison with Australia but also in relation to New Caledonia. This was important, as it reinforced to the students the geographical proximity of both of these countries to Australia. Class discussions about global issues that impact on both Vanuatu and Australia were guided by the teachers to create a sense of empathy in students towards their neighbours. International-mindedness is not only defined as possessing knowledge of the world and its people but also as having a caring attitude towards others. Compassion is an important attribute to develop when aiming to enhance international-mindedness in students (Cause, 2012).

World language education research aims to shed light on one major challenge to education systems around the world: how to foster communication, peace, and well-being across the community of nations. [...] World languages are the key to global understanding (Tochon, 2009, p. 671).

The videos used were provided by the researcher and featured people from Vanuatu introducing themselves and discussing their likes and dislikes which supported the language features that were required to be addressed in the Australian curriculum. These videos enabled teachers to review already taught key French-language features, such as greetings, while modelling the use of other key language features in an authentic East-side neighbour context.

### **Week Five**

<b>Primary Foci Week Five</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>

Family members Likes and Dislikes	Wallis and Futuna	Knowledge and Caring
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In the fifth week of the curriculum intervention, the teachers taught students how to talk about their family members likes and dislikes. Additionally, they introduced students to Wallis and Futuna in order to continue extending students' knowledge of the Pacific region. While a lot of the teaching previously utilised class discussions, this mode of learning was not used as frequently during this week. In fact, the teachers reported that this particular ESN location proved to be the most challenging component to teach. As outside of the resources gathered collaboratively in the planning of this project, there was little appropriate information they could find online. As a result, this was the East-side location they felt least comfortable teaching. The theme of the Royal Family of Wallis and Futuna had been identified as a context for learning the language features around family members. In addition, through the analysis of traditional names of Wallisian and Futunan people, teachers hoped to encourage students to be more reflective, tolerant and caring which are qualities of an internationally-minded person as explained in Chapter 2, section 2.3. A key language-learning goal was for students to learn to talk and write about who is in their family and share their likes and dislikes.

### Week Six

<b>Primary Foci Week Six</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
Conjugation Revision (Aimer/Etre/Avoir)	French Polynesia	Knowledge and Caring

In week six, the teachers expanded their students' understanding of grammar as they presented additional verbs and conjugation patterns in French. In addition, the last country explicitly introduced to students was done in week six. This country was French Polynesia, and teachers

focused principally on Tahiti and Bora Bora. Although the teachers' knowledge of this country was again not highly developed, there appeared to be more accessible general information about this country than the previous week's topic, Wallis & Futuna. It was discussed that this was probably due to the higher popularity of French Polynesia as a tourist destination. Teachers explained during the planning meeting that revision of language features needed to be incorporated into every lesson to ensure students continued to develop their language skills, and not just grow their knowledge of Australia's ESN. It was evident in the planning documentation that it continued to be possible to focus on these key language features within the context of the ESN. Teachers agreed that students would particularly enjoy exploring the Polynesian culture, which included the art of tattooing, tamure dancing, va'a world championships, surfing and pearl factories. These topics were suggested by high school teachers living and teaching in Tahiti with whom the researcher interacted via Skype and then later reported the information to the teachers at Callistemon.

### **Week Seven**

<b>Primary Foci Week Seven</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
Revision all language features	Revision Pacific Region	Knowledge, Principled, Caring and Open-Minded

In week seven, teachers reviewed all language features taught having finished the explicit teaching of all the four-francophone countries. The curriculum in week seven also aimed to impact on students' international-mindedness by reviewing their overall knowledge of ESN, emphasising their open-mindedness and caring and principled attitudes towards the people of the ESN through facilitated class discussions focusing on this Pacific region. It was collaboratively identified during the planning that this point in the unit would mark a shift from teacher-led instruction to student-led inquiry about the ESN. As described by Tochon (2010)

although teachers as instructional organisers are important, to foster meaningful change, students must be given opportunities to engage in inquiry projects that encourages them to use their imagination.

For the remainder of the unit teachers introduced students to the travel expo formative assessment, which engaged students in an inquiry into one of the ESN. This autonomy and control over their learning was designed to motivate students to learn and to involve the school community in their learning. In addition, the students were introduced to a charity from New Caledonia which was included so that another attribute of international-mindedness could be reinforced, being a proactive global citizen, someone who takes concrete actions to help make the world a better place.

### **Week Eight to Ten**

<b>Primary Foci Week Eight-Ten</b>		
<b>French-language</b>	<b>ESN</b>	<b>International-Mindedness</b>
REVISION	Pacific Region (Self-Inquiry/Research project)	Knowledge and Risk Taker

From week eight, every lesson was divided into three sections. First students were introduced to a new fact that teachers had found about the francophone ESN as they developed their own knowledge, emphasising their co-learning within this context. This contributed to the expansion of their knowledge of this part of the world, therefore contributing to their IM. Then the students reviewed their French-language skills in line with the requirements of the Australian curriculum. Finally, students worked collaboratively on their inquiry research project with the teachers as facilitators.

The value of language increases when it is shared (Tochon, 2009). Drawing from this assertion, in the last week of the term, parents, teachers, the school leadership team and wider school community were invited to attend the travel expo after school hours. This was planned to allow students the opportunity to share their knowledge of the ESN and in doing so reinforce their own knowledge through teaching others. Finally, research-based graphical representations such as Dale's "Cone of Experience" or the Learning Pyramid, indicates that for the learner the retention value of doing some teaching is significantly higher than other forms of learning, including lectures, discussing concepts, and watching audio-visual presentations (Rose, 2014; Lalley and Miller, 2007). The unit *Baguette in Paradise* concluded on the travel expo which was a high order thinking learning experience for all students involved which also encouraged them to take risks.

#### **5.4 Summary**

The collaborative nature of the Participatory Action Research approach enabled the researcher to work alongside participating teachers at Callistemon SHS while also engaging in collaboration with teachers from the ESN. This resulted in the researcher being able to listen attentively and test the assumptions of the teachers, and in doing so build on their strengths and extend their practice into a less familiar area. However, it also allowed the teachers at Callistemon SHS to contextualise the collaborative work of the team and in doing so operate within the levels of their own capabilities and for the perceived interests of their students.

In the end, the intervention unit provided opportunities for students to develop key knowledge elements of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia. The topics of each lesson addressed within *Baguettes in Paradise* were chosen to help support equally the development of this knowledge. It was also discussed that exploring the four francophone countries, and keeping the focus on the broader Pacific region to the East of Australia, would provide students with the opportunity to be exposed to other non-francophone neighbours,

empowering French-language teachers to make this less visible region more visible. Specific resources were sourced by all participants (researcher, teachers, ESN teachers) and allocated prior to each lesson, as it was known from the reconnaissance phase that access to quality resources would be the greatest challenge faced by the classroom teachers. In addition, to complement the resources made available to teachers and as part of the intervention stage, the researcher developed a webpage (<http://baguettesinparadise.weebly.com>) that included some of the teaching resources described in this chapter as well as extension activities on similar topics.

The collaborative planning of this second phase of the action research was a critical first step in using the collective knowledge of the participant teachers, and external sources such as educators in French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, to develop a unit of work that aligned tightly to the linguistic requirements of the Australian curriculum, whilst providing scope to explore the ESN and develop students' IM. These professional conversations allowed the teachers and the researcher to explore collectively the key challenges of developing such a unit and to discuss and develop appropriate solutions. Most importantly this resulted in higher levels of teacher ownership of the unit, with the conversations also helping teachers to deepen their cultural knowledge of the ESN. As McKernan (1991), explained:

Lewin recognised the important role of participation in planned change processes. Lewin argued that to understand and change certain social practices, social scientists have to include practitioners from the real social world in all phases of inquiry (McKernan, 1991, p. 10).

The unit of work Baguettes in Paradise was the result of collaborative consideration and use of the professional knowledge of language teachers, educational research on effective teaching practice and the literature on international-mindedness. The program provided an aligned focus between all the teacher participants, which helped assure positive student learning (Marzano

and Toth, 2013). The unit focused on encouraging both teachers and students to develop an alternative contextual application of the French-language and by so doing challenge the cultural hegemony in French teaching and learning. It also allowed the possibility of students becoming more international-minded by addressing some of the key attributes such as knowledge, principled, caring, open-minded and risk taker. This deep purpose of the unit aligned with the work of Lantolf and Sunderman who argue in Tochon (2009) that the ultimate justification for engaging in language education is to work on developing a human's knowledge of other humans.

The chapter has primarily sought to describe the intervention process with only limited comment on the nature of the experience students and teachers encountered. A deeper consideration of their experience is presented in Chapter Six, Evaluation, where a major focus is on the nature of the experience and whether the curriculum experience was indeed 'transformative'.

## CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter Five confirmed that it was possible to collaboratively design a unit of work that would challenge the hegemonic positioning of France in French-language pedagogy. However, how effective was its implementation? The evaluation was the last phase of this participatory action research project. In this section of the thesis, the teachers' reflections on the enactment of the aspired transformative curriculum will be presented. In addition, evidence of student learning and engagement will be analysed.

Section 6.2 will present the qualitative data, first reviewing the teachers' evaluation of the transformative journey and then presenting the students' qualitative evaluation of the aspired transformative curriculum. In section 6.3 the quantitative data from the international-mindedness and knowledge instruments will be presented and compared with the results from the reconnaissance phase. Finally, section 6.4 will summarise the impact of the participatory action research and foreshadow upcoming recommendations for future implementation.

### **6.2. Evaluation of transformative journey: qualitative data results**

In analysing the qualitative data collected through this research, this section will first focus on developing an understanding of teachers' experiences and evaluate whether they experienced transformation as a result of the aspired transformative curriculum. This qualitative data was collected from the four French-language teachers at Callistemon State High School. The second section will review the impact of the aspired transformative curriculum on student learning by analysing the qualitative data collected from the same Year Eight students who participated in all stages of the research.

#### **6.2.1 Teachers' evaluation of curriculum transformation journey**

The aspired transformative curriculum was taught across four Year Eight French classes in Term 3, 2014. It was the first time that these four participant teachers focused on developing

knowledge of Australia's ESN and students' international-mindedness, while continuing to teach students how to speak, listen, read and write in French. Informal data were collected during the curriculum delivery throughout the term. In this section of the thesis, I argue that teachers' experiences and commentary provide evidence of the phases of the transformative learning theory developed by Mezirow as explained in Chapter 2. As previously mentioned, he characterised transformational learning as being evidenced by a pattern of phases of learning, which are ultimately evidenced in new lines of practice and action (Mezirow, 1995).

The post evaluation teacher data are organised into three sub-sections, in alignment with some of Mezirow's phases of transformational learning. The supposition is that if teachers are showing evidence of progression in these phases, then transformation is being experienced. These sub-sections include the (1) dilemma; (2) acquisition of knowledge and skills and (3) building of competence and self-confidence as essential stages in transformative learning. Each section is also followed by some consideration of the ramifications of the research. It is these experiences that would later provide some indication of what would be necessary for such aspired transformative curriculum to become an ongoing reality.

#### **6.2.1.1 The recurrent dilemma**

Mezirow (1991, 1995) argued that critically challenging strongly held assumptions is the first step to transformational learning. It is a precursor to any reform and is characterised by people becoming aware of their taken for granted assumptions. Although Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) argued that educators respond differently to change, the participating teachers, including myself as the researcher, agreed that developing an awareness of the ESN as an *alternative* context in enacting the French-language curriculum was a disorienting dilemma.

A disorienting dilemma is said to be a dilemma that causes a significant level of disruption or disturbance in a person, and where their frame of reference is shown to be

inadequate to explain what they have seen, heard, or experienced (Howie & Bagnall, 2013, p.7).

Disorientating dilemmas are commonly seen as an integral part of a transformative learning experience. In fact, Mezirow argued that a disorientating dilemma could both represent, and be the critical first step, of a transformative learning experience. Initially, Mezirow's theory of transformative learning suggested that a single life-event crisis could be the catalyst for change (Mezirow, 1978); however later he further explained that transformation can be 'epochal', meaning it can happen at a critical point in time or be incremental and take place over time (Mezirow, 2000). The experience caused by this aspired transformative curriculum also aligns to the model of Pope (1996, p.176), who uses words such as an "unfolding evolution" to argue that transformation is not necessarily linked to a single event. This is also supported by Nohl who suggests that the process of transformation often has a "non-determining start" (2015, p.39). In the case of this research, the teachers' awareness of their disorientation developed gradually, rather than instantaneously, through a series of interactions and group conversations that stretched over the initial few weeks of the project, primarily when the initial conversations proposed the possibility of shifting the contextual focus to Australia's ESN.

Regardless of how one wishes to refer to the disequilibrium experience, as Mezirow suggests, a sense of guilt and sometimes-even shame was created as a result of considering the possibility of an ESN context. The teachers were exposed to a pedagogical possibility that they had not considered previously. Realising that this meaningful context for French-language pedagogy was so close to Australia, but had previously been unconsidered by them was disorienting.

When you introduce French at the beginning of the year, it comes into it, of course we always mention it, but I don't think that teachers really go back to it. I think we need to make an effort to bring that in to our program. (Teacher 1)

Another explained:

When I introduce French, my first lesson is always about where is French spoken. I think we (French teachers) know that it is there (referring to the francophone ESN) [...] but past that introduction, we don't do much else with our students [...] I am hoping that we can take it up to the next level. Making it a priority makes sense. (Teacher 4)

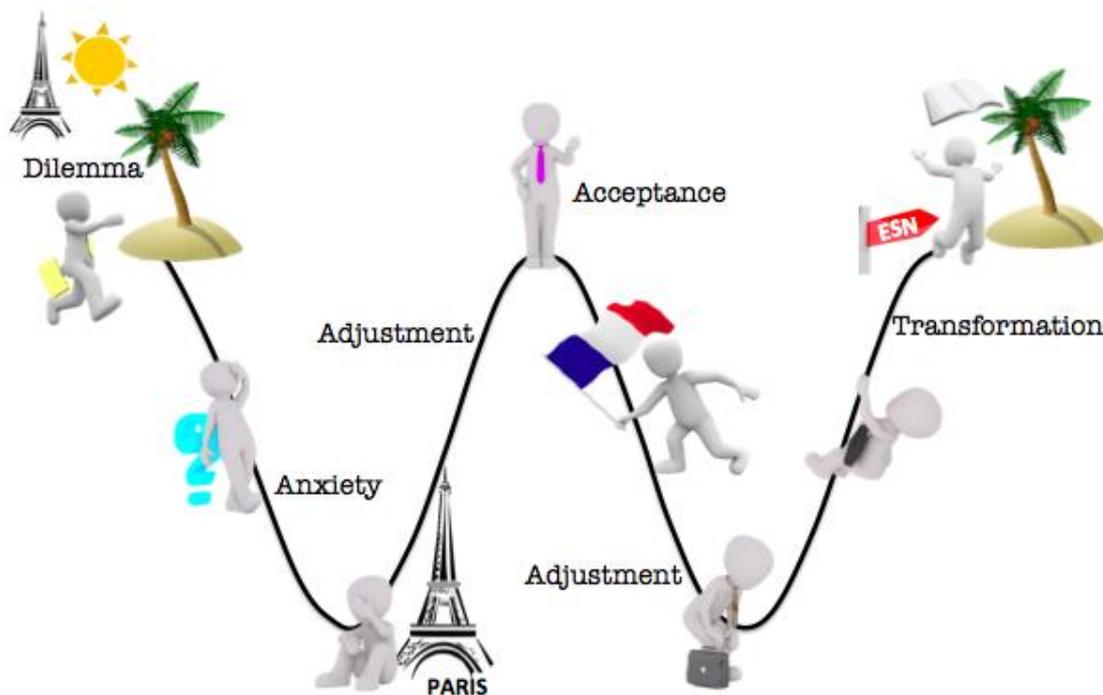
The exposure to the ESN as a context for French-language pedagogy challenged the participating teachers and myself to examine our traditional approach to teaching French. This challenge continued to occur during all three phases of the research as together we explored the possibilities of using the ESN as a context for teaching French. It was apparent that, collectively, we were confronted by our own bias of a France-centric curriculum, and the opportunity to consider a different context for French-language curriculum exposed our own pre-occupation and lack of critical consideration of possibilities for French-language pedagogy. Our preconceived views or meaning perspectives were challenged when the possibility of an ESN context was made available to us (Mezirow, 2000).

