

Living a Curriculum of Hyph-E-Nations: Diversity, Equity, and Social Media¹

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Abstract

This study considers the complexities of living a cross-cultural curriculum within the multicultural contexts of Canada through following the experience of some first generation immigrants in a project that employs the multi-dimensional space of the Internet and cyber social communities within a vocational public school in Ontario. Disrupting traditional conceptions of students' production of literacies, the project seeks to re-work the boundaries that define multiculturalism as a series of homogeneous hyphenated spaces from which students who are racialized as non-white are expected to speak. Here we consider, "what is at play in the hyphen?" and "how might the networked classroom space be considered a hyph-e-nation?" To explore these questions, we begin with an overview of multicultural education in Canada. We then employ a reading of Third Spaces and quantum physics to reread how students might open up dual Third Spaces through self representations in a social networking space: first through the social network as a Third Space and second, as certain kinds of learners caught in the hyph-e-nated middle of Canadian multiculturalism in an Ontario classroom. The case studies are followed by a discussion that problematizes discourses of comparison between cultural communities of which students with many cultural

backgrounds and experiences are members.

Keywords: character development; curriculum theory; curriculum development; policy; diversity; hybridity; hyph-e-nations; immigrant students; multiculturalism; multiple literacies; social networking; quantum third spaces.

We have been clear, as a government, that we need all Ontarians to be at their best. We have invested in publicly funded education heavily and we will continue to do so because we know that a strong, publicly funded education system is the foundation of our province's future prosperity. Our schools need to help students develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, and caring citizens who can contribute to both a strong economy and a cohesive society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

We are not fated to choose those great apparatuses of mediation that structure our symbolic world... (Homi K. Bhabha, 1999).

We are living in a world of recursive crises. Afghanistan... Arab Spring... Alberta Tar Sands... BP oil spill... mass murders in public spaces either here in Canada, the United States, or Norway... racialized and gendered violent acts against immigrants, women, and children. Such geopolitical and environmental crises continue to displace inhabitants around the world. Such displaced persons, by choice or as refugees, then migrate to distant territories and adapt to new national governmental regimes while seeking employment, refuge, and a sustainable livelihood. "Never before in the history of the world," as Banks (2009) stresses, "has the movement of diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and language groups within and across nation-states been as numerous and rapid or raised such complex and difficult questions about citizenship, human rights, democracy, and education" (pp. 1-2). In fact since 2008, over 200,000 migrants from the Philippines, India, and China have made their way to Canada and are now living here as permanent residents (see Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Tagalog, Arabic, and Mandarin are listed as the dominant mother tongues spoken at home

among Canadian permanent residents. For many of these immigrants, social networking has become, as we shall see later in this paper, the new mediated apparatus for communicating and representing their hyphenated symbolic worlds as permanent residents and foreigners in a new country.

In 2008, like other nations, Canada experienced “a financial perfect storm of a sputtering U.S economy, tumbling oil prices and falling domestic demand that conspired to hurt the country’s growth prospects” (CBC News, 2008). During this economically difficult time, the Ministry of Education created several different educational reforms in response to the increasing multicultural and multinational diversity now present in Ontario classrooms all in the name of social cohesion and economic prosperity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009, 2010). Yet many of these reforms fail to challenge the inequitable future distribution of common capital investments available to immigrant families due to the ongoing institutional symbolic and material manifestations of poverty, racism, sexism, misogyny, and homophobia (Coloma, 2008). Nonetheless, such provincial reforms here in Canada have also afforded educational researchers pedagogical opportunities to study how our subjectivities as teachers and immigrant students form what Wang (2006) calls the fluid, intertwined, multilayered, and networked links to the complex affects of globalization that move beyond the ‘global’ and ‘local,’ the particular as parochial, and universal as homogenous. These links (hyph-e-nations) might be reconsidered as either static or abstracted entities, toward what might be richer cross-cultural, psychic and material relational engagements with others both inside and outside our classrooms. And yet, the multicultural reforms created to address the increasingly diverse student bodies within our classrooms are anything but novel here in Canada.

In 1971, Canada sought to confirm its place in the world as a cosmopolitan society by establishing multicultural policies into federal legislation. In fact, the authors of this paper come from families who immigrated to Canada from places such as the United

Kingdom, Guyana, India, Italy, and the United States because of the multicultural policies and respective educational and economic opportunities this provincialized nation-state provided for our families at the time (see Ng-A-Fook, 2009; Ausman, 2012). Our national government has since built upon early multicultural policies by integrating its initial tenets into the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977), the Charter of Rights of Freedoms (1982), and the Multicultural Act (1988). Canada was one of the first countries, as Ghosh and Abdi (2004) remind us, to create and implement a policy at the federal level of government. Nonetheless, such multicultural policies have been fraught with issues related to how different cultures are represented and perceived by the differing governing political parties, depending on whether they are symbolically mediated through a governmental apparatus by neo-conservative or neo-liberal ideologies.

Joshee and Sinfield (2010) note that as late as 2001, the Canadian Government's Policy Research Sub Committee on Social Cohesion, "positioned [diversity] as synonymous with difference and differences are something to be bridged rather than celebrated" (p. 65). Moreover these authors trace the historical evolution of the Canadian government's policy position with regards to minority groups:

Earlier discussions on identity, diversity, and equity were supplanted by a focus on 'at-risk' populations including immigrants (as an undifferentiated group) and youth-at-risk, which in Canada conjures an image of poor and often racialized young people. Thus the attempt to embed a vision of diversity as a strength within the social cohesion discourse was replaced by a vision of diversity as more than a potential fault-line; diversity was now a full-blown risk to social cohesion (p. 65).

Despite such ongoing limitations, where multiculturalism is considered a threat to social cohesion as one example, first generation immigrants continue to make their migration across the oceans and from other lands to what is now called Canada. Consequently, many immigrant students have transnational dual citizenships and multicultural and multilingual hyphenated identities.

Multicultural policies here in Canada are not informed by a

unifying theory, but rather convey a plurality of meanings depending on national, historical, cultural and political contexts. While North American progressives may view multicultural policies as a means through which to acknowledge and prevent injustice, Pinar (2009) makes clear that national multicultural reforms, at least for some neo-conservative politicians, actually reproduce social inequalities by fostering ethnocentrism as a form of inverted racism. Israeli scholars in contrast, as Pinar writes, emphasize both the particularities and commonalities of cultures, and the interchange between them. Therefore, as Pinar points out, multiculturalism means different things to different people. Whether it encourages cosmopolitanism, is constructed as a threat to culture, represented as a positive openness to difference, or politically utilized through the rhetoric of social cohesion depends on the country, locale, and historical context in question. Debates about multiculturalism are also, he suggests, debates about the politics of national identity, where some policy makers focus on the dangers of nationalism and others argue that the forces of globalization are eroding the very concept itself. Regardless of such debates, the abundance of different contextual meanings reminds us that the notion of “nation” and “multiculturalism” are themselves unstable.

During the ongoing economic, political and environmental crises, nationalism seems to have increased around the world. Just look to newspapers and read about the power various countries have demonstrated in mediating the psychological, economic, and material effects of globalization on their sovereignty (Russia and Georgia, China and Taiwan, Germany and Greece, Canada and other counties racing to stake claims over the natural resources now available with the opening of the Northwest Passages). Scholars like Pinar therefore disagree that nationalism necessarily diminishes in the wake of conceptualizing and implementing cosmopolitan and multicultural curriculum policy reforms. Back in the 1990s, curriculum scholars like Ted Aoki asked policy makers, administrators, and teachers how they might become more “supportive of the understanding of Canada as a

multiplicity of cultures, particularly as a counterpoint whenever the dominant majority cultures become indifferent to Canada's minorities" (p. 268). Moreover, he stressed then that we reflect a curriculum with minority voices that ask that minorities not be erased. Aoki's theoretical works continue to provoke curriculum scholars to ask more of our theorizing in relation to concepts like multiculturalism. Drawing on the work of Deleuze, he invites us to stretch our understandings of multiculturalism beyond the striated linearity of its conceptualizations as a noun or as a curriculum of historical dates to remember and celebrations of their respective multicultural festivities. Instead, Aoki asks us to reconsider multiculturalism as a polyphony of lines of movement that grow in the abundance of conjunctive middles, the "betweens," or what we might re-situate in this paper as the doubling of "hyph-e-nations" that some first generation immigrant youth experience as "third spaces" within the contexts of public schooling in a provincial jurisdiction like Ontario.