The understanding of experience is filtered through meaning perspectives (later called “habits of mind”) which include individuals’ uncritically assimilated perspectives. When a person encounters an experience which calls his or her meaning perspectives into question, this can lead to critical reflection and critical questioning of the perspectives (Kroth & Cranton, 2014, p.xiii).

Although the experiences offered by the aspired transformative curriculum provoked dialogue, reflection and questioning, reformulating teachers’ meaning perspectives and changing their assumptions remained challenging throughout the intervention.

As will be evidenced in the commentary to follow, Figure 6.1, inspired by the common stages of cultural shock as outlined in the work of Oberg (1954), represents the emotional journey

teachers and myself experienced through the intervention as we progressed through the planning, development and enactment of Baguettes in Paradise



*Figure 6.1:* Stages of transformation when challenging the cultural hegemony of the French-language curriculum

As Mezirow suggests, disorientation results from the challenge to one's own commonly held preconceptions. As the researcher, and also as an educator, I was interested in exploring the potential for contributing to teachers' transformative learning as a result of their participatory intervention. As recommended by Kroth & Cranton (2014), I helped set up a learning environment so that French teachers could collectively embark on a collaborative and dialogic journey to imagine alternative perspectives and possibilities. As Dirkx (2006) asserts, I sought to bring the 'unconscious to consciousness'. Supported by the recently published national French-language curriculum F-10 which emphasised the needed bilateral relationship between Australia and the ESN, I sought to create a disorientating dilemma through intentionally provoking the possibility of an alternative context in a safe, dialogic and supportive

environment which would nudge teachers to see a contextual alternative and “*give this alternative a go*”.

It was noted that during the reconnaissance and for approximately the first three weeks of the curriculum enactment, the teacher participants were eager and excited about transforming their traditional teaching approach of French as they too acknowledged the missed opportunities provided by a proximal context. However, from week 4, they started to experience some anxiety, which came largely from their lack of knowledge towards the ESN. Some reported that they were feeling “uncomfortable” with their general knowledge of the target countries. Others explained that it was taking them a lot of time to do additional research online to learn about the ESN. Therefore, although they were invited to review their meaning perspectives (focusing on the ESN in the French classroom), it became evident that teacher participants struggled with acquiring knowledge of an unfamiliar contexts. On one level, the struggle was due to the time that is required to make an epistemic and pedagogical shift; on another level, the undercurrent in their struggle was also their personal and professional negotiation of the value in disrupting a culturally and pedagogically dominant approach with unfamiliar French contexts in ESN. Because of this, transformation to new and “established new lines of action” would be challenging to achieve. In this sense, the dilemma remained and was recurrent as their ongoing sense of inadequacy continued despite their motivation to see the enactment of an ESN-context curriculum realised. Teachers described that the most significant cause of the perpetuation of the dilemma during the enactment of the curriculum was the challenge of developing their knowledge and capacity, which is further discussed in Section 6.2.1.2.

I think we, as teachers, need to become more informed about the ESN ourselves to start with. I think we need to. I found that when I was looking at it, I was looking at it on the internet. There is a wealth of information on the internet. If you just have time to go through it all and make it appropriate for your students. I think definitely we will need

to share resources more. Especially sharing it with schools that do it too. I think we need to do more of the sharing of resources and ideas. I think that makes people more aware as well. We are so time poor (Teacher 3).

### **6.2.1.2 Acquisition of knowledge and skills**

Teachers articulated that their sense of inadequacy in their general knowledge towards the ESN was a major influence in inhibiting their successful transition to an ESN French curriculum orientation. This feeling of inadequacy was expressed in their commentary in a variety of ways, but was mainly shown in their comments that pertained to their limited ability to engage in meaningful cultural conversations with their classes. The quote below explains that after the initial positive “inner awakening” that encouraged teachers to embark on this transformative journey (Mezirow, 1991; Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Kroth & Cranton; 2014), the lack of resources caused a feeling of anxiety, primarily because they were now teaching in a context in which they had limited experience.

I went on the Internet to try to find some videos, like on YouTube to show my students. I could not find much. What I found was either too old, not engaging or people in the video they spoke only in French which was obviously not appropriate for beginners of French (Teacher 4).

All teacher participants reported that they had to rely on their collaboration as research participants to access and develop the resources that were organised for collective action in implementing Baguettes in Paradise. Despite this supportive effort, there were times when they wanted to provide more information to their students but were unable to find additional information or were unsure of the quality of the resources they found:

At times you can find some things but then I don't know if what I am reading is correct or not, and there is not much elsewhere that can help me decide if the information is true (Teacher 2).

A teacher also explained that it was not just knowing about a certain topic, sometimes it was as 'simple' as just not knowing what to look for:

Sometimes, I just don't even know what to type. We have Google but what am I supposed to look for? (Teacher 1).

Nevertheless, through this process, as Mezirow (1991) explained, teachers identified their ability to recognise, acknowledge and reassess their taken-for-granted professional capabilities required for curriculum enactment as an important step to achieving transformation. This realisation provided teachers with an opportunity to reframe their traditional approach to delivering their French program. Mezirow (1991) argues that as adult learners we are often caught up by our own prior learning and overall life experiences, but a new purpose can provide the opportunity for transformation. Becoming aware of our personal and professional limitations can contribute to the disorientation that enables individuals to develop the knowledge to bring about new actions. In other words, as illustrated in figure 6.1, the participant teachers were required to build knowledge and skills to overcome their own France-centric teacher education, which as foreshadowed in the reconnaissance, was dominated by an established paradigm. Being open to reconsideration was important, but coupled with this was the need for teachers to develop the professional knowledge and skills to move towards a new line of action (Mezirow, 1991; Dirks, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006). It was evident that eventually, by the time students started the inquiry part of the curriculum (week 7), teachers became more accepting of some of the challenges accompanying this curriculum transformation and were adjusting their practice through collaborative dialogue and learning alongside their language students as they progressed through the term:

When I don't know, I just tell them [students]. They are fine with that. We just learn it together. One of my students was telling me about the Second World War and Port Vila the other day. I was impressed with the information he was able to recall. I am definitely learning with them (Teacher 4).

This quote, along with the three preceding quotes, all demonstrate that teachers' knowledge about the ESN was simply not sufficiently developed and this was linked to their lack of formal or informal exposure to this topic. This acknowledgment corresponds with the identified need in the literature for teachers to be provided access to more quality resources to support teaching which focuses on the Pacific (Rose, Quanchi, Moore, 2009).

Through my own journey, which extends beyond this curriculum intervention, I have found that although the resources are lacking, one of the best ways to access authentic resources that minimise stereotypes is to make use of "the digital era" (Fullan and Langworthy, 2014, p.4) in which we live and embrace various social media platforms. For example, by "following" or "liking" Facebook pages of associations, clubs, restaurants and media of the target countries (New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia), it allows access to up-to-date and authentic information about what is happening in these countries. It is a current window open to the ESN. Teachers and students can find out about a range of events, current affairs and issues that are happening in the target countries and then use this context as way of introducing teaching and learning new language features.

Despite teachers' awareness of their lack of preparedness for this curriculum intervention and limited access to teaching resources, they demonstrated persistence in this challenging transformative journey. There was clear evidence from the teacher participants that even with their perceived knowledge inadequacy in regards to what they knew about the ESN, they still felt that the unit was successful in its implementation primarily because of the collaborative

learning with colleagues and their confidence in positioning themselves as co-inquirers with their students.

Laing (1978 cited in Mezirow) suggested that small groups working together are critical to bring to consciousness the unconscious to help start addressing a common dilemma. However, although a social context helps to fuel transformative learning and support transformation, Mezirow argues that transformation is ultimately an individual learning process (Kroth & Cranton, 2014). Transformation requires a considerable mental effort to shift one's frame of reference (Mezirow, 2000).

The developing capacity of the teachers and the successful outcomes of this intervention will now be discussed in the next section.

#### **6.2.1.3 Building of competence through success in actions**

The qualitative data also identified that despite the challenges experienced, teachers gradually, and through reflection and collaboration, developed an increased level of competence and were able to identify some successes in their changed approach to teaching French. Mezirow (1991, 2000) identifies this building of competence as an important penultimate step in the transformative learning journey. Of particular importance in this building of teachers' competences through success was the positive responses of students, who once exposed to the curriculum, started to demonstrate significant learning gains that shaped a new idea of the Pacific.

One teacher recalled observing students as they shared their newly found knowledge of the ESN during the travel expo:

It was very clear that some groups, in particular the group who presented from Vanuatu. They had done lots of research into their presentation but also had this deep understanding so they were able to communicate, discuss these ideas very clearly. For

example, the presentation of the flag and symbolism about the flag of Vanuatu [...] I didn't want to walk away; I was just standing there and, like, tell me more! (Teacher 4).

Teachers' self-confidence in their new role was also reinforced by receiving positive feedback from parents on their students' learning experiences:

I had parents actually commenting on certain groups that did present on how well they presented and the information they were learning. [...]The parents walked away like wow these kids have really understood deeply that task (Teacher 4).

The inclusion of parents and other members of the community was important, given teachers identified, in the reconnaissance, parental pressure as one possible contributing factor to the Eurocentric nature of the Australian French classroom.

Teachers reported their observation of parents during the travel expo:

Parents were learning a lot. The topic of the travel expo was not a shock to them because we had very clear communication with the parents. We told them that it was going to be cultural studies about the ESN rather than French culture itself. I think the information that was presented was new to them and intriguing and they were learning alongside the children (Teacher 3).

To challenge the hegemonic status of France in the teaching and learning of French, it is not just necessary, but in fact more powerful, to position students as agents of change. In addition, "international research has shown that parental engagement (of various kinds) has a positive impact on many indicators of student achievement" (Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders, 2012, p.8).

Additional examples of these successes can be found in the following teachers' comments shared through their experiences with the travel expo:

I think it went very well. The students worked really hard in the lead-up to making the poster. Not all of my students came but those who did, did a lovely job and I think overall everyone who came had a lovely time and it was a very beneficial afternoon (Teacher 3).

I think it was a great success. I think this task is a very good task to give students the opportunity to show their creative side and have a deeper understanding of the ESN (Teacher 4).

Teachers explained that the unit worked for both high academic and low literacy classes but in different ways:

None of my kids showed up at the travel expo, so that was a shame but they loved the process of making the poster, it was actually the best they behaved – like I had a large amount of behaviour issues in that class and when we were doing the cultural elements and drawing these between our own culture and the culture we are looking at they were the best behaved I have ever had them – I remember that and that stayed with me. We were watching some of cultural videos and they were getting straight in to it. They were not good at listening to the PowerPoint presentations but the videos they engaged in very well (Teacher 4).

It is these different examples of success that enabled teachers to build confidence towards their aspired new role as French-language educators; that is, a role in which French teachers develop student competence in the French-language, while also taking almost exclusive responsibility for supporting students' knowledge development of the ESN.

However, despite the overall positive success of the aspired transformative curriculum and most notably the assessment task (the travel expo), teachers mentioned that although the unit was interesting and worthwhile to develop students' knowledge, they experienced pressure by trying

to cover all four countries. Some recommended that focusing on two countries each Term might be a better approach.

I think students learnt a lot from Baguettes in Paradise but trying to cover four countries within just one Term was difficult. I think that in the future I would prefer to introduce one or two countries a Term so that we can really unpack the information for each of them (Teacher 3).

Teachers were unable to cover, or covered only briefly, some aspects of the curriculum due, principally, to lack of time but also due to the range of available resources and personal knowledge of ESN. As Terhart (2013) suggested, the “no time” argument was certainly used on many occasions by teachers. However, in identifying areas for improvement through critical reflection of the unit, teachers indicated they developed improved competence as they came closer to transformation. This approximation was the “awakening” described earlier in Chapter 2 by Ball (2009). She argued that experiences that challenge long-held perspectives [Eurocentric teaching focus] are the beginning to generating new knowledge, problem solving and ongoing learning. This “awakening” was in part created by teachers’ realisation that producing new knowledge (ESN knowledge) would be relevant for their students’ future. The hidden curriculum that underpins their practices is brought to light and provides a possibility to disrupt the hegemonic representation of France as the only authoritative language context.

The teacher also celebrated the connections that their students were starting to make:

They [my students] became more aware of the Pacific in general. One thing that really impressed me was like, that these islands, these little islands. He [a Year Eight student] was able to tell us where his ancestors were coming from. I remember being very impressed, we went on the Google map and he was able to navigate across the Pacific region. Not just big islands but also the small islands (Teacher 4).

Witnessing examples of students connecting their personal history with the ESN world

reminded French teachers of the great potential that lay within their role and this aspired transformative curriculum. Focusing on the ESN in a French-language classroom offered students opportunities to engage in global learning about a part of the world that is directly relevant for them, either through a personal connection as seen above, or through an interwoven future as described throughout the literature review.

In addition, it did become clear during discussions with teachers that they had moved from a conscious to an unconscious use of nomenclature, such as the phrase “East-side neighbours”, when referring to this part of the world. Sharing a common language or model of instruction is an essential prerequisite for developing expertise in any systematic way (Marzano, 2009). Moreover, it is this shared understanding that assists in developing consistent and effective pedagogies around the implementation of an ESN French focused curriculum (Marzano and Toth, 2013). It was evident that consistent language allowed for a clearer and more purposeful discussion around the curriculum transformation. The teachers involved began to hold a common understanding of the phrase East-side neighbours, meaning the four French speaking countries of the South Pacific.

I think students really enjoyed learning about Australia’s ESN. For the vast majority it was the first time they were learning anything about these countries. They were engaged and became curious about these islands (Teacher 3).

Finally, teachers explained that students did not seem to “miss” being taught exclusively about France. In fact, teachers reported that students appeared to enjoy the curriculum and were engaging well in the formative assessment.

For a lot of my students, I found that, the high achieving students always like to enjoy something new. I think some of them found it more interesting to have another aspect of the culture rather than just language. It lightens the weight of the language a bit. We did not talk about it in French but it came as a welcome relief to them, it was not always

all about the linguistic and that's ok (Teacher 1).

Here the use of the word 'relief' by the teacher is a positive indication about the reception of the aspired transformative curriculum by the teachers, and hints at an enthusiasm for change and more importantly, a contributor to their resolution in taking on and enacting a new line of action. Endicott (2011, p.57) explained that educational change in languages is complex and argued that 'a greater need for professional development and support, for learning to teach languages in new inter-cultural ways with a new outcomes-based syllabus' is necessary.

#### **6.2.1.4 Summary**

To summarise, from the teacher's perspective, the enactment of the aspired transformative curriculum was for them a transformative experience. Mezirow's transformative learning theory helped to describe the different stages of these teachers' journey providing evidence of transformation. Teachers were first confronted by a disorientated dilemma making them better aware of the cultural hegemony that was continuously prompting their return towards their traditional eurocentric teaching resources. This awareness, which resulted from ongoing discussions and critical reflection before, during and after having applied the aspired transformative curriculum, points to a probable positive future, as several scholars such as Cranton and Kroth (2014), Dirkx (2006) and Mezirow (1991, 1995, 2000), argued that such wakefulness is a prerequisite to transformation. Once exposed to the disorientating dilemma, French teachers worked collaboratively towards the enactment of the curriculum. Teachers said that their satisfaction with this curriculum was strongly influenced by both the positive student and parent comments following their exposure to the aspired transformative curriculum. These successes contributed significantly to their commitment towards this aspired transformation. However, this aspired transformation was a challenging endeavour for teachers mainly due to a lack of resources and the teachers' self-identified difficulty in sharing spontaneous knowledge and facts with students. Overall, teachers recognised the value of teaching this aspired

transformative curriculum, as they were able to understand and articulate the purpose that was driving the research.

Although teachers articulated some success and increased competence in teaching about the ESN, the researcher's observations combined with this qualitative data indicated that the single transformative unit of work was not enough to allow teachers to have their identity as French-language teachers fully transformed. In fact, a follow-up post-evaluation in Term 4, six months after the intervention, showed teachers, with one exception, had returned to their traditional eurocentric teaching approach.

I felt like I needed to be consistently reminded by *Florence* (researcher) that we could for example show a map of Noumea instead of a map of Paris. I didn't even realise that I was doing it. It is a bit embarrassing but it is hard to change although I know that this is important stuff. (Teacher 4)

In alignment with Mezirow's phases of transformative learning, the teacher expressed feelings of guilt and shame when reflecting on the continuation of their long-standing practices and Eurocentric focus in the French classroom. It is apparent that the lack of resources and strong perpetuating notion of France in French challenges the transformation of teachers' meaning schemes and meaning perspectives, and overcoming these are vital steps in creating a focus on the ESN in the French-language classroom. Therefore, this research data indicates that any substantive integration of the ESN into the identity of French teachers will take a more sustained effort.