In this paper then, we continue to provoke the ways minority scholars might ask more of their research on multicultural education. To address this in part, we draw upon the concepts of "transnationalism" and "third space" in relation to immigrant and non-immigrant youth engaging each others' subjectivities and respective symbolic representations—of gender, culture, nationality, etc.—via the mediated apparatus of social networking. Roland Sintos Coloma (2009) asserts that "fram[ing] research beyond the nation as [the] main unit of analysis can yield rich insights regarding the imbricated inter-relatedness of nations and the border-crossing flows of people, ideas, goods, cultures, and institutions" (p. 497). Moreover, Coloma notes that U.S. historians of education are calling for more research on "*comparative inquiries*" (p. 498, original emphasis) between cultures and the experiences of people of color. He stresses that contemporary research has located a gap in the curricular presentation of multiple cultures in terms of interactions between communities of color, and that discourses about particular cultural groups only relate perspectives from within particular communities. Here Miller (2005) suggests that American

curriculum “must grapple with the history and ongoing operation of U. S. imperialism and education” (p. 498). Canada’s different provincial ministries of education face similar yet different challenges integrating the Canadian Federal Government’s policy of multiculturalism into social initiatives that are not divisive.

In the *Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (2012), whose subtitle is revealingly “Promoting Integration,” the federal government explains that

Multiculturalism is the Government of Canada’s policy framework aimed at managing diversity and the challenges that may arise.... Canada’s approach to diversity has traditionally balanced two objectives: to encourage integration, and to ensure that the broader society is welcoming and that it accommodates diversity (p. 11).

So even now in 2012, we continue to grapple with language from our federal legislative body that reminds us that diversity is something to be “managed,” “accommodated,” and that integration (into a racialized white majority) is a primary curricular objective. A provincialized response to the Federal policy reforms is *Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009), whose vision includes “recognizing systemic barriers” toward accessing education and hiring within the education field, and a philosophy of “recognizing the province’s diversity as a strength” (p. 11). Prior to this policy reform, this Eastern School Board in Ontario did have an Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Teacher Manual in place. And since completing our social action project at the school, this school board has since published an implementation document based on the government Equity and Inclusive Education Policy.

This school board continues to commit itself toward “promoting student achievement and well-being for all students” through its “identification of discriminatory bias and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement” (p. 2). Keeping in mind the challenges of working within an educational context that precipitates from a particular

government stance about the need to bring visible minorities into the mainstream of a larger majority, we situate the following social action curriculum research project within the context of a vocational high school *Communications and Technology* classroom in which students from multiple ethnic and migrant backgrounds interact online through social networks about teen culture, social justice issues related to marginalized youth, personal responsibility, empathy toward others, and strategies for engaging youth activism. In this paper, we consider how this project might problematize and/or transcend a discourse of comparison between cultures to speak to larger educational communities of which students with many cultural backgrounds and experiences are members.

The term “multiculturalism” itself is an interpellation of the classroom – it names the classroom as a certain kind of Canadian cultural space, importantly one made official by being wrapped up in a term coined by the Canadian government. It is a certain kind of Canadian learning space that has traditionally taken up the concepts of equity and inclusiveness through the use of migrant hyph-e-nated communities: Lebanese-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, Indo-Canadian, and so forth. Employing the multi-dimensional space of the Internet and cyber-social-communities, this project seeks to re-work the boundaries that define multiculturalism as a series of homogeneous hyphenated spaces from which immigrant students are expected to speak. We ask, “what is at play in the hyphen?” and “how might the networked classroom space be considered a hyph-e-nation?” To theorize this curriculum inquiry research project, we employ a reading of Third Spaces (Bhabha, 1994) and quantum physics to re-read representations of immigrant student subjectivities. We examine how students might open up dual Third Spaces through self-representations in a social networking space used for various assignments: first through the social network, and second, as certain kinds of learners caught between the hyph-e-nated middles of Canadian multiculturalism in an Ontario classroom.