### **6.2.2 Students' evaluation of curriculum transformation journey**

The qualitative student data was gathered from a focus group, which included the five students in Year Eight French at Callistemon SHS. Prior to being exposed to the aspired transformative curriculum, the data collected in the reconnaissance phase indicated that these same five

students had limited knowledge of Australia's ESN due to the fact that they have had little to no teaching about this part of the world at school. Overall, students felt more comfortable being asked questions about Asia in contrast to the ESN as they explained that it was a topic they covered on many occasions at school. The work of Rose, Quanchi, and Moore (2009) had warned of the lack of teaching and learning opportunities about the Pacific offered to Australian students as evidenced by the school curriculum, and this was evident in students' commentaries.

I am not sure about what countries are located on the East-side of Australia, we have not learnt about it. I know more about Asia because we are learning about it (Student 5).

I am not really comfortable speaking about this part of the world. My knowledge of this part of the world would have to be about a 1 or 2 (out of 10). (Student 1)

Me too about 2 or 3 (Student 2).

Same. (Student 3)

Prior to being exposed to the aspired transformative curriculum, most students found learning that the French-language was being spoken in countries located only a few hours from the coast of Australia to be surprising and, to some extent, bizarre. This aligned with the description provided earlier in the data provided by the French-language teachers and also through the literature review (Cryle, 2003; Ritchie, 2003; Chamber, 1996). Therefore, in all, the data collected post-curriculum intervention sought to determine if any transformation in students had occurred in their: (1) Expectations of learning content within the French-language classroom, (2) Knowledge of ESN and (3) International-mindedness. These aspects are described in the sections that follow.

#### **6.2.2.1 Expectations of French-language classroom: Students post-evaluation data**

Overall, the post-evaluation data indicated that these Year Eight students were surprised by the new aspired transformative curriculum and its non-Eurocentric focus.

Initially I thought that we were only going to learn about the French-language but we also learnt about the culture. I was surprised that we didn't learn about the Eiffel Tower [...]. (Student 1)

I expected to learn more about Paris because usually stereotypical French is all about Paris [...]. (Student 2)

Although the literature as well as teachers' comments in the reconnaissance had indicated that the possibility of not teaching about Paris could disappoint students and impact on their overall interest in the subject (Chambers, 1996; Ritchie, 2003), the data collected in the evaluation phase demonstrated that students were surprised but not disappointed by the ESN focus. In fact, one student explained:

This class has exceeded my expectation [...]. (Student 3)

While another added:

I was not disappointed, I was just surprised that we didn't learnt about France but rather about New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna (Student 2).

Students also explained that part of the curriculum also aligned with some of their initial expectations, in particular those around the language features they would learn within their French classroom, as illustrated in this post-evaluation comment:

My expectation was initially that we were going to learn basic words in the language.

I expected to learn French words and numbers and stuff. We did that. I was expecting to learn about their flags and what they eat and stuff. I was expecting to learn about France, but I learnt that there are lots of other islands closer to Australia that speak French (Student 5).

This comment was one of several that provided evidence that the aspired transformative curriculum, with its focus on building knowledge and positive attitudes toward the ESN, engaged students positively in developing an alternative view to what their French classroom

would likely traditionally emphasise.

### **6.2.2.2 Knowledge of students post-evaluation data**

The five students were also invited to engage in small group discussions to gain a better understanding of how their knowledge of the ESN developed post-curriculum. When asked to explain what new knowledge students had developed this term in their French class, one student initiated the conversation by stating:

I have learnt about Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia  
(Student 4).

It was clear that for some it was the very first time that they were being exposed to knowledge of these islands in a school environment. One student explained:

It was the first time for me to learn about these countries so it was very interesting  
(Student 2).

This aligns with the central idea of this research, that the French-language classroom and its teachers are ideally placed to improve the limited learning opportunities of Australian students to develop knowledge of the ESN. If not for this unit of work, it is likely this student would not have engaged with learning about the ESN in any other meaningful way.

Students' cultural knowledge associated to the ESN also developed:

I thought it was interesting to learn that women in New Caledonia play cricket and they wear traditional dresses when they play (Student 3).

There are a lot of things left in the water from the Second World War in Vanuatu. If you go there you can go diving and you will be able to see lots from the war. Australians, used the islands for fighting, like military, against Japan (Student 1).

In addition, one could argue that students' frames of reference have been challenged in this curriculum too as some explained that:

[...] now when I think of a possible travel with my French class, I think of Noumea, New Caledonia. (Student 3)

“[...] now that I have learnt about these countries, I think I would like to go to Vanuatu or New Caledonia”. (Student 2)

In their comments, the students are demonstrating that they have the conceptual understanding to be able to identify the ESN as closely linked to French-language and culture. They are now conscious of this possible alternative of travelling to the ESN as part of their French-language studies. This asserts that they have not only developed a sense of the location of the ESN geographically, but that their “awakening” is also contributing positively to challenging the hegemonic status of France as the only authoritative language site.

Another Year Eight student continued:

I am from the Philippines and I found some connections between these islands and my own culture, it was pretty interesting. It was a very interesting unit. I believe that because the French islands are closer to Australia, it will motivate more students to learn the language because now we know that there are people who are living just next to us who speak French, we don't need to go to France, Paris, to use what we have learnt in class. (Student 2)

In the quote above, not only does this student question the orthodoxy of going to France, he draws attention to the possibility of the use of ESN for other Australian students.

To summarise, these quotes provide examples of students whose knowledge of the ESN has been expanded, which has also fostered a desire to directly engage. This is a critical step in wanting to make a positive difference in this region.

### **6.2.2.3 International-mindedness of students' post-evaluation data**

Knowledge, as described in the literature review, is one of the key components of international-mindedness but as explained in Chapter 2, the literature review, there are other attributes that defines international-mindedness. This section focuses on the observed developed attributes of international-mindedness as a result of the exposure to the aspired transformative curriculum. It is important to note here that the intervention focused on particular dimensions of IM and in this analysis we sought to determine if any of these aspects showed evidence of development. These aspects included Knowledge, Caring, Principled, Open-Minded and Risk Taker. The qualitative post-evaluation data displayed some of the knowledge, open-minded and risk taker attributes of international-mindedness within the following students' comments:

[...] I think it is a beautiful culture [people from Noumea] and it is so close to Australia.

I heard that people eat bats in New Caledonia, I want to try that! (Student 3)

Here the student was able to demonstrate positive emotions towards the ESN because of her newly acquired knowledge. In addition, she was able to appreciate critically the traditions of others and wanted to connect and experience them herself. Therefore, it could be argued that additional attributes of IM are demonstrated in the above comment. Open-mindedness and risk taking behaviours are all defined as key components of international-mindedness (Hill, 2012). Of course, it is possible, that this particular student may well have already been internationally-minded, but the aspired transformative curriculum gave her a context in which to apply it that she had not been exposed to before. As discussed in the literature review, Singh and Qi (2013) explain that awareness and understanding is a first step when developing international-mindedness. This student has developed this, and through the French-language classroom is developing Step 2, Skills and Capacity, as the ability to communicate in the language of the ESN is a fundamental requirement for engagement. Singh and Qi (2013) went on to explain that with both of these steps completed, the will to act and engage in service and action can follow.

Another acknowledged component of international-mindedness is multilingualism (Sriprakash, Singh, Jing, 2014; Singh & Qi, 2013). What was apparent in the students' statements was that despite the explicit focus on the ESN, they had also been provided with an opportunity to learn how to speak, listen, read and write in French. One student argued:

I think this term we learnt about both the culture and the language. I can say Bonjour! Salut! Comment ça va? I learnt how to speak French and a lot of vocabulary, and like tradition and how what people in French countries do. I can introduce myself in French and count to 30. (Student 1)

Another student explained:

I learnt how to speak in French and how to write in French.

These responses demonstrated that by focusing on the ESN for one term, students perceived that they did not learn less French. In fact, although not measured in the study, they have covered the required linguistic features and developed their cultural knowledge of French through Australia's ESN.

### **6.3 Quantitative Evaluation: Results from Questionnaires**

As described in Chapter 3, there were two questionnaires used as part of this research project. Both questionnaires, described in Chapter 3, were used pre- and post-exposure to the curriculum intervention. Because this questionnaire data is inherently only of value as a pre-post comparison, it is presented only in the Phase Three: Evaluation. The first questionnaire was the international-mindedness questionnaire. It was used to evaluate if students' international-mindedness changed after being exposed to the aspired transformative curriculum. It was used to determine whether the French-language classroom could be used as a vehicle to develop students' international-mindedness. It is important to note that although the questionnaire addresses various dimensions of IM, the actual curriculum intervention was conceived to address particular elements of IM. These included Knowledge, Caring, Principled, Open-

Minded and Risk Taker and are worthy of analysis in this chapter. The second questionnaire, a knowledge-based questionnaire, was used to evaluate initial students' knowledge of the ESN and then to compare improvements of that knowledge after the 10-week Term. In section 6.3.1, the results from the international-mindedness questionnaire will be presented and discussed. In 6.3.2, the results from the knowledge-based questionnaire will be presented and discussed.

### **6.3.1 Evaluation of International-Mindedness Questionnaire Results**

The development of this instrument was explained in Chapter 3. Knowing about the level of students' international-mindedness at the beginning of the study followed by the post-intervention data helped determine if the intervention can be associated with greater international-mindedness. In other words, can students exposed to an aspired transformative French-language curriculum become more internationally-minded? To answer this question, the research-based questionnaire was developed and completed by students prior to exposing them to the new curriculum.

At the end of Term 2, 2014 a total of 21 students at Callistemon State High School completed the international-mindedness survey before the curriculum intervention was implemented in Term 3, 2014. These 21 students undertook the same survey immediately after the curriculum intervention. The time between the two tests was twelve weeks, including ten weeks during which teachers taught the French class using *Baguettes in Paradise*.

A score was allocated to each student's response as a means of determining student agreement or disagreement with the questionnaire statements. Two points were allocated when a student selected 'Strongly Agree', 1 point when the student selected 'Agree', 0 points for 'Neither Agree nor Disagree', -1 point for 'Disagree' and -2 points for 'Strongly Disagree'. An average score for each question was then calculated, giving a broad measure of whether the group of students agreed or disagreed with the statement, and the strength of that position. The difference in average score between the pre-and-post intervention responses provide a measure of where

students' IM developed and by how much. This difference is calculated by subtracting the pre-intervention mean score from the post-intervention mean score for each question. The average score for all questions pre-curriculum intervention was 1.025 and post-curriculum intervention was 1.082, indicating only a small increase in overall agreement with the survey questions, or in students' international-mindedness. The statistical significance of this will be discussed below. A larger version of the figure 6.2 below can be found in Appendix D.

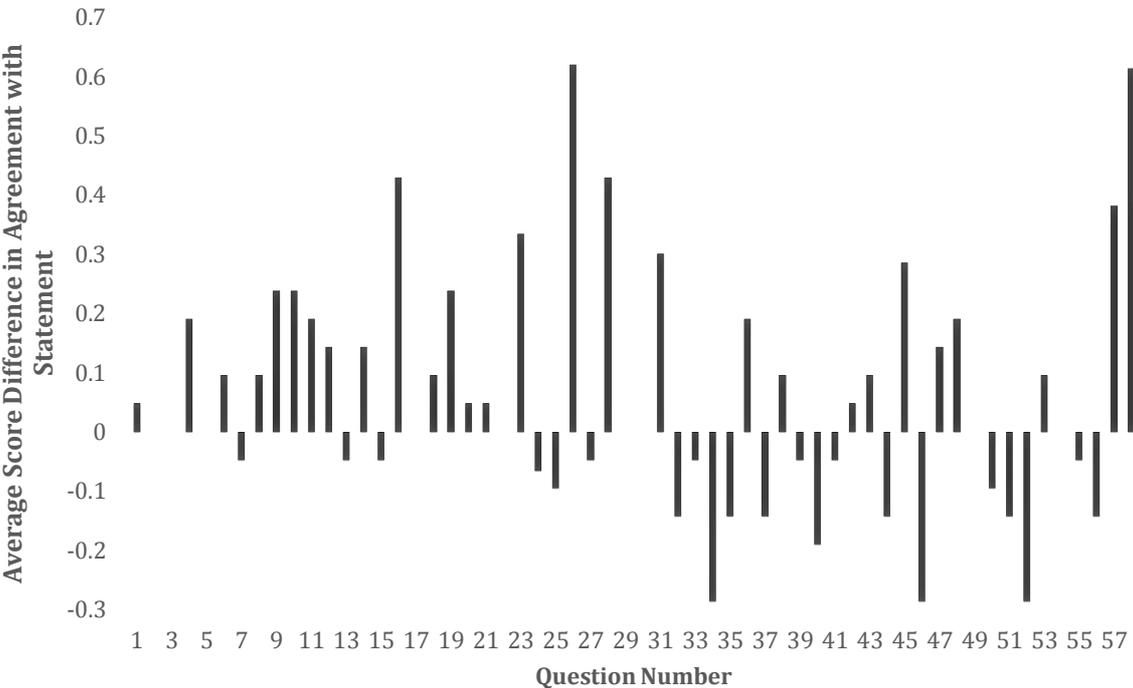


Figure 6.2. Average change in pre and post intervention test scores across all questions in the International-mindedness instrument.

A positive value in the figure above indicated that agreement with a statement has broadly increased following the curriculum intervention and a negative value indicates that agreement with a statement has broadly decreased following the curriculum intervention. Overall, figure 6.3 shows that the difference in student scores pre-and post-intervention was quite variable. Any sizable difference indicates that, statistically, some growth in students' international-

mindedness was observed. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that not all changes can be attributed solely to this curriculum intervention.

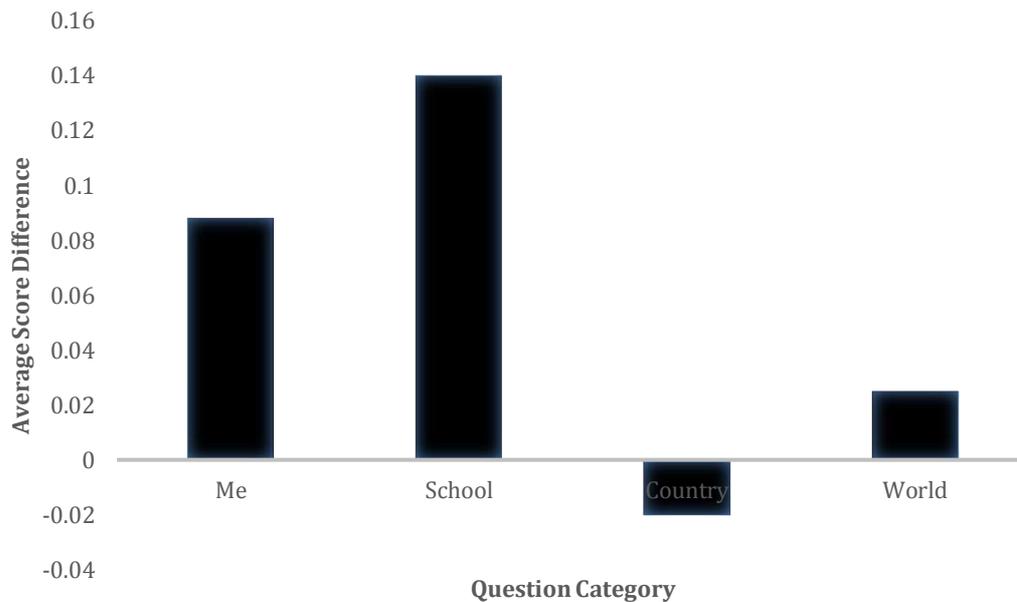
In analysing these sizable differences, it was first noticed that statement number 4 *Learning about new things makes me feel excited* and statement number 14 *School is important*, as well as statement 19 *I am excited to go to school to learn* all show that, statistically, students demonstrated an increase in their excitement about learning following the aspired transformative curriculum. This statistical data was particularly relevant when combined with the previously presented qualitative data in which teachers explained that students demonstrated enthusiasm towards the introduction of an ESN context in their French class. The combination of these two sets of data indicates that the context of the aspired transformative curriculum used in the French-language classroom was successful in engaging students positively in their learning at school.