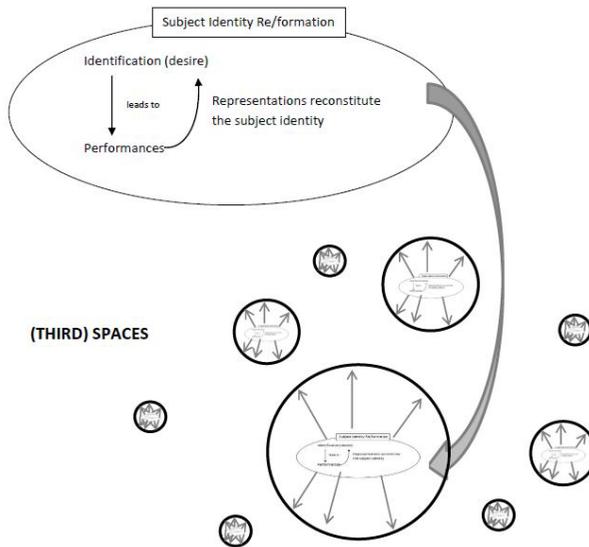
NETWORKING QUANTUM THIRD SPACES

The students in our study came from differing ethnic backgrounds – some born in Canada who moved away to the homelands of their parents before returning, some migrants who have travelled and lived in many countries, and several born here within one of the numerous diasporas that make up the cultural tapestry of this eastern part of Ontario. Through their participation in the social network, they enter the open domain of cyberspace – one that is undefined, and able to absorb the changing and constantly updated and redefined self-identifications of its users. It is also open for different ways in which students within the educational context of a plugged-in classroom name and symbolically represent themselves both within and against the traditional mediated apparatus of instituted educational structures. Because of this, the social network is an optimal locale from which a discussion of Third Spaces in relation to identity can begin. Before talking about the larger social action project from which some of our curriculum theorizing emerges, we offer the following experimental theoretical model of “quantum (third) space” to understand and disrupt essentializations of identity (see Ausman, 2012; Moon, 2010; Pinar, 2009, 2012). Although culturally responsive theory initially framed the design and implementation of the larger project (Gay, 2000, 2002), we have since moved our theoretical framework toward the concept of quantum (third) spaces in order to understand the complexities of immigrant students’ hyphenated symbolic enunciations on the social network site.

In our theoretical model for what we are now calling quantum third space, we situate identity as a continuous re-shaping of the self based upon identification, desire, and any subsequent symbolic representations (see Figure 1), which in turn enunciate different performative recursive acts of identification. We draw upon quantum theory to reconceptualize (third) spaces within the representational and special contexts of three dimensions. In our model, each circle represents multiple potential identifications and in relation to their respective desires. Moreover, once those representations are

conceived they are in turn pushed to the outside, of the “shell” of one’s unconscious, like Freud’s mystic pad, or the outer perimeter of the circle and these different potential enunciations are perhaps what self and other eventually see – whether as filmic performative representations, as writings, as symbolic representations on social network sites, or any other form of representation.

For us, such representations are pushed to the outside after each moment of individual identification (shown by the arrows within each circle) are a way of thinking about the things we see and consume – whether they are YouTube videos about different cultural representations, on t-shirts, in movies, books, or poetry. Within this conceptual framework, individuals can produce, recognize, and consume simultaneous representations at once. Our understanding of quantum (third) spaces includes the existence of several spaces at the same time, in varying dimensions. This is an attempt to break free from the essentialization of identities, affording us capacities to think of (third) spaces as both places and the spaces between places. Hybrid (or what we are calling hyphenated) cultural identities do not volley from one stable or determined space to another (India-Canada, Guyana-Canada, Scotland-Canada, Italy-Canada, for example), emotionally or physically. Being in a (third) space (at least for hyphenated or hybrid subjectivities) includes experiencing constant change inside one self, with multiple contradictory feelings of belonging and not belonging, of appropriation and alienation, by the differing representations of being a hyph-e-nated Canadian (Ng-A-Fook, 2009). Therefore drawing on quantum theory, the original conceptualization of quantum (third) spaces began with one of us (Ausman) attempting to explain her autobiographical experiences of living such differing differences, where it is both possible and probable for a self to inhabit two or more places at the same time, the spaces between such places, and the transient enunciated hyphens (either symbolically or performatively) that link such places within (third) space.

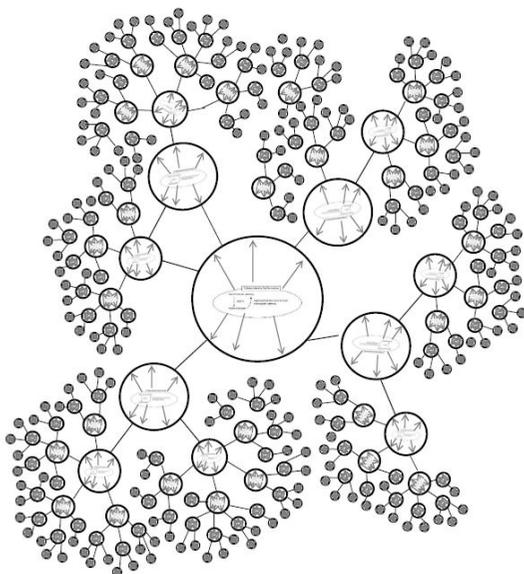


A subject identifies with something or someone, desires to be like it/them in part or in whole, and this leads to (re)actions. These actions can be considered performances by the subject, and are observed or consumed by those in space and time (others in a social network, viewers of a film, readers of a book). This subject who has represented herself publicly in some way (through speech, film, written text, online posting) is personally changed by this act of representation.

Figure 1. A Theoretical Model for Quantum (Third) Space.

In this picture, the different circles imply that quantum (third) spaces can be a number of things, all of which are evolving and shifting. They can be referential – a circle that emerges from a moment of identification and desire to be another circle, another (third) space – and we see this in real life, with fads, knock offs, movies similar to other movies, t-shirts that copy pictures logos from other cultural artifacts, etc. In turn, the frames of reference in a quantum (third) spaces are always shifting, as well. But the originary object (or identity) is fleeting and gone in the next instant. And, unlike in Bhabha’s theory, the originary object does exist, just in another time. In quantum theory, our autobiographical differences with the past, present, and future can co-exist, and we see this in cultures that try to hold onto values and traditions held deeply for generations alongside the various

changes in present and how they imagine their futures.



The self-representations people put forth in the digital space, on their homepages, are seen, read, appropriated, deflected, ignored, or passed-on by any number of other people in the network. Because of this, identities within the social network are meditated through a fluid quantum (third) space that is temporally dynamic and geographically defy fixity, yet are inextricably linked to the rest of the network. Although such links are represented in the model through what we might call hyph-nations (-), they remain transient, always having the capacity and potential to make multiple spontaneous as well as structured connections through time and space.

Figure 2. A Model of Quantum Third Spaces in a Social Network.

Social networking affords curricular and pedagogical opportunities for multiple enunciations of self-identifications that are linked to others' life experiences, often playing off one another, playing off the multiple hyphens that momentarily trans/connect to and with each sphere. Some students' journeys from Canada to homelands abroad and returning are similar to others and so students find their own stories mirrored yet transformed in the journeys of others. This model of identity as fluid, dynamic, ambivalent, and changing on account of reading the self through others' experiences forms an evolving social network of self-identifications (see Figure 2).

TRANSLATING CURRICULUM POLICY AS A SOCIAL ACTION CURRICULUM RESEARCH PROJECT

In 2008 a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Education propelled this project forward and facilitated the necessary economic and material resources to design and facilitate a joint community service-learning project between the *Council of Ontario Directors of Education*, the *Centre for Global and Community Engagement* and the *Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa* to work with a local high school. That same year, the Ontario Ministry of Education's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat published a curriculum policy document outlining its character development initiatives. The document outlined some of the following priority areas:

- 1) Respect for diversity must be at the heart of our policies, programs, practices and interactions;
- 2) Learning cultures and school communities must be respectful, caring, safe and inclusive;
- 3) Character development must be integrated into the curricular experiences of students and embedded into the culture of the school and classroom in an explicit and intentional manner; and
- 4) Character development is not a standalone initiative; it has linkages with learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development and parent and community partnerships (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 7).

Although this document emphasizes respect for diversity, inclusion, citizenship development and academic achievement, as Joshee and Sinfield (2010) stress, its discussions on identity and equity continue to be framed through a discourse of social cohesion and economic accountability (the discourse of finding common ground, as one example, for the sake of economic prosperity). For example, we can find passages in the document including:

Our citizens are our province's best asset. They contribute to nation building and to the continued development of a civil society. When schools address the qualities that contribute to the health and well-being of our society, they are, indeed, contributing to the improvement of the world that our students will inherit (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 9).

Consequently, for this particular social action curriculum research project, we attempted to develop and experiment with our curriculum designs and theorizing in order to both target and challenge the specific Character Development goals set by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Education:

- 1) Improving students' attendance;
- 2) Fostering a sense of community and safety;
- 3) Creating spaces with students for their voices to be heard;
- 4) Validating multiple representations of students' literacies; and
- 5) Becoming politically engaged citizens.