In addition, sizeable growth in agreement was noted in statement 9 *I discuss ideas and issues with my family and friends*, statement 11 *I ask questions to my family about how life was when they were my age*, statement 26 *I ask questions to my teacher and classmates about where they are coming from*, statement 21 *I like that people from my country come from different places* and statement 45 *All people are equal*. This quantitative data reflected positively on the caring and open-minded attributes of IM. All of these above statements show students demonstrating curiosity about others, an interest in engaging with them and caring about the wellbeing of others. Students were given multiple opportunities across the 10-week unit to learn from and about those living close to them. These gains in student attitudes toward others were also reflected in many student qualitative statements, which highlighted their interest and desire to engage with the ESN. A key finding from this study is that with a relative under-representation of ESN in school and popular discourse, teaching about the ESN is necessary to bring to bear greater awareness of the region to young Australians.

Finally, the sizeable difference in statement 23 *I am not afraid to make mistakes in the classroom* and statement 58 *When I grow up I am going to travel overseas* could be directly attributed to the aspired transformative curriculum, in particular lessons from week 7 to 10, in which students were encouraged to engage in an inquiry-learning task on the ESN. When combining the statistical data with the qualitative data, it can be suggested that the assessment poster students engaged in as part of *Baguettes in Paradise* contributed to improving students' score in these particular domains of IM.

However, given some unexpected results in other individual statements on this instrument, care should be taken in placing an overly strong emphasis on these individual results. For example, it was an unexpected outcome that despite the fact that many lessons across the 10-week unit aimed to address the statement 3 *Trying new things is important* and statement 49 *I like to learn new things about the world, its people and its history*, both of these showed zero difference between the pre and the post intervention data. This does not align with student and teacher qualitative data and points to some potential limitations in using the instrument to review specific statements rather than broader trends.

Although the results are highly variable when examined by question-by-question, careful analysis does reveal some interesting patterns. Firstly, as shown in Figure 6.3, there is a clear difference in how students' average scores changed from pre- to post-curriculum intervention across the horizontal subsections of the instrument: Me, My School, My Country and My World. The curriculum intervention appears to have caused an increase in student agreement (and therefore, international-mindedness) with the survey statements when they were targeted at the Me and My School participation level. The statements targeted at the My Country and My World participation levels saw very little change.



*Figure 6.3.* Average difference in pre-and post-intervention test scores across the Me, My School, My Country and My World questions.

This pattern aligns with the work of Harwood and Bailey (2012) who developed the Me, My School, My Country and My World framework for evaluating IM. In their research, they argued that international-mindedness was developing from the inside out. That is, IM develops first from the individual student, outward through their interactions within school, continues developing through engagement with the wider nation, and finally develops through connections with global communities. In taking into consideration the research of Harwood and Bailey (2012), as well as the length of exposure to the aspired transformative curriculum, it was expected that the highest levels of growth in student IM would occur at the Me and My School level. This is, after all, where the vast majority of their time and attention is devoted.

A second level of organisation within the international-mindedness survey instrument was the inclusion of statements that engaged students on Intellectual, Emotional and Behavioural levels. Figure 6.5 shows that there was some difference in the impact of the curriculum intervention

across the Behavioural level in particular. Some changes were noted at the Intellectual level while little difference was seen across the Emotional level.

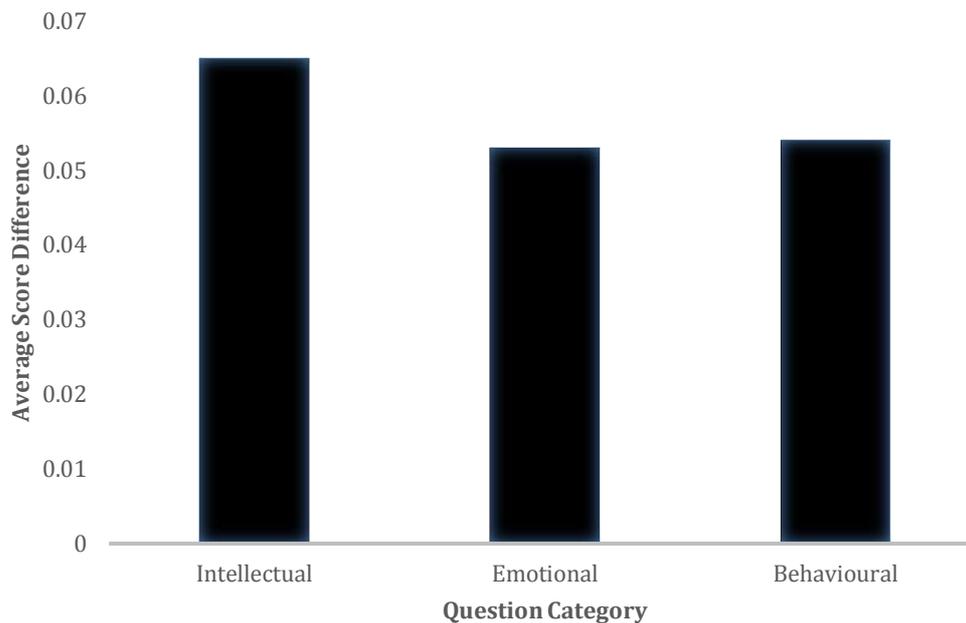


Figure 6.4. Average difference in pre and post intervention test scores across the Intellectual, Emotional and Behavioural questions

Evidence of the relatively strong growth in the Behavioural questions was discussed in section 6.2.2.2. In that section, drawn from a student small focus group, students talked about an increased desire to engage with the ESN and to try new cultural experiences. The aspired transformative curriculum sparked an interest in the students, which was reflected in the international-mindedness instrument questions about future behaviours. In particular, the increase in agreement with statement 58, *When I grow up I am going to travel overseas* is indicative of this stated change in future behaviour and a growth in international –mindedness. The final level of organisation of the international-mindedness survey instrument was the vertical arrangement of statements to align with 5 of the attributes of the International Baccalaureate learner profile. Figure 6.5 shows that the most significant changes in student

scores were in the categories of Open Minded and Risk Taker. These attributes were also salient in the small focus group discussions, with students making statements that indicated growth or a change in mindset. This change is not unexpected, because the intervention unit made explicit attention to both of these attributes. Further statistical analyses in the sections that follow will give evidence as to whether these changes are attributable to the intervention; however, it is worth noting that the Open-Minded attribute was identified as being less statistically significant than the Risk-Taker attribute. There was little to no change in student scores within the Principled and Caring attributes. This prompts questions about the length of engagement with the ESN that would be required to develop greater international-mindedness toward the ESN. This unit of work was introductory and lasted for 10 weeks. Based upon these outcomes, this research will argue for a sustained focus on the ESN in the French-language classroom throughout the schooling years. It is hypothesised that such a focus would develop further international-mindedness across all of the attributes, including the Principled and Caring attributes.

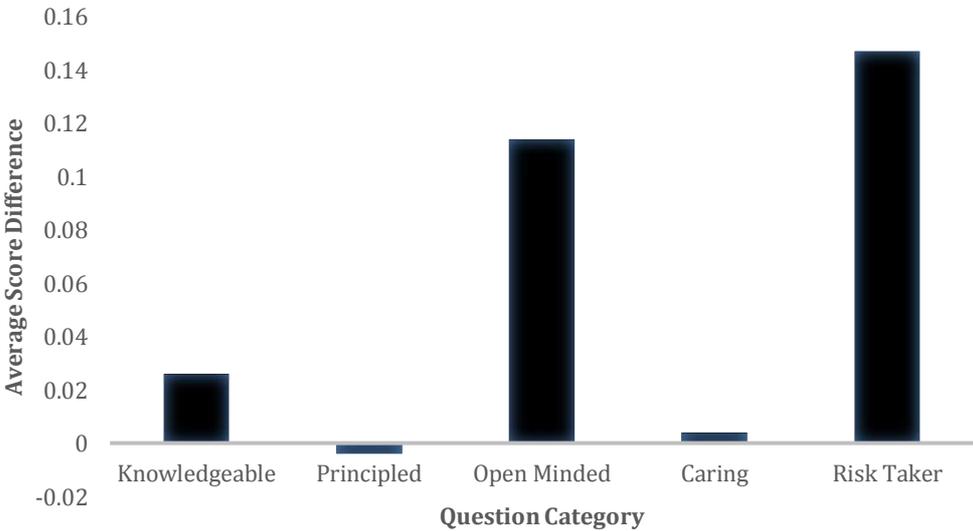


Figure 6.5: Average difference in pre and post intervention test scores across the 5 included IB attributes

### 6.3.1.1 Statistical data analysis

This section presents the statistical analysis of the results collected from the International-Mindedness instruments. The table below shows a summary of the quantitative data drawn from the instrument used to measure student's international-mindedness pre and post the curriculum intervention. There were 21 participants from Callistemon SHS. The scale of the instruments is +2 to -2 (Strongly Agree = +2, Agree = +1, Disagree = -1, Strongly Disagree = -2).

The table presents an increase in the mean, hence, in international-mindedness for most groups of questions. To ensure this increase was due to the curriculum exposure rather than due to randomness or experimental errors, a common statistical measure was used. The P-value was calculated for each question group using a paired single tailed T-test. The statistical reliability of the evidence can be directly described in terms of the P-value found in the table below.

Across all questions there was an increase in the mean of 0.058. The P-Value of 0.013 indicates that there is moderate evidence against the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative, the null hypothesis being that the increase is not due to the curriculum intervention but due to randomness or experimental errors. The alternative is that the increase in the mean is the result of the curriculum intervention. Similar results can be observed for the My school, Behavioural, and Open-minded groups of questions. The Me group of questions has a P-value of 0.005 and the Risk Taker group of questions has a P-value of 0.006, indicating that there is strong evidence against the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative for these questions. The other questions have  $P > 0.10$  which indicates no evidence against the null hypothesis; therefore, we are not able to conclude that these increases are direct results of the aspired transformative curriculum.

Table 6.1: Statistical test showing significance of quantitative data from IM questionnaire

Question Group	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test Standard Deviation	Post-test Mean	Post-test Standard Deviation	Increase in Mean	P Value (smaller (less than 0.05) is more statistically significant)	Effect Size
All	1.025	0.559	1.083	0.53	0.058	0.013	0.105
Me	1.374	0.342	1.462	0.305	0.088	0.005	0.272471
My School	0.987	0.684	1.129	0.517	0.142	0.013	0.238789
My Country	0.975	0.478	0.953	0.49	-0.022	0.299	-0.04546
The World	0.813	0.51	0.838	0.541	0.025	0.334	0.047594
Intellectual	1.13	0.463	1.183	0.526	0.053	0.105	0.107397
Emotional	1.18	0.541	1.195	0.501	0.015	0.351	0.028812
Behavioural	0.776	0.552	0.88	0.522	0.104	0.025	0.193744
Knowledgeable	0.893	0.608	0.919	0.67	0.026	0.288	0.040737
Principled	1.425	0.336	1.421	0.363	-0.004	0.462	-0.01145
Open Minded	0.935	0.557	1.049	0.492	0.114	0.095	0.217768
Caring	1.013	0.494	1.017	0.435	0.004	0.469	0.008629
Risk taker	0.853	0.557	1	0.491	0.147	0.006	0.281092

The effect size represents the size of the intervention effect. Overall, the effect size of All 0.105 for a Term of instruction indicates a meaningful impact on student IM in this area. Hattie (2009) explains that effect sizes can be described in general terms as having a small effect ( $d=0.2$ ), a medium effect ( $d=0.4$ ) or a large effect ( $d=0.6$ ) on outcomes. He defines  $d=0.4$  to be the *hinge point*, an effect size indicating the impact of the intervention has ‘greater than average influence’ on achievement. Given this particular intervention lasted just one Term, it can be concluded that the intervention was successful in helping improve students’ international-mindedness. The data presented in Table 6.1 indicates that the largest effect sizes were found

in the Me (0.272) and Risk Taker (0.281) groups of questions. However, as with any statistical calculation, results are subject to some uncertainties. Hattie (2009) warns to be cautious when interpreting effect sizes from small samples (<30). The effect size also indicates that the intervention is having a varied effect across the different aspects of international-mindedness. Given the data comes from a program that was delivered to only one class by one teacher with a sample size of less than 30, any meaningful gauge of the size of the effect would need to be conducted on a larger scale with a greater number of teachers.

To summarise the results, statistical measures provided evidence that the aspired transformative curriculum impacted on international-mindedness. However, the variability in the attributes of international-mindedness that are impacted on by the transformative curriculum clearly indicated that for a focus on the ESN to impact effectively on international-mindedness it needs to be sustained over a longer period of time and not just one term. The results also prompt questions about further refinement of the aspired transformative curriculum and its continued use should be subject to the same cycle of implementation and review as occurs at a school level for all other aspects of the curriculum. Further research incorporating the use of controls could also be utilised to isolate more accurately the effect of the aspired transformative curriculum from that of general schooling.

### **6.3.2 Evaluation of Knowledge-based Questionnaire Results**

The knowledge-based questionnaire included a series of 15 questions, designed to gain an understanding of students' general knowledge of Australia's Francophone ESN. The data was collected from 25 participants in Year Eight at Callistemon SHS. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. It is important to note that although this questionnaire was additional to the international-mindedness instrument, knowledge of the world is a key component of international-mindedness. Therefore, these results are also indicative of an impact of the aspired

transformative curriculum on students' international-mindedness, albeit within a very specific attribute of IM.

First, the classroom teacher distributed the questionnaire and students completed it on paper during the reconnaissance (pre-curriculum exposure). The same questionnaire was then redistributed to students in the evaluation phase (post-curriculum exposure). This section of the thesis focuses on presenting the difference between the pre and post data collected which provides information on students' knowledge development of the ESN. The data collected from this instrument will be presented in two subsections: (1) Students' transformed consciousness, and (2) Students' cultural knowledge.

#### **6.3.2.1 Students' transformed consciousness**

The data indicated a shift in the frame of reference of ESN as a French-language resource, and an emerging understanding of ESN. Whilst the majority of students were able to make general identification that French was one of the languages in the Pacific nations (Question 10), a higher level of accuracy was evidenced after exposure to the resource. 68% were already aware that French was spoken across the five continents including the islands in the Pacific Ocean. Only 16% believed, pre-curriculum, that French was the official language of France only, while a similar percentage of students indicated that they did not know. This data did not come as surprise after students revealed in the reconnaissance focus group that they had previously been introduced to French Polynesia through their Year Eight SOSE unit. Also, teachers mentioned that it was considered common practice to inform students that French was a global language spoken all over the world, including briefly mentioning the Pacific. Additionally, as previously presented in the literature review Chapter 2, Quanchi (2013) argued that Australians know that there are French-speaking islands nearby in the Pacific, but beyond that, they lack knowledge about the region.

On the other hand, question six, which asked students to identify the country of origin and the activity of men in a photo, received, pre-exposure to the curriculum, a surprising 52% (13 responses) of correct responses. This surprising trend prompted an interrogation of students regarding their answer. The student comments indicated they used reasoning to eliminate the incorrect answer and arrive at the correct answer.

According to two of the students, the answer was bungy jumping in Vanuatu because:

Well it can't be the cultural festival because I don't think we could do that here. There is a guy jumping so I don't think they are building a hut or anything, although I can see some men are carrying things, but I don't know what it is. It does not look very modern and I think New Zealand is very modern, like Australia. (Student 1)

It looks like people are not wearing much clothes so I thought maybe Vanuatu because it's a small island but I also thought maybe Maori people from New Zealand. I was not quite sure. (Student 2)

Here, the way in which students portrayed the small islands was quite uninformed. Although their opinions were mostly innocent reasoning resulting from lack of knowledge and understanding towards this part of the world, it was concerning that students had these sorts of pre-conceptions of the ESN. These comments aligned with Henningham (1995) who condemned the stereotypical view of associating Pacific Islanders with "simple" smiley natives. The AAAPS National Report 2009 (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009) claimed that opportunities for the teaching and learning of the Pacific region in Australian schools was limited, meaning the chances of young Australians developing knowledge of this part of the world would exclusively depend on individual teachers' initiative and enthusiasm.