Although one of our priorities was to integrate these overall goals into the curriculum design and implementation of our project, we also sought to disrupt the various ways in which the institution of schooling situates and mediates the concept of "literacy" and in turn determines "what" and "who" counts as being literate (cultural, economic, social capital) within the institutional walls of public schooling. We might then ask the following question: How do immigrant students learn to appropriate the sociocultural multiple literacies of the (dominant/colonial) "other," when the school literacy itself works to alienate the very educative processes necessary for immigrant students to ex-appropriate their identifications with becoming a citizen of Canada? In response to such potential alienation, we recursively questioned the various ways teachers and students could collaborate to integrate students' interests (their autobiographical narratives) into the curricular designs during our planning and implementation of the project. But perhaps more importantly, this social action curriculum project provoked us to

reconsider the curricular and pedagogical affects that integrating emergent technologies like social networking within a classroom setting might have in terms of disrupting traditional conceptions of immigrant students' production of their subjectivities (in terms of national and cultural affiliations) and respective multiple literacies within the context of schooling.

We began implementing the project in September 2008 and ended it in June of 2010. During these two years, two of us (Ng-A-Fook & Radford) were at the school teaching the courses we created with graduate and teacher education students almost every day. The project was comprised of the following three phases:

- 1) Building a sense of community;
- 2) Development and implementation of a culturally responsive media studies curriculum (this concept is problematic today); and
- 3) Analyzing and synthesizing the impacts of the design and living the implementation of this project with marginalized youth.

Each student involved in the program was purposefully selected by a steering committee to reflect the diversity of their school community and then invited to participate within the project in order to complement the overall team dynamic. Some students had behavioural issues and were deemed "at risk" by the administration to the larger school community. These students were part of the school's special behavioural unit. Some students had ADD and/or ADHD. Other students had difficulties negotiating the dominant literacies of schooling such as reading and writing within the formal English language utilized at this specific school. The organizational structure of our collaborative partnership and its flexibility in terms of the programming enabled our research team to embed the Ontario Ministry of Education character development initiatives within the *Communications and Technology* and later *English* curriculum with 46 students in five Grade 10 courses over the two years of the project. The participating students' ages ranged from 15 to 18 years old.

Initially, the curriculum was designed to address the bigger picture of the school, community and environment. However, it was quickly seen that the students wished to focus on their individual struggles in terms of how to address issues of equity within the contexts of public schooling. In attempting to give students the necessary technological skills we observed that, while many adults view today's youth culture as the most "plugged in," students were surprisingly unfamiliar with the digital literacies linked to the Mac software used as well as consumption and production of knowledge through various digital medias (YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Ning, etc.).

Following this initial curricular and pedagogical insight, the teaching team created a social network site called *Engaging Youth Activism* for students to share their work. Across Canada and in school boards like this one in Eastern Ontario, administrators are mobilizing to make their infrastructure wireless and ensure policies that support the eventual facilitation of a computer or laptop for every student enrolled within the public schooling system. Outside schools, politicians are increasingly engaging the public through social network sites like Facebook. Consequently, schools must provide a space for students to engage the different competencies for becoming responsible cyber citizens (Bennett, 2008). However, when we initially began our program sites like Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube were censored by the school board administration. As a result, we set up our social network site with www.ning.com. This social network site had yet to make its presence known to the administrators of the school board. And in year two, the name was revised to *Digital Youth Activism* (see Figure 3). Within a few weeks of establishing the site, it became a central and integrated component of the curriculum design for future units of study with students.

The students were encouraged to develop their social network site pages, and provided with guidance with on how to ethically create and represent their respective public cyber-identities. The field coordinators periodically took and incorporated screen captures of students' social network site web pages into their daily journals as a

cultural representations, and then we will return to the concept of curriculum lived as hyph-e-nations in relation to multicultural education, diversity, and equity.