Question two continued to reflect students' lack of knowledge. Here students were asked to look at a map and identify the name of 4 countries located on the East-side of Australia. In

answering these questions pre-exposure to the aspired transformative curriculum, 54% of students admitted that they didn't know what they were. Another 26% attempted to answer the questions but were incorrect and only 22% were able to identify the names of any of the countries correctly. Out of those correct answers, nine students were able to identify New Caledonia, eight students identified Vanuatu, and four identified French Polynesia while only one identified Wallis and Futuna's geographic position. Interestingly, eight students confused New Caledonia for New Zealand while one thought that it was the Philippines. In early discussions with teachers they explained that it was expected students would not know a lot about the Pacific Islands prior to the aspired transformative curriculum, and these results confirmed these initial thoughts. After exposure to the transformative curriculum, the students' knowledge of the location of the countries had improved with over half of the class able to recognise all four francophone speaking countries.

However, the aspired transformative curriculum did not just aim to address the development of Pacific Islands awareness, it also aimed to bring to students' consciousness the new role of the French-language classroom. Question one asked students to select the country (New Caledonia, Canada, France or Tahiti) where they expected to go if their school was organising a French trip. The results pre-curriculum exposure show that 20 students expected to go to 'France' while only 5 expected to go to 'New Caledonia'. On the other hand, post-curriculum exposure, 19 students expressed that they now expected to go to 'New Caledonia' with their French class.

Additionally, question eleven asked students to write down the name of every country they knew in which French is an official language and then to list these countries in order from the country they would most like to visit to the country they would least like to visit. Initially, out of the 25 students, only 15 listed the names of countries. Pre-curriculum exposure, France and Paris were the students' first preferences followed by Canada and French Polynesia. The following countries were also listed by some students although only coming in third or fourth

position: New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, New Zealand and Philippines. Post curriculum this data changed with 20 students out of the 25 listing all of the following: France, New-Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia. No students wrote Paris in the post-curriculum surveys.

Therefore, the responses to these questions clearly identified a shift in students' mindset, and a realisation of the teachers' mindset, which can be attributed to the exposure of the aspired transformative curriculum. After being exposed to Baguettes in Paradise, students became conscious of the possibilities of learning French through a non-orthodox context. As students were challenged to think beyond the status quo, their frame of reference when developing their understanding of the French-language became inclusive of the ESN. The Pacific became visible.

#### **6.3.2.2 Students' informative transformation**

The other questions on the ESN knowledge instrument were classified as factual knowledge. In other words this instrument posed specific questions about all the four francophone ESN. The data collected shows that Baguettes in Paradise was successful in helping students develop some knowledge of all four countries: New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia. This was evident in gains across the majority of the knowledge questions, but particularly well illustrated through the data collected from question five which presented the four French-speaking countries, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia and required students to identify flags associated with each country. This question scored the highest difference from pre to post exposure to the transformative curriculum, showing that teachers had all clearly presented the four target countries. Initially only 1 student answer the question correctly, while 23 students answered it correctly after the 10-week unit.

Table 6.2: Development of student international-mindedness (knowledge component) towards Australia's East- Side Neighbours across the 10-week transformative curriculum.

Question	Number of students with correct responses pre-curriculum	Number of students with correct responses post-curriculum
1	5	19
2a	9	18
2b	8	15
2c	1	10
2d	4	12
3	1	8
4	5	5
5	1	23
6	13	20
7	3	20
8	3	2
9	2	12
10	17	18
13	2	16
14	6	4
15	5	11

Overall, the questionnaire indicated that the aspired transformative curriculum was successful, and not surprisingly, in increasing students' factual knowledge of the ESN. Nevertheless some other trends were observed. First, questions where little-to-no increase were noted were all identified to be associated with French Polynesia. Students did not improve their score on questions relating to French Polynesia and this trend could be explained by the fact that this

country was the last one to be addressed as part of the transformative curriculum which aligned with the qualitative data about teachers running out of time and lacking teaching resources.

[...] Covering all four countries in one Term was challenging. I think it would be best for us and the students next time to do, focus on only one or two. (Teacher 2)

Second, despite almost all factual questions relating to New Caledonia scoring a significant positive difference pre-and post-curriculum exposure, question twelve which showed a picture of *Le Phare Amédée* received no correct answer pre-exposure and only one post exposure. *Le Phare Amédée* is a popular tourist destination, which essentially could be described as the Eiffel Tower of New Caledonia. Therefore, the lack of students' knowledge about this particular place was surprising. However, when planning this unit with teachers and discussing the concept of international-mindedness, it was deliberated that Baguettes in Paradise, despite its name, would refrain from teaching the ESN from a strong tourism perspective and that the emphasis would instead be on developing knowledge of its people and their culture. *Le Phare Amédée* was clearly not explicitly taught, which, considering the gains in other areas of the knowledge instrument, is not a major concern.

To conclude, based on the questionnaire, prior to the exposure to the transformative curriculum, Callistemon SHS Year Eight students' knowledge of Australia's East side neighbours was limited. The data indicated that additional learning time is required to allow students to expand their knowledge across all of the ESN. As demonstrated in the results of the questionnaire and in teachers' qualitative statements, French Polynesia did not receive sufficient attention in the classroom due to a lack of time and lack of teaching resources. A term of teaching French through the ESN context, although not providing enough time, does show that there is plenty of scope for expanding the teaching of social-cultural topics. Overall, the results demonstrated students made significant gains in knowledge with a total increase of correct responses of 34.4% within a 10-week time-frame.

#### **6.4 Summary of Evaluation Phase**

The qualitative and quantitative data of this research indicated that embedding teaching on the ESN within the French curriculum developed students' knowledge of the ESN and international-mindedness. Without a quasi-experimental comparative analysis, such a claim cannot be stated otherwise. There is also strong evidence that this focus can be engaging for students and teachers, providing a surprising shift in the France-centric paradigm that exists in the minds of both students and teachers, whilst still enabling the linguistic features of the curriculum to be taught.

The quantitative student knowledge instrument, which measured what students understood of the French ESN, indicated that students had little knowledge of the East side neighbours prior to the transformed curriculum. This was anticipated by teachers prior to the unit and confirmed through the knowledge instrument and teacher reflections. There is likely a significant link between the limited student knowledge and corresponding teacher knowledge that was described by some of the teachers during the reconnaissance. Importantly, teachers uniformly saw the opportunity to embed the ESN within the curriculum as meaningful and achievable, although the discretionary nature of this focus was identified as a challenge.

Post-curriculum, the quantitative analysis showed significant gains in some, but not all, aspects of student knowledge of the ESN. It was clear that not only was there an expansion of what students knew, but there was also a refinement of their knowledge, with a reduction in the number of misconceptions.

In addition, the transformative curriculum had a modest positive impact on students' international-mindedness with statistically significant increases noted in some areas of IM. However, the variability in the attributes of international-mindedness indicated that a sustained and targeted approach is needed to see substantial growth in student international-mindedness across all of the defined aspects. That said, as per the definition of international-mindedness, it

is something that continues to develop through time and experience. It is never at the end stage and is a way of being that grows as the individual grows. Further research including the use of control groups to isolate the effect of the transformative curriculum from that of general schooling would allow more definitive conclusions to be reached.

To conclude, this transformative participatory action research worked with a strong team of educators who became better informed about a specific issue and opportunity. This team of educators were willing to transform their practice, at least temporarily, in an effort to impact on students' knowledge and international-mindedness. The importance of teachers' readiness to change cannot be underestimated, as it is one of the crucial foundations needed to make any change sustainable. What has developed from this action research is, in the language of Kotter's change management premise, a "willing coalition", and this is not to be downplayed as an important first step.

I now believe that good teaching locally, which spreads among colleagues through its own dynamism, is having a greater impact than top-down or centrally-prescribed policies which dictate that schools in Australia should teach Pacific History or Pacific-related subject matter (Quanchi, 1996, p.70).

It is clear that availability of resources, access to professional learning and a more sustained engagement with ESN are key issues that must be addressed to see any true transformation of the French-language curriculum. This indicates a logical next step to expand the impact of this research, which will be explored in the conclusion. Further, the temporary nature of teachers' adjusted practice and return to a more Eurocentric focus illuminates the durability of teachers' views of French-teaching with a focus on France.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

### **7.1 Introduction**

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, in 2005 the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools* was released, showcasing the commitment of the Ministers of Education to creating quality language education programs for all Australian students. This national statement reaffirmed the critical place of languages in schools in contributing to the preparedness of young Australians to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Lo Bianco, 2009; Liddicoat et al, 2007). Over a decade later, as a language educator, it is my observation that the wide-ranging emphasis on Asian languages has created a sense of inequity amongst language teachers in North Queensland who do not fit that category. More importantly, it is contributing to the invisibility of other close neighbours of Australia. I attribute this imbalance to the shared vision profusely found amongst political discourses that continue to reinforce the proximity and economic importance of Asia (ACARA, 2011; De Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). There may still be political support for language education, but perhaps the critical question now is: At the school level, will all languages continue to be taught in the future in Australia?

As outlined in Chapter Two, certainly the Rudd government (2007-2010) has contributed to revitalising the strong focus on languages through its attention to Asian literacy (Asia Education Foundation, 2010). However, while this century may well be the ‘Asian century’ for economic and political reasons, for broader educational and humanitarian reasons, other languages should likely also benefit from this exposure. If Australia aspires to raise internationally-minded global citizens, then the ESN of Australia should, as suggested by ACARA’s recent French Curriculum, be incorporated into that curriculum as a context for developing international-mindedness, which includes knowledge towards some of Australia’s closest neighbours. As previously described there is now an encouraged national opportunity to bring the ‘unconscious to consciousness’, and make the invisible ESN more visible. I interpreted this inclusion of the ESN in the national curriculum as an invitation to engage in critical dialogue with French teacher colleagues for the possibility of actioning change to the traditions of the French-language curriculum.

This research project has presented a rationale for a participatory action research involving a three-phase response to this challenge. In this final chapter, I provide a summary of the research.

It begins in section 7.2 by restating the four questions guiding this research and providing a brief overview of the research. A review of the findings of each question is addressed in this concluding chapter. First, section 7.2.1 addresses the current understandings of Australia’s east side neighbours amongst high school students in North Queensland prior to the commencement of the study. Second, section 7.2.2 summarises teachers’ views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia’s ESN as a context for French-language instructions? Third, section 7.2.3 discusses how explicit teaching about Australia’s ESN in a French-language context contributes to knowledge about Australia’s ESN and international-mindedness. The fourth section 7.2.4, describes how French-language teachers transformed their current teaching practices to allow a focus on developing students’ knowledge about Australia’s ESN and international-

mindfulness. Based upon the findings, Section 7.3 presents recommendations and future directions for the continued transformation of the French-language classroom to include a stronger focus on the ESN. Finally, in drawing this thesis to a conclusion section 7.4, presents a reflective overview of the study and suggests further avenues for research.

## **7.2 Findings and Research questions**

The four research questions organising the participatory study were:

**Question 1** - What are the current understandings of Australia's ESN amongst high school students in North Queensland?

**Question 2** - What are teachers' views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia's ESN as a context for French-language instructions?

**Question 3** - How can explicit teaching about Australia's ESN in a French-language context contribute to knowledge about Australia's ESN and greater international-mindedness? If so, what are the features of such instruction that contribute to such mindfulness?

**Question 4** - How can French-language teachers transform their current teaching practices to allow a focus on developing students' knowledge about Australia's ESN and international-mindedness?

These questions were answered by a multi-phase participatory action research conducted at schools in North Queensland, with most of the research located in a single large secondary school. For most of the study, the participants included teachers and students who were located at this school. The data collected during the various phases of this research project provided answers to the four research questions cited above.

### 7.2.1 Findings for research question one

**Question 1** - What are the current understandings of Australia's ESN amongst high school students in North Queensland?

As described in Chapters Three and Four, this question was answered by a questionnaire survey that investigated students' knowledge of the ESN pre and post curriculum exposure. This instrument was informed by Griffin et al. (2002) who used an instrument to measure students' knowledge of Asian countries. In addition, focus group interviews with the students and teachers provided elaboration on the quantitative data provided by the instrument.

The study found, through both the quantitative and qualitative data collected, that the participating students had very limited awareness and knowledge of Australia's ESN, despite North Queensland's geographical proximity to this region. Prior to being exposed to the aspired transformative curriculum, students undertook a test used to measure their general knowledge of the ESN, and correct responses came in at under 19.8%. In the qualitative data, both teachers and students alluded to the lack of learning opportunities in school for learning about this part of the world. Therefore, these findings were not unexpected, and they aligned with the work of Henningham (1995), Quanchi (1996) and the report by Rose, Quanchi and Moore (2009). In addition, an analysis of the participating school's curriculum combined with my personal and professional experiences as an immigrant from the Pacific Islands also warned of this anticipated lack of knowledge and understanding about Australia's ESN.

The study concluded that these young Australians, despite geographical proximity, held only a superficial image of the Pacific prior to being exposed to the curriculum transformation, resulting in a "sketchy" understanding of Australia's ESN (Henningham, 1995, p.1). These results were consistent across all data sources, the knowledge questionnaire, the qualitative student results, and the teachers' comments as proposed in the literature review. It is evident that under the current implementation of the Australian curriculum, at the school in question,

students are not being provided sufficient opportunity to engage deeply with this region of the world. Drawing from a range of literature, this thesis has strongly argued that we, Australians, share an interwoven future with the ESN. “Australians need to know more about their neighbours. Australia needs to become part of the Pacific” (Rose, Quanchi & Moore, 2009, p.1). It has been identified, through the data presented above, that there is limited student knowledge about this part of the world, which without transformation is likely to continue, due to the persistent limited learning opportunities across the national curriculum used throughout primary and secondary schooling in Australia.

### **7.2.2 Findings for research question two**

**Question 2** - What are teachers’ views of an adjusted teaching practice using Australia’s ESN as a context for French-language instructions?

As described in Chapter 3, teachers’ views about embedding a stronger focus on the ESN in their French classrooms were captured through a series of small focus groups. The literature review warned of the hegemonic nature of French-language pedagogy that would likely make it difficult for teachers to change their ways of thinking, let alone their ways of doing (Forsdick, 2015; Ritchie, 2003; Chamber, 1996; Mezirow, 1995; Gramsci, 1971). In addition, Quanchi (1996, 2002), Thaman (2001, 2010), Puamau (2005), who each aspired to transform curricular to bring attention to Pasifika cultures, emphasised the challenge of countering the dominant hegemonic forces. In this research, all teacher participants demonstrated evidence of ‘disorientation’ (Mezirow, 1995) to the possibility of a proposed shift of focus to a Pasifika context that challenged the dominant views of the French-language classroom and their role as French-language educators. Through critical dialogue and reflection, teachers accepted to adjust their teaching practice and use Australia’s ESN as a context for French-language instruction. They recognised their lack of engagement with this part of the world as they came to realise their daily teaching focus was essentially Eurocentric (Forsdick, 2014; Ritchie 2003;

Watson, 2010; Chamber, 1996; Chartier, 1995; Petrey, 1995), even Paris-centric. Teachers realised the need for transforming their role as French-language educators in light of the political prioritisation of Asian languages and the encouraged possibility of the Pasifika context as endorsed in the national French curriculum.

However, although teachers were willing to participate in the study, their adjustment of a well-routined practice with alignment to the Pacific rather than France was inevitably going to be a challenging venture (Fullan, 2003; Mezirow, 1995). In fact, teachers quickly raised concerns that demonstrated their tenuous commitment to such an adjustment, pointing out the inadequacy of teaching resources that support such curriculum adjustment towards the ESN. This was accompanied by concerns of lack of time to prepare teaching and learning resources. In addition, teachers expressed concerns of “putting students off” by not teaching about France and Paris. They explained that getting students to continue with their language studies was very important to them and they feared that by not teaching a Eurocentric and/or Paris-orientated curriculum they might not satisfy the new learners of French (and their parents).

Finally, teachers agreed that despite these challenges, such transformation would be worthwhile for students because “they knew very little about the Pacific”. The teachers articulated that focusing on the ESN would provide students with opportunities to challenge their stereotypical view of the world and French people in general. They noted the possibilities of this transformation impacting positively on students’ international-mindedness and therefore being of benefit to students.

### **7.2.3 Finding for research question three**

**Question 3** – How can explicit teaching about Australia’s ESN in a French-language context contribute to knowledge about Australia’s ESN and greater international-mindedness? If so, what are the features of such instruction that contribute to such mindfulness?

As described in the methodology, this study was conducted as a participatory action research investigation and therefore it requires evaluation of the impact of the transformative curriculum on student learning (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). The quantitative and qualitative data addressing research question three were drawn from two instruments and small focus groups with students and teachers. The knowledge instrument measured student learning about the ESN, with knowledge being a key component of international-mindedness (Singh & Qi, 2013; Boulard, 2013; Hill, 2012), while the international-mindedness instrument itself provided a broader measure across several domains of how students' international-mindedness developed over the course of the unit.

As described in Chapter Six, the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data confirmed that teaching about Australia's ESN in the French-language classroom provided opportunities to develop both students' knowledge of Australia's ESN and their international-mindedness.

The knowledge instrument noted an increase in students' knowledge (measured as an increase of 34.4%) over a 10-week timeframe. In addition, it was evident through the qualitative comments that students were better able to geographically situate the ESN and give some detailed information about the four francophone ESN countries. In other words, students' consciousness about this part of the world became more evident because of the explicit input of their French-language teachers. In addition, notwithstanding the initial fears of teachers, students were not disappointed to have not studied about France, or more specifically about Paris. The different concept of Frenchness (Chamber, 1996) presented to students through this unit did not appear to have had a negative impact on students' learning. In fact, students reported enjoying the unit *Baguette in Paradise*.

The findings from the IM instrument, however, emphasised the need for a longer exposure to such a curriculum. The instrument demonstrated statistically significant results, as measured

through a paired single tailed T-Test, that students can develop their international-mindedness under the aspired transformative curriculum. In particular, increases were noted in students' Open-Mindedness and Risk Taker attributes. However the growth was not uniform across all aspects of IM. This aligned with the qualitative data collected from this research, which also demonstrated students' curiosity and desire to spend time in the ESN developed over the unit. Baguettes in Paradise exposed them to new knowledge that helped to develop their curiosity about the people living in this part of the world. Baguettes in Paradise enabled students to draw connections and contrasts between their own identity and the identities of the people living in those different island countries. It is concluded that the aspired transformative curriculum does contribute to the development of student international-mindedness, but that sustained curriculum transformation over a longer period of time is likely required for these effects to become significant across all aspects of IM, and for the size of the effects to become larger.

The development of students' knowledge of the ESN and international-mindedness was made possible by French-language teachers who collaboratively planned a series of lessons across a ten-week unit that focused on the four francophone countries, providing a window to the Pacific. The supporting curriculum materials and learning experiences enabled students to make connections with the people and cultures of the ESN. This research found that a collaboratively-constructed inquiry-based learning approach is a suitable means to support initial curriculum transformation, as evidenced through the success of the formative inquiry task within the unit. The qualitative data from the teachers indicated that such a process allows French-language teachers the opportunity to move beyond their own limited knowledge set of the ESN as they learn alongside their students.

McTaggart (2007) described PAR as requiring educational value for validation. It was clear that although there were some limitations in the statistical significance of the effect of the aspired transformative curriculum on student learning, the unit of work did develop knowledge

of the ESN and student international-mindedness. In this respect, *Baguettes in Paradise* demonstrated its educational value. The refinement of the aspired curriculum transformation and the required support and next steps for its continued expansion are further unpacked in sections 7.2.4 and 7.3.

#### **7.2.4 Finding for research question four**

**Question 4** - How can French-language teachers transform their current teaching practices to allow a focus on developing students' knowledge about Australia's ESN and international-mindedness?

In reflecting on the effectiveness of the aspired transformative curriculum and the logical next steps for supporting future French educators in their adjusted pedagogy, the researcher drew from the information collected from the participant teachers. In their post-intervention reflections, teachers provided opinions about how the French-language classroom could be transformed, which allowed several conclusions to be made.

At a practical level, the outcomes of this study suggest that educators interested in embarking on a similar transformative journey should start with similar types and levels of knowledge, which are identified as appropriate for Year Eight learners, as were explored in *Baguettes in Paradise*. It is also suggested that as students continue to progress through the different levels of their language development, they should have continued opportunities to engage with knowledge about the ESN and that this knowledge should grow in complexity to allow the context to meet the increasing rigour required by higher levels of the Australian curriculum. It is suggested that at a senior level, in Years 11 and 12, students engage in an ESN focused curriculum that exposes students to more critically-aligned curriculum experiences such as the influence of colonialism on the Pasifika region. Therefore, developing students' knowledge of Australia's ESN and their international-mindedness can be expanded to become a focus at

multiple levels of the curriculum in the French-language classroom. However these links to the ESN must be authentic and cannot be rushed in their delivery.

Similar studies reviewing attempts at curriculum transformation identify lack of teaching resources as a common challenge (Quanchi, 1996; Thaman, 2001; Puamau, 2005). This was also one of the most common reports from teachers participating in this study. The lack of teaching resources, or even the lack of knowledge as to where to find resources that would enable students to develop knowledge of the ESN, were both identified by participants as inhibitors to curriculum enactment. Teachers themselves had limited knowledge of the ESN as they explained that their own teacher education was principally grounded in the traditions of a France-centric curriculum. It is evident from this study that in my ongoing role in supporting professional learning for teachers, facilitating the development of teachers as agents of change will be necessary, as recommended by the work of Ball (2009). Through this study, it has become evident that the entrenched nature of teachers' preoccupation with a France-centric context for the teaching of French and the 'discretionary' (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009) nature of the ESN inclusion makes any considerable attention to the ESN challenging. After completion of the participatory action research, the participating teachers did not continue to "reintegrate" automatically (Mezirow, 2000). Their "problematic frames of reference" to make their French-language classroom more inclusive of the ESN did not fully transform (Mezirow, 2009). Since this adjustment is currently at the teachers' professional discretion, if we want to see actual transformation towards this focus, opportunities to shift teachers' thinking and improve teachers' individual competency must also be supported by explicit policy (Rose, Quanchi and Moore, 2009).

As noted above and in the reconnaissance, teachers explained that their own teacher education focused on France with attention to French culture such as classical French novels, which provided them with deep knowledge, awareness and love towards France. It is important to note

that a range of Pacific alternatives can be found to supplement or replace these existing France focused resources. Examples include, but are not limited to, the novel set in Tahiti, Pierre Loti, the “Wahine” photography of Lucien Gauthier, the large mass of photographically illustrated post cards of New Caledonia, or art works such as Nicholas Chavalier’s “Race to the market, Tahiti”.

To some, adjusting their teaching practice to allow a focus on the ESN challenged their very conception of what it meant to be a French teacher. Teachers, although enthusiastic about the great possibilities that this aspired transformative curriculum could bring in terms of developing students’ international-mindedness and breaking down stereotypical views of what a ‘French person is all about’, expressed their fears that they were not teaching towards “the student’s dream of one day being able to climb the Eiffel Tower”. Some raised concerns about the fact that transforming the curriculum might mean fewer students would be enthusiastic about further studying French because the stereotypical cultures of the ESN were too similar to what students and their parents in Australia already knew.

Based upon the findings of this study, transforming the French-language curriculum to provide students with opportunities to develop international-mindedness, including positive attitudes towards and knowledge of the ESN, is both worthwhile and achievable. The French-language classroom provided an appropriate context for this to occur. The implementation of Baguettes in Paradise provides a foundation for further curriculum adaptation and teacher learning in the quest to bring about a meaningful change that incorporates the ESN as a context for learning in the Australian French classrooms.

### **7.3 Critical reflection and future steps**

*“People change organisations. The starting point is not system change, or change around us, but taking action ourselves. The challenge is to improve education in the only way it can – through the day-to-day actions of empowered individuals”. Michael Fullan 1988, p.46*

As I write these words, I am reflecting on the last ten years of my teaching career and admit that I, too, was guilty of sustaining the hegemonic positioning of France as the sole authoritative language site, and reproducing romanticised image of France and Parisians to my students. I have been a part of this despite having only visited France five times in my life for a total of only a few weeks, and also despite the fact that I was born and raised in New Caledonia with extended family and friends and still remain proudly patriotic. I agree with the teachers who participated in this study, that the authenticity of a French teacher's identity in Australia is contextually grounded to France, and Paris almost exclusively. What is taught becomes part of who the teachers are and how others perceive them.

As this research has progressed, I have come to several conclusions. Most importantly I now realise:

[...] the starting point for what's worth fighting for is not system change, not change in others around us, but change in ourselves. This is both more achievable and paradoxically is the first step toward system change because it contributes actions not words. (Fullan, 1988, p. 25)

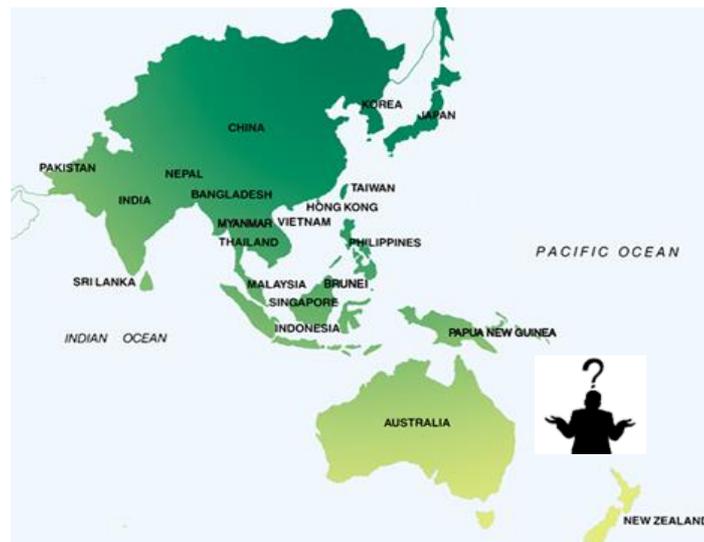
I have experienced first-hand how the transformative paradigm has the power to change the researcher's life (Creswell, 2003). I have experienced what Mezirow described as perspective transformation, a major transition in my everyday life purpose. My professional identity and practice as a French-language educator have transformed throughout this research project since it started in 2013. After ongoing self-reflection and deep thinking about the relevance of the claims and the proposed curriculum transformation I was guiding French-language teachers towards, I am now fully convinced that this project has become more than just a personal attachment or sentiment. This project has supported the possibility, alluded to by Professor Barry Leal back in 1997, of teaching French authentically for the Australian context, reflective

of our place in the world (Cryle, 2003). Through the participatory process, I have seen the potential and now the promise of such an endeavour. Because of this experience, my teaching has changed and I have been transformed. My curriculum is now linked to the ESN, but it took a sustained effort, despite my cultural background being from the ESN. Some teachers find it difficult to change their habit of thinking (Marzano, 2007). Challenging a hegemonic curriculum is not easy despite a commitment to do so. In fact, six months after the completion of *Baguettes in Paradise*, I returned to Callistemon SHS and found out that out of the four teachers that were involved, only one was continuing to include Australia's East side neighbours in her teaching practice. Michael Fullan (2001) describes such patterns as the 'implementation dip' (p.6). "The implementation dip is literally a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings" (p. 6). Being aware and appreciating this dip is an important part of the learning process in order to achieve the desired transformation "Leading in a culture of change means creating a culture" (Fullan, 2001 p.7). Fullan (2001) explained that it is common for successful schools to experience "implantation dips" as they continue to move forward. As Mezirow (2000) suggested, a true transformative experience is represented by an undisputed new walk of action. This means coming to the point where participants are not only just facing the change, but act the change themselves, becoming transformed individuals who will walk the talk.

However, this transformation in French educators' beliefs and practices may not be of a continuous nature, but rather be found within an epochal transformation; that is transformation that occurs through a series of small shifts which may take months or even years as the learners, in this case French teachers, realise that a meaning perspective has shifted (Howie and Bagnall, 2013). It is this deliberate practice that Hattie (2009) noted as the key difference between novices and experts. The next step for me, as a researcher, will be to focus on improving

particular aspects of French educators' teaching so that they deliberately and consciously plan and deliver lessons that focus on the ESN.

This participatory action research has certainly impacted on my understanding of how the curriculum transformation could be implemented in schools. To create long lasting change, it is also clear that the further implications of the research relate to the availability of quality resources and the need for teacher-training and professional learning in this space, which must be underpinned by an understanding of transformative learning theory. These key issues must be addressed if we want to see any true transformation of the French-language curriculum and therefore indicates a logical next step to expand the impact of this research.



*Figure 7.1:* How to transform the current curriculum so that in the future the invisible becomes visible to young Australians

As expected of the researcher in a participatory action research, I was ‘motion leading’ as Fullan (2013) would describe it. As I made a plea to transform what was happening in the school system to make the invisible more visible, I also embarked on a parallel journey and changed my own French-language curriculum at the university in which I am a lecturer of French-

language. I now focus principally on teaching the French-language through the ESN. In teaching reading and writing, I have exchanged the well renowned “*Le Tour du monde en 80 Jours*” by Jules Verne and “*L’Etranger*” by Camus for novels by Marcel Melthérorong and Frédéric Ohlen. In developing students’ international-mindedness, I focus on current affairs published by *La Dépêche de Tahiti* and *Les Nouvelles-Calédoniennes* instead of *France 2* and *Le Monde*. I have applied and successfully received grants every year since 2013 allowing me to take over 55 JCU students to the ESN with the assistance of the Australian Government New Colombo Plan. We have now had regular visits to New Caledonia and Vanuatu with our French-language students. Finally, to build consciousness, I have published and presented at conferences where I have advocated for this transformation.

In challenging the hegemonic positioning of France in the French-language classroom, it is evident that a sustained and strong collaborative culture is needed. Therefore, I organised free seminars for French teachers that focused on developing teachers’ knowledge and curiosity about the ESN. The first one was in October 2016, where 13 French-language teachers attended from Brisbane, Mackay, Cairns and Townsville. A copy of the program can be found in Appendix E. Since then I have also organised a seminar in Brisbane in partnership with the Alliance Française of Brisbane and another in Townsville with the local Alliance Française. Lastly, I have also made contact with governments both in New Caledonia and Vanuatu looking for support. In September 2017, I was invited by the New Caledonian Government to participate in and present at the Pacific Francophone forum. Further, the Department of Education and Training International recently provided a grant of \$21,000 to support this project, which will allow two French teachers and six high school French-language students to travel with me to the ESN at the end of 2017.

As of today, at least six schools are using Baguettes in Paradise with their students as a result of these recent workshops and the professional collaboration fostered through the North Queensland Language Teachers' Network and the College of Arts, Society and Education at James Cook University. Callistemon State High School returned to it in 2016 and additional meetings with teachers have been organised to continue to share resources. The change did not occur after the first intervention, and it certainly 'dipped' after the first cycle of this action research was completed, but it is evident that the teachers in this region are now not only using the nomenclature but most are also explicitly teaching about the ESN through their French classroom.

Reality is constituted by perception through experience (Mezirow, 1991, p.21). The meaning schemes and perspectives of the participant teachers, that is the combination of their knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings towards the French-language, ultimately impacts on their interpretation of the curriculum. Mezirow explained that these interpretations are often incorrect views of reality (1991).

Following the essential virtues of the transformative educator emerging from the work of Mezirow and teachers as agents of change from Ball and Hattie, it is my intention to continue to mentor students and language teachers, to help them question their beliefs, values and actions. Through this I am committed to creating a coalition of French-language teachers and learners who, through critical reflection, will be invited to explore alternatives to the cultural hegemony attached to how we teach French in Australia.

Only a week prior to submitting this thesis, a statement by the Honourable Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was published announcing the launch of a Pacific Research Program at ANU on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Although this statement reports impressive statistics showcasing Australia's engagement with the Pacific Nations, it does not focus on education but

rather ‘on the intersection of politics, economy and power with the region’s most pressing development challenges’. This statement positions the Pacific as a site for Australia’s aid and intervention to ‘fix’ rather than a site for developing young Australians’ international-mindedness.

Therefore, it is my strong belief that this change is now timely and necessary, both for the survival of the French-language in Australian schools, but most importantly because of the inevitable interwoven future which Australia and our ESN share. French-language teachers in Australia and in particular the ones working on the East-coast, and maybe those especially living in Queensland, are, under the 2015 Australian Curriculum, guided by a clear rationale emphasising the importance of developing knowledge of the Pacific to our young people. I aspire for this region of the world to become ESN literate.