LITTLE MOE

Little Moe, as he calls himself, was an 18-year-old student who chose to enroll in our program. At the time, he described his youth as somewhat “*hectic*” because of the continuous migrations of his family. He was originally born in Carleton Place, Canada, and attended school there until second grade. His family then moved back to Lebanon where he spent the next three years. When he returned to Canada, he attended three different middle schools before entering the vocational high school in Grade 9. Even while Moe was in our program, his family moved houses at least one more time. When Moe returned to Lebanon, he explained that he had a lot of social and cultural capital at the schools he attended because he could speak English. His background in Canada provided him with an advantage and told us, “*I aced the English classes.*”³ However, upon his return to Canada the other students in class often teased him because of his apparent accent. Nonetheless, when Moe describes his linguistic interactions with his family, he considered both English and Arabic to be “*equal*” in terms of what constituted his ‘first’ language. His struggles with performing the cultural accentuated norms of the English language within the contexts of public schooling often made him a target for bullying. During our interviews he told us:

When...what’s it called...in Grade 6 when I was first in Carleton Place, I was shorter than most of the kids in my class, so they’d make fun of my height and stuff, like oh, you don’t know how to speak English, go back to your country and stuff. So...

He does not remember exactly how he reacted but his sister has recounted to him that in response to this, he “*freaked out and starting,*

like, running and punching kids in the head." These experiences of bullying changed the way he performed academically in the classroom and had a lasting effect so much so that the defeat he experienced as a child is repeated through his schooling experience:

Like, since that...since then, I wouldn't talk a lot. Like, I wouldn't be, like, like standing in front of the class and start saying the whole story and stuff. I wouldn't say that. Like, in conversation I'd mess up a bit. Like, when I talk, I'd mess up. Like I have, like, a speech impediment...is that what you call it?

Consequently, when Moe began high school he was put into an English as a Second Language stream (ESL) where he was now dwarfed by the curriculum. During this first year he was unable to achieve any Grade 9 credits and had to redo the entire year. When asked how he felt about this he said, *"I was really upset."* And,

You know, school's school. Like, no matter what you do, it's still school. You're going to have to learn. But the thing is, like, I understood why I didn't get credits, because I, like, was really behind in class and stuff...so yeah.

Moe also struggled with the Ontario Grade 10 Literacy Test, failing it twice prior to his Grade 12 year. He was well aware that it is a hurdle to overcome in order to graduate. *"If I don't pass it this time I don't graduate so I am kinda nervous."* He identified the essay portion to be the hardest part of the test in that *"some kids they don't think that much, not that they don't think that much, they don't have enough thoughts to fill up the whole page."* Moe also struggled with his language skills outside of school. When he originally took the written test for his driver's license he failed, getting quite a few of the questions incorrect. During his second attempt he requested the help of an Arabic translator. Not only did he pass, he did not get a single question wrong. Moe was one of the only students enrolled in our program to highlight national and cultural representations that were important to him at home on our social network site, like the Lebanese flag (see Figure 4). Moe's struggle is mildly exemplified in what Banks (2009)

describes as a gap between democratic ideals and the experiences of minority students. He argues that visible minorities are often marginalized both in their own communities and in national cultures. By adopting the dominant language and culture they may become isolated from their community culture, yet are also denied full participation and structural inclusion in mainstream society (see Egéa-Kuehne, in-press).

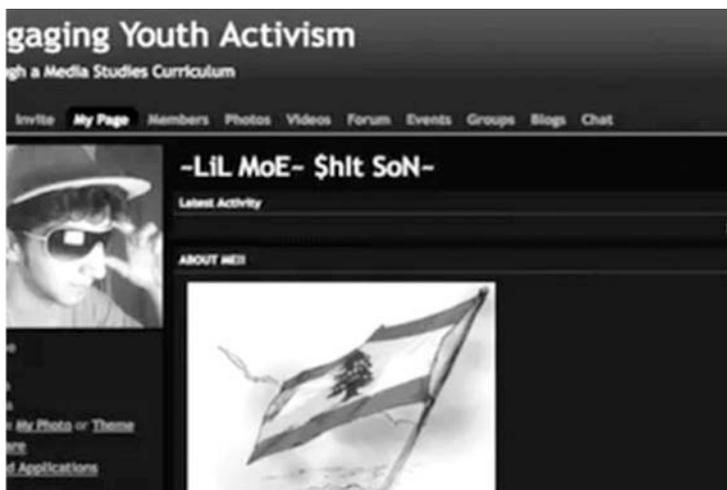


Figure 4. Moe's Social Network My Page.