To achieve this, future research in this field remains important. A continued research focus on curriculum transformation that brings increased attention to the ESN in the French language classroom would support and enhance the required transformative learning of French teachers. In particular an extension of this research to explore the implementation of similar transformative curricular in different contexts, including with older students, would be of great value. In working with older students, topics of substantive interest and concern to the Australian-ESN relationship could be critically targeted, such as the apparent ‘deficit-attention’ Australia commonly attributes to the ESN. Such efforts would require a much deeper understanding of ESN and demand attention to the resources and learning that will assist teachers to identify and address the dominant cultural hegemony of current practices. Finally, there continues to be a need to focus research efforts toward the further testing and refinement of instruments that measure international mindedness so that more rigorous quantitative analyses can be implemented to evaluate the effect of curriculum enactment.

According to Mezirow, one of the most important parts of transformative learning is critical reflection. In concluding this thesis, I reflect on this learning journey. In 2013, I asked myself and my colleagues to reflect on the fundamental role of the French-language classroom in Australia. Their response demonstrates the promise and possibility of curriculum transformation in bringing greater attention to the ESN, while highlighting the great challenge of long standing cultural hegemony. I intend to continue working with teachers so that together we can empower future generations of French educators and French-language learners. Teaching about the ESN is more than just enabling students to excel as French-language students; it is a readily accessible vehicle that proved to have the capacity to encourage the next generation of Australians to ‘zoom in’ on the Pacific region. This research calls upon all French language educators in Australia, to challenge the stereotypical imagery of the Pacific and assist in the creation of a future where one of their fundamental roles is to make the ESN part of their students’ frame of reference, for the benefit of Australians and Pacific Islanders alike.

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## Acronyms

AAAPS	The Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment And Reporting Authority
AEF	Asia Education Foundation
AERA	Australian Association for Research in Education
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AR	Action Research
AUD	Australian Dollar
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EQ	Education Queensland
ESN	East-Side-Neighbours
F-10	Foundation to Grade Ten
GMS	Global Minded Scale
HPE	Health and Physical Education
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
IM	International Mindedness
JCU	James Cook University
MCEETYA	The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSW	New South Wales
P&O	Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PNG	Papua New Guinea
QCAA	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
QLD	Queensland
SHS	State High School
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

## Appendices

## **Appendix A: Information Sheet and Consent Forms**

**PROJECT TITLE: *Australia and the French Pacific Islands: Educational Strategies for the Development of Internationally-Minded Young Australians***

You are invited to take part in a research project which aim is to develop a French-language curriculum for Year 8 students that will enhance their knowledge and skills of the French-language but also contributes to the development of their international-mindedness towards Australia's East-side neighbours. The study is being conducted by Ms Florence Boulard and will contribute to her degree of Doctor of Education at James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be invited to be complete a questionnaire. The questionnaires should only take about 25 minutes to complete. The questionnaires are a mix of open and closed format questions. You may also be invited to participate in a small focus group which with your consent, will be audio-taped, and should only take approximately 20 minutes of your time. The focus group will be conducted at the School of Arts, Education and Social Sciences at James Cook University, or, a venue of your choice.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, any information you have given will be destroyed.

Your responses and contact details will be strictly confidential. However, please note that participants' anonymity and confidentiality involved in the focus group cannot be fully assured. The data from the study will be used in research publications and reports. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Ms Florence Boulard or her supervisors Dr Pauline Taylor and/or Associate Professor Brian Lewthwaite.

**Principal Investigator: Ms Florence Boulard**  
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School of Education  
James Cook University  
**Phone:**  
**Email: [brian.lewthwaite@jcu.edu.au](mailto:brian.lewthwaite@jcu.edu.au)**

*If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:*

*Human Ethics, Research Office*

*James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811*

*Phone: (07) 4781 5011 ([ethics@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@jcu.edu.au))*

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## Appendix B: Instruments

### Instrument 1 ESN: Knowledge Questionnaire

*What do Australian students know about Australia's East-side neighbours?*

#### Question 1

**If you were to go on a French trip with your school where would you expect to go?**

New-Caledonia

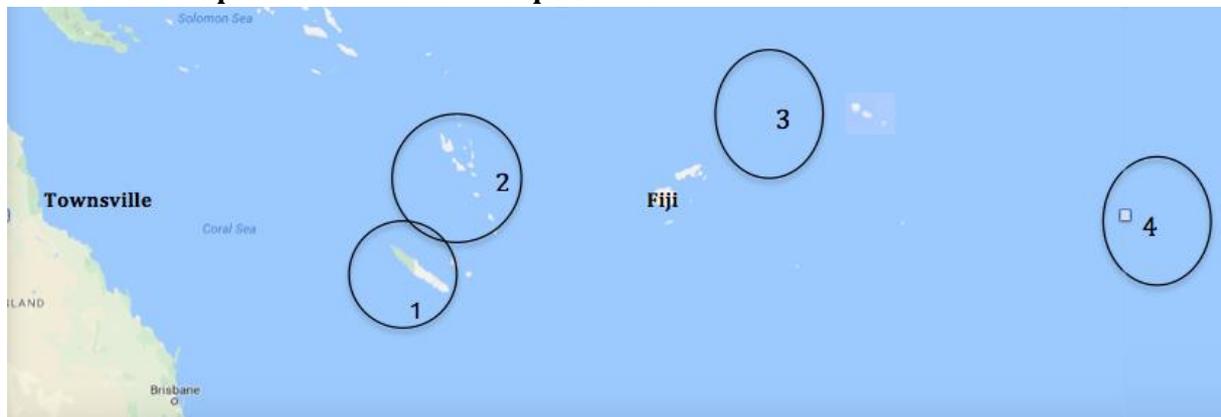
Canada

France

Tahiti

#### Question 2

**LOOK at the map and then answer the questions**



**What is the name of country 1?**

New-Zealand

Philippines

New-Caledonia

I don't know

**What is the name country 3?**

Wallis & Futuna

Hawaii

Solomon Islands

I don't know

**What is the name of country 2?**

New-Caledonia

Vanuatu

Norfolk Island

I don't know

**What is the name of country 4?**

Wallis & Futuna

New Caledonia

French Polynesia

I don't know

#### Question 3

**What is the capital city of New-Caledonia?**

Tontouta

Port-Vila

Noumea

Caledonian

I don't know

#### Question 4

**Where was this picture taken?**

Gold Coast

Tahiti

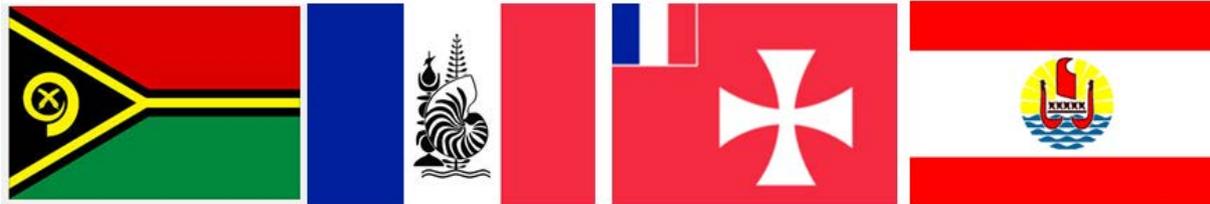


Hawai  
Florida  
I don't know

**Question 5**

**Which list shows the countries names of the flags below in the correct order?**

Wallis and Futuna, Vanuatu, New-Caledonia, Vanuatu  
Vanuatu, New-Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia  
New-Caledonia, Vanuatu, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna  
I don't know



**Question 6**

**What is the activity shown in this photo and which country do you think it is from?**

New-Zealand / Bungy jumping  
Vanuatu / Bungy jumping  
Fiji / building a hut  
Australia / cultural festival  
I don't know



**Question 7**

**New-Caledonia produces about 25% of the World resources in:**

Cobalt  
Nickel  
Gold  
Seafood  
I don't know

**Question 8**

**The image on the right shows a commonly used tattoo from which country?**

French Polynesia  
Vanuatu  
New-Caledonia  
Wallis & Futuna  
I don't know



**Question 9**

**What is the name of this bird and where does it come from?**

- Cagou from Vanuatu
- Cagou from Wallis & Futuna
- Cagou from New-Caledonia
- Pigeon from Vanuatu
- I don't know



**Question 10**

**Which of the following statement is true?**

- French is an official language in France and Canada only
- French is not spoken in countries close to Australia
- French is spoken on five continents including on islands in the Pacific Ocean
- French is the official language of France only
- I don't know

**Question 11 - Write down the name of every country you know in which French is an official language. List the countries in order from the country you would most like to visit to the country you would least like to visit.**

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

Country you would most like to visit



Country you would least like to visit

**Question 12**

**Where is this lighthouse found?**

- Bora Bora Island
- Efate Island
- Lifou Island
- Amedee Island
- I don't know



**Question 13**

**What describes best a 'bougna' and a 'laplap'?**

- Birds
- Food
- Games
- Fish
- I don't know

**Question 14**

The Hawaiki Nui Va'a race is one of the biggest waka ama race in the world. Which picture illustrates this race best.



E - I don't know

**Question 15**

In what country can I use these notes?

1. France
2. New-Caledonia
3. Vanuatu



## Instrument 2: International-Mindedness

What are the current levels of international mindedness in young Australians?

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Ms Florence Boulard**

**PROJECT TITLE: Education Futures in the Tropics Australia and the French Pacific Islands: Educational s  
internationally-minded young Australians**

**SCHOOL: Arts, Education & Social Sciences**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: F or M

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Background information:**

4. In what country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what country were your parents born? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What language(s) do you speak at home? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mobility:**

Have you lived outside of Australia? Yes / No

If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived outside of North Queensland? Yes/No

If so, where and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you travelled outside of North Queensland? Yes /No

If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## International Mindedness Instrument

Question Number	Harwood & Bailey (2012) IM Framework	Boulard (2013) IM Qualities Singh & Qi (2013) IM Critical Steps	International Baccalaureate Learner Attributes	Statements (Students respond with one of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)
1	Me	Intellectual	Knowledgeable	Learning is important.
2	Me	Intellectual	Principled	My behaviour impacts on my friends and family.
3	Me	Intellectual	Risk Taker	Trying new things is important.
4	Me	Emotional	Knowledgeable	Learning about new things makes me feel excited.
5	Me	Emotional	Principled	I don't like it when my family and friends are treated unfairly.
6	Me	Emotional	Open Minded	I am proud about where I come from (my ancestry).
7	Me	Emotional	Caring	Seeing my family and friends sad, makes me feel sad.
8	Me	Emotional	Risk Taker	Trying new things makes me feel excited.
9	Me	Behavioural	Knowledgeable	I discuss ideas and issues with my family and friends.
10	Me	Behavioural	Principled	I am respectful towards my family and friends and treat them fairly.
11	Me	Behavioural	Open Minded	I ask questions to my family about how life was when they were my age.
12	Me	Behavioural	Caring	I help my family and friends.
13	Me	Behavioural	Risk Taker	When I face a challenge, I try different ways of solving the problem.
14	School	Intellectual	Knowledgeable	School is important.
15	School	Intellectual	Principled	I think about the impact of my behaviour on my classmates and teachers.
16	School	Intellectual	Open Minded	I know where other students in my school come from.
17	School	Intellectual	Caring	I understand what it means to care for people at my school.
18	School	Intellectual	Risk Taker	I know how to work alone and in groups at school.
19	School	Emotional	Knowledgeable	I am excited about going to school to learn.
20	School	Emotional	Principled	I don't like it when people at my school are treated unfairly.
21	School	Emotional	Open Minded	I like that people from my school come from different countries.
22	School	Emotional	Caring	Seeing people at my school who are sad makes me feel sad.

23	School	Emotional	Risk Taker	I am not afraid to make mistakes in the classroom.
24	School	Behavioural	Knowledgeable	I try my hardest at school.
25	School	Behavioural	Principled	I am respectful towards my classmates and teachers and treat them fairly.
26	School	Behavioural	Open Minded	I ask questions to my teachers and classmates about where they come from.
27	School	Behavioural	Caring	I help my teachers and classmates.
28	School	Behavioural	Risk Taker	I participate in extra-curricular activities at my school.
29	Country	Intellectual	Knowledgeable	I know about Australia, its people and its history.
30	Country	Intellectual	Principled	All people in Australia should be treated fairly, regardless of where they come from.
31	Country	Intellectual	Open Minded	I know about the different cultures that exist in Australia.
32	Country	Intellectual	Caring	I often think about the future of Australia.
33	Country	Intellectual	Risk Taker	I know that Australia is changing and I am prepared to engage in this future.
34	Country	Emotional	Knowledgeable	I like to learn new things about Australia, its people and its history.
35	Country	Emotional	Principled	I don't like it when Australians are treated unfairly because of where they come from.
36	Country	Emotional	Open Minded	I like that people from my country come from different places.
37	Country	Emotional	Caring	When I see or hear about other Australians on the news who are disadvantaged I feel sad.
38	Country	Emotional	Risk Taker	I feel inspired by Australians who take responsible risks to help others.
39	Country	Behavioural	Knowledgeable	I often ask questions about Australia, its people and its history.
40	Country	Behavioural	Principled	I treat people and the environment with respect and take responsibility for my actions.
41	Country	Behavioural	Open Minded	I consider different perspectives when making a decision.
42	Country	Behavioural	Caring	I have recently volunteered my time to help others.

43	Country	Behavioural	Risk Taker	I have recently helped to raise money for a charity.
44	World	Intellectual	Knowledgeable	I often read about the world, its people and its history.
45	World	Intellectual	Principled	All people are equal.
46	World	Intellectual	Open Minded	I focus on the positive rather than the negative.
47	World	Intellectual	Caring	I often think about the future of the world and all of its people.
48	World	Intellectual	Risk Taker	I know how to speak more than one language.
49	World	Emotional	Knowledgeable	I like to learn new things about the world, its people and its history.
50	World	Emotional	Principled	Seeing people being racist makes me sad and angry.
51	World	Emotional	Open Minded	I am curious about the world.
52	World	Emotional	Caring	I want to help make the world a better place.
53	World	Emotional	Risk Taker	I have an adventurous spirit.
54	World	Behavioural	Knowledgeable	I often ask questions about the world, its people and its history.
55	World	Behavioural	Principled	I take action to defend the rights of people in my world.
56	World	Behavioural	Open Minded	I am in contact with people living outside of Australia.
57	World	Behavioural	Caring	I am helping change the world to make it better.
58	World	Behavioural	Risk Taker	When I grow up I am going to travel overseas.

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## **Appendix C: Detailed Lesson Plan Baguettes in Paradise**

Week	Lesson 1	Lesson 2
1	<p><b>Alternative Program</b></p> <p>Set expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Entry/exit procedures</li> <li>6. Bookwork</li> <li>7. Behaviour</li> <li>8. Homework</li> </ol>	<p><b>Alternative Program</b></p> <p>Set expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Entry/exit procedures</li> <li>10. Bookwork</li> <li>11. Behaviour</li> <li>12. Homework</li> </ol>
2	<p><b>TOPIC: Reflection - Introduction to French</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Understand the main learning goals for this unit and how they will be assessed.</li> </ol> <p><i>PowerPoint presentation1</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Understand stereotypes associated with the French-language and culture.</li> </ol> <p><i>Video</i>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFT32li8pc4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFT32li8pc4</a>  <i>Class discussion guided by the teacher</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Be able to use and recognise some basic greetings in French.</li> </ol> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkQrLXaEO">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkQrLXaEO</a>  <i>Tg (song)</i>  <i>Bonjour</i></p>	<p><b>TOPIC: Being good neighbours</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Understand what is international-mindedness.</li> <li>14. <i>Use definition of IM</i></li> </ol> <p><i>An internationally minded person is someone who is able to understand the diversity and richness of the world through its history, people and cultures. It is to be flexible in various situations yet caring and capable of showing respect towards all cultures and its people. It is also knowing how to interact with all people in a respectful manner irrespective of citizenship. Being internationally minded is more than just being culturally aware. It is a constant learning process; it has no limit and can continue to develop through time and experiences. What differentiates international-mindedness from other concepts such as intercultural understanding and global citizenship is that international mindedness moves beyond accepting or tolerating others. It entails an active</i></p>

	<p>Comment ça va?</p> <p>Comment vas-tu ?</p> <p>Très bien</p> <p>Et toi ?</p> <p>Moi aussi</p> <p>Merci</p> <p>Salut</p> <p>*Additional activity - Have completed the online IM survey.</p>	<p><i>engagement with international perspectives and diversity of cultures (Boulard, 2013).</i></p> <p>15. Understand that French is being spoken by neighbouring countries located on the East side of Australia.</p> <p>16. <i>Activity MAP "The North vs The East side neighbours"</i></p> <p>17. <i>Class discussion guided by the teacher</i></p> <p>18. <i>Google Map</i></p> <p>*Additional activity - Language features: Review basic greetings in French</p>
3	<p><b>TOPIC: New-Caledonia</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>19. Know the geographical location of New-Caledonia</p> <p>20. <i>PowerPoint Presentation Lesson 3</i></p> <p>21. <i>Use google map (draw attention to proximity to Australia)</i></p> <p>22. Understand general information about NC</p> <p>23. <i>Video</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsjuxV82NNw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsjuxV82NNw</a></p> <p>24. <i>Classroom discussion</i></p> <p>25. <i>Worksheet</i></p>	<p><b>TOPIC: New-Caledonia</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>31. Be able to identify similarities and differences between the Kanak people vs Australian Indigenous people &amp; culture. (Use PowerPoint Presentation)</p> <p>32. <i>Video</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoiG614sxV8&amp;list=PLJKIml7UQiYQcC0po16ORqmnXgSk6Qvhu">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoiG614sxV8&amp;list=PLJKIml7UQiYQcC0po16ORqmnXgSk6Qvhu</a></p> <p>33. <i>Text</i> <a href="http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/New-Caledonia.html">http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/New-Caledonia.html</a></p> <p>34. Develop their understanding of the French-language further (family members).</p>

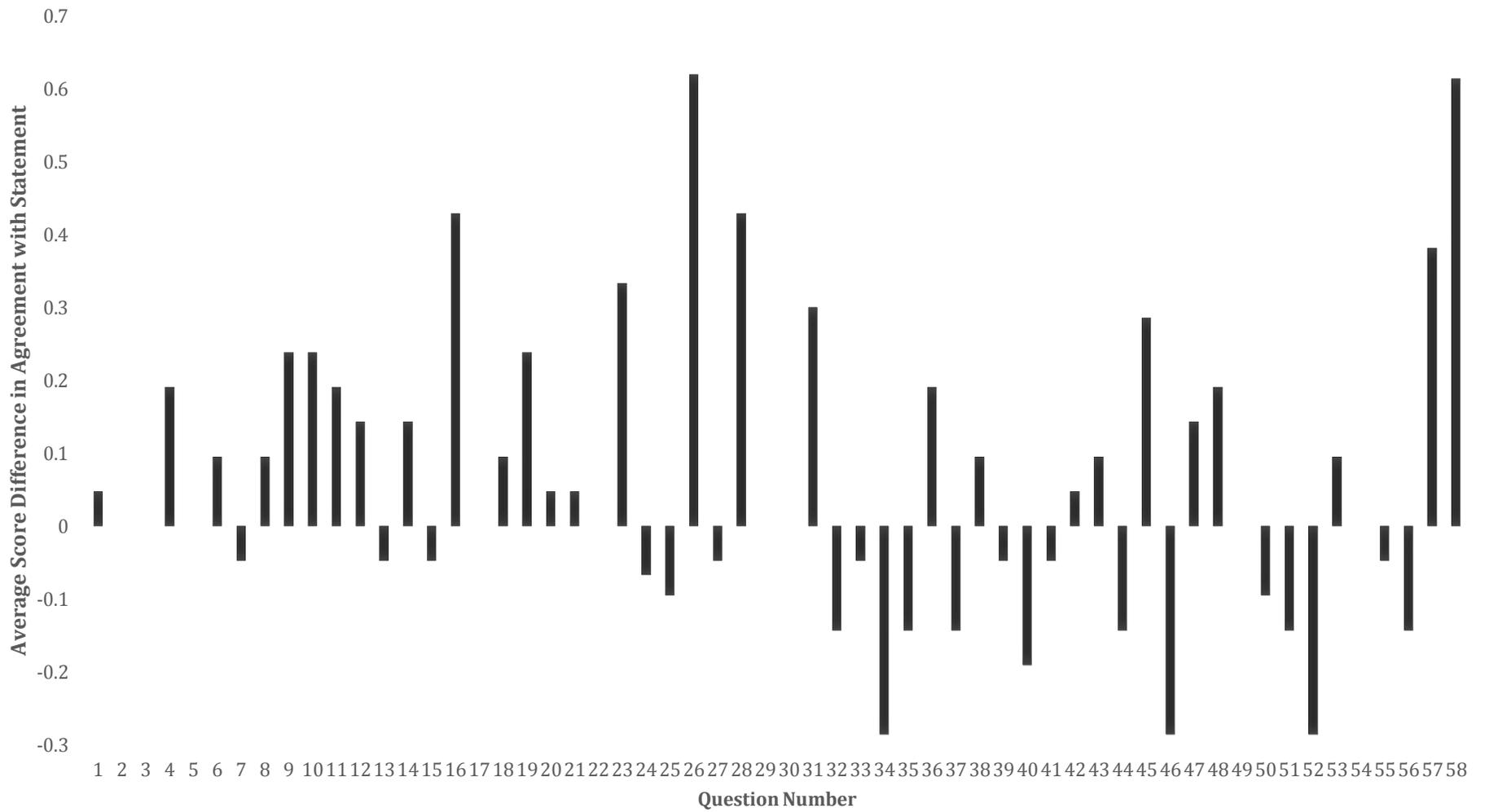
	<p>Informative reading for teachers to read prior to teaching about New-Caledonia:</p> <p><a href="http://www.mncparis.fr/uploads/histoire-mnc.pdf">http://www.mncparis.fr/uploads/histoire-mnc.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://nouvellecaledonie.la1ere.fr/2013/07/19/une-histoire-caledonienne-49093.html">http://nouvellecaledonie.la1ere.fr/2013/07/19/une-histoire-caledonienne-49093.html</a> (Bernard Berger)</p> <p>26. Know how to introduce themselves in French</p> <p>27. Videos</p> <p>28. Writing/Speaking activity "Bernard Berger"</p> <p>29.</p> <p>30. Numbers 1-20</p>	<p>35. <i>Listening activity: Meet Kevin, Adeline and Brigitte</i></p>
4	<p><b>TOPIC: Vanuatu</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>1) Know the geographical location of Vanuatu</p> <p>36. <i>Use google map (draw attention to proximity to Australia)</i></p> <p>2) Understand general information about Vanuatu</p> <p>37. <i>PowerPoint Presentation</i></p> <p>3) Know how to talk about what they like and don't like in French. Verb "Etre".</p> <p>38. <i>Meet Welton from Malekula (video)</i></p>	<p><b>TOPIC: Vanuatu</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>39. Understand the common global challenges that they share with some of Australia's East-side neighbours. (Use PPT)</p> <p>40. Volcano and Tsunami (ecology/sustainability) videos</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XXadKfE3pg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XXadKfE3pg</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIRNizkRwCU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIRNizkRwCU</a></p> <p>41. Group discussion (hypothesis – what if?)</p> <p>42. Activity (knowledge + caring + risk takers)</p> <p>43. Review basic language skills</p>

5	<p><b>TOPIC: Wallis et Futuna</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>44. Know the geographical location of Wallis and Futuna</p> <p>45. <i>Use PowerPoint Presentation</i></p> <p>46. <i>Refer to google map (draw attention to proximity to Australia, New-Caledonia and Vanuatu)</i></p> <p>47. Understand general information about Wallis and Futuna</p> <p><b>48. Use worksheet Wallis and Futuna Context</b></p> <p>Information for teachers to read prior to teaching this lesson (Information is in French)</p> <p><a href="http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?-wallis-et-futuna-.html">http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?-wallis-et-futuna-.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.walissetfutuna.fr/Wallis/Bienvenue.html">http://www.walissetfutuna.fr/Wallis/Bienvenue.html</a></p> <p>Video - Meet Johanna from Futuna</p> <p>*Opportunity for assessment on linguistic features (exam)</p>	<p><b>TOPIC : Wallis et Futuna</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p> <p>49. Know about the king and queen of Wallis and Futuna</p> <p>50. Les rois et les reines</p> <p>Information for teachers to read prior to teaching this lesson (Information is in French)</p> <p><a href="http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?-wallis-et-futuna-.html">http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?-wallis-et-futuna-.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.walissetfutuna.fr/Wallis/Bienvenue.html">http://www.walissetfutuna.fr/Wallis/Bienvenue.html</a></p> <p>51. Have reviewed family members vocabulary</p> <p>*Opportunity for assessment (quiz) on linguistic features (exam listening/reading/writing)</p>
6	<p><b>TOPIC: La Polynésie Française</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p>	<p><b>TOPIC: La Polynésie Française</b></p> <p>LEARNING GOAL - By the end of the lesson students will:</p>

	<p>52. Know the geographical location of French Polynesia <i>and</i> understand general information about it.</p> <p>53. Review the verb “Aimer”, “Etre” and “Avoir” in French</p> <p>Resources: Overview country PPT</p> <p>Meet Ludovic (video)</p>	<p>54. Know about the famous sports/activities done by people living in French Polynesia</p> <p>55. Know about the meaning of tattoos associated with French Polynesian culture</p> <p>56. Review how to talk about what they like and don't like in French + numbers 1 to 30.</p>
7	<p><b>ASSIGNMENT - Travel Expo</b></p> <p>Review concept of International-Mindedness</p> <p>Introduce A.V.E.C (video)</p> <p>Review French neighbours on the map</p> <p>Give out assignment and go through the conditions of the task.</p>	<p><b>ASSIGNMENT</b></p> <p>Two minutes clip “Le saviez-vous?”</p> <p>Research lesson</p>
8	<p><i>Assignment continues...</i> →</p> <p>Two minutes clip “Le saviez-vous?”</p> <p>Planning and Drafting</p>	<p><i>Draft due....</i></p> <p>Two minutes clip “Le saviez-vous?”</p> <p>Provide students with feedback sheet for peer review.</p>
9	<p><i>Assignment continues ...</i> →</p> <p>Two minutes clip “Le saviez-vous?”</p> <p><i>Peer review</i></p>	<p><i>Assignment due in class</i></p> <p>Two minutes clip “Le saviez-vous?”</p>
10	<p><i>Travel Expo presentation + Assessment Opportunity</i></p>	<p><i>Extended Activity (Invite guest speakers from the community)</i></p> <p><i>Activity MAP “The North vs The East side neighbours”</i></p>

## **Appendix D**

**Graph showing average change in pre and post intervention test scores across all questions in the international-mindedness instrument.**



## **Appendix E**

**Teachers' Seminar about the ESN organised at James Cook University in October 2016**



## Professional Development for French Language Educators Australia's East-Side Neighbours

### Empowering your French language classroom

The recent development and release of a national curriculum in Australia by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Agency (2012) provides evidence that its content is not a simple neutral assemblage of knowledge, but is rather a 'selective' tradition (Apple, 1993) that illustrates how Australia, as a nation, seeks to define itself through the curriculum experience provided for its youth. As asserted by Pinar (2002), every curriculum is an autobiographical construct largely representative of the participants in its construction and the imperatives they, as stakeholders, see as important as benefit to the nation. Three main imperatives are evidenced in the Australian national curriculum and are explicitly identified as cross-curriculum priorities: (1) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, (2) Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and (3) Sustainability. Important to this professional development is the identification of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia as a national priority, despite Australia's closer proximity to the nations of the South Pacific. These countries are not only Australia's closest neighbours, they are also a part of Australia's past, current and future history and by such are inextricably interwoven with Australia's identity. The curriculum is a crowded place but French teachers in Australia are ideally positioned to make the invisible, visible. The transformation of current teaching practice in the French language classroom is possible and it is proposed that such enactment is likely to place Australia in a stronger position to collaborate with all countries in its region and create a better future for all of the region's citizens, not only those who are speakers and learners of French.

### FRIDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

**5:00 - 5:30pm** Registration Building 134 ROOM 002

**5:45 - 6:15pm** Welcome JCU *University of the Tropics*: Making the invisible visible - Why focus on the East-side neighbours in the French classroom? By Florence Boulard

**6:15-6:45pm Presentation 1:** The Movement of Things in the Pacific\* French Polynesia by Jasmin Guenther.

**6:45-7:45pm** Meet and Share accompanied with drinks and canapés

### SATURDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

**10:00-10:25am** Registration Building 134 ROOM 002

**10:30-11:00am Presentation 1:** A magical mystery tour of the Pacific By Dr Kuttainen.

**11:00-11:30 Presentation 2:** Travel and language school in Noumea By Marc Boniface.

**11:30-12:30 Collaboration session** Australian Curriculum and the ESN: Let's plan together.

**12:30-1:25** Lunch & Documentary

**1:30 - 2:15pm Presentation 3:** Real friends, real people: making connections with Kiko from Wallis & Tulipe et Charles from Noumea.

**2:30-3:00pm Presentation 4:** Discovering our East-side neighbours to inform and transform traditional classroom practices by Dr Marie M'Balla-Ndi.

**3:15-3:45pm:** Concluding statement by Eliza Bird.

**4:00pm** *Start of the transformative journey!*

## **Presentations**

### **\* Making the invisible visible - Why focus on the East-side neighbours in the French classroom?**

Florence Boulard is a French lecturer and languages coordinator at James Cook University. She is passionately engaged in fostering a love of modern languages, not only for students at JCU, but also for the wider public. Florence is originally from New-Caledonia but decided to come to Australia to pursue her tertiary studies. In 2006, she graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education. Her passion for teaching and learning led her to complete a Master of Education in 2011 for which she wrote a thesis on international-mindedness. Florence has now been working on her PhD research project for the past three years which focuses on educational strategies for the development of internationally-minded young Australians.

### **\*The Movement of Things – Tracing Eighteenth Century Polynesian Artefacts**

Jasmin Guenther has studied Cultural and Social Anthropology at the Georg-August-University in Goettingen, Germany with a regional focus on Oceania and Southeast Asia. Taking a great interest in material cultures and museum studies, she has conducted research on bark paintings and contemporary art at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery for her M.A. thesis. She worked for two years as assistant curator at the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, Germany, before relocating to Australia in 2016 to pursue her doctorate degree at James Cook University.

### **\*A Magical Mystery Tour of the Pacific**

Dr Victoria Kuttainen is the Colin & Margaret Roderick Scholar of Comparative Literature. She is engaged in a three-year collaborative research project with postdoctoral scholars Dr Susann Liebich and Dr Sarah Galletly: *The Transported Imagination: Australasian-Pacific Travel & Mobility in Interwar Magazines*. This research draws on her interests in late colonial modernity, travel across the Pacific, vernacular cosmopolitanism, periodical studies, and the middlebrow. Her previous research in the areas of postcolonialism, settler studies, and the short story as a native form of print culture in Australia, Canada, and the USA culminated in her first book *Unsettling Stories: Settler Postcolonialism and the Short Story Composite* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010).

### **\*La Nouvelle École de Langues NSOE à Nouméa, Nouvelle Calédonie**

Marc Boniface grew up in Noumea, New Caledonia before moving to Australia. His experience spans over 30 years in most sectors of travel and tourism. He is the Founder & Managing Director of TETC. The Educational Tour Company creates and promotes a range of quality and innovative language study tour programs abroad, including to Noumea. Marc has been actively involved in Educational Tours since 2006 and is also one of the Co-founders of L'Ecole de Langues NSOE in Noumea in 2015.

### **\*Discovering our East-side neighbours to Inform and Transform Traditional Classroom Practices**

Dr Marie M'Balla-Ndi is originally from France but moved to Australia in 2008 to complete her journalism studies at the University of Queensland (UQ - Brisbane). In 2014, she graduated from UQ with a PhD in Journalism and International Affairs. Since completing her Masters in Journalism in 2009, Marie has worked as a foreign correspondent for a number of Francophone and Anglophone news outlets in diverse regions of the world. Her doctoral research examines the impact of socio- cultural and political issues, including traditional protocols and values, on contemporary journalism practice in the South Pacific region, with a focus on Vanuatu, Samoa and New Caledonia.

### **\*Let's Turn our Eyes to the East**

Eliza Bird is a third year Bachelor of Arts students at James Cook University. Eliza is currently majoring in French and English literature. In 2015 she received a scholarship from the Australian Government which enabled her to take part in an immersion subject in New-Caledonia. Following the destruction caused by tropical cyclone Pam, Eliza also participated in a charity diner to help raise much needed fund for the people of Vanuatu. She is planning to do honours next year after she completes her degree.