Moe's and other students' postings of international symbols on our social network site, flagged us as teachers and researchers involved with the program to reconsider the complexities of living a cross-cultural curriculum as both immigrants and non-immigrants, native-born and foreign born within the multicultural contexts of Canada. From this digital space, Moe, whose audience is both his peers and teachers, signifies and symbolically represents himself in a new space. His hyphenated lived experiences speak to what Kirsten Drotner (2008) calls the restructuring of "dominant educational thinking about knowledge" (p. 171) through a space of multidimensional dispersal that the Internet affords its users. Moe's story locates him in multiple spaces simultaneously, a hyph-e-nation between the dual geopolitical

nations of Canada and Lebanon, and in the linguistic spaces between each.

In Lebanon, Moe was identified by his ability to speak English and in Canada, by his lack of that same ability. Reading Moe's journey through quantum (third) spaces, his experiences as part of the Lebanese diaspora in Canada are about both geographical movements and dispersal but also about Moe's experiences with Canadian multiculturalism through the dimension of time. As an adult learner, Moe experiences a temporal return to the space of the Canadian multicultural classroom that has not changed from his elementary experience years before. Moe's subjectivity, its enunciations, is symbolically mediated as a Canadian ESL student through the institutional apparatus of public schooling spaces of a vocational secondary school in Ontario. The social network affords Moe a place to speak from the abundances of "between" places: the liminal zones between Lebanon and Canada where his linguistic identity does not have to be the dominant marker of his social identity. On the ning.com site, Moe is able to speak his own multidimensional language of self-identity. He puts up images, phrases, and flags that are meaningful to him, and which change over the course of the term. He plays within the hyphenated (-) spaces of the social network offering his homepage as a site where self-identification occurs but one that remains fragmented rather than totalizing the fluid enunciated dynamics of his subjectivity. As a third space, the content of the "My Page" constantly changes, the language shifts, and images substitute one representation for another...and, ...and, another.

When asked about how the overall social curriculum action curriculum project impacted Moe's life inside and outside the classroom at school, he responded the following in relation to creating news broadcasts and public service announcements for both the social networking site and larger school community:

It taught me how to uh, like, how to do, like, questions, how to make up my own questions right on the spot. It helped me interview people, like, it'd be, like, come here I'll interview you, and right off the spot you'd have

to interview them and give them questions. So, yeah, it helped me, like, work faster with people, and talk to people faster. You know, it gave me more confidence.... The teachers in the program taught me how to work with groups of people. Like me and Sara would work mostly together. But before the program, me and Sara would never work together. Like, I barely talked to her. Like I used to barely talk to her, but now we talk a lot. Now I walk around the hallway and say to people, "this Friday we are putting out a news cast." Right after the news cast, we'd be walking down the hall, they'd be, like, "Oh, good job, more, good job, more." So yeah, the program gave me more confidence to make another one. Yeah, yeah. It's like....it showed me, that at school it's not only a bully Moe, it's not only a Moe that doesn't say much. It showed people that I'm, a different side. I can do what I want. I had a teacher actually come up to me and be, like, "Can I get your autograph?"

In a sense, the social network site as well as the other dimensions of the program provided opportunities for teachers and students to call forth our capacities as a cosmopolitan praxis to imagine unexpected cross-cultural flows and transnational mobilities. To a large extent, the narratives students offered represented autobiographical inter-subjective accounts of what Miller (2006) aptly calls the "shifting and rapidly changing discursive and material effects of globalization" (p. 31). Moe's story represents a lived curriculum inhabited by the hyphenated spaces between alienation and appropriation, becoming and happening, and being and not being Canadian—living a social networked curriculum of hyph-e-nations within a quantum (third) space.

KIKO

Kiko was a 17-year old student enrolled in the program. In class, he was one of the quieter students. Not until he started posting cultural representations of his family background on the social network site did we and other students learn that he spent many of his formative years growing up in the Philippines. He created several videos that documented what it meant for him to be a hyphenated Filipino

student living in Canada. Prior to his postings, there were many times both inside and outside of class when other students referred to him as “Spanish” or “Chinese.” In one instance, when Kiko corrected one of his peers about being Filipino, the student responded “whatever, same thing.” In *Theorizing Asian Canada, Reframing Difference*, Coloma draws on the works of Althusser (1971) and Fuss (1995) to situate the concept of Asian Canadian as a “formation within the simultaneous and negotiated process of interpellation and identification that name and bring together a racialized coagulation of diverse ethno-national cultural groups” (p. 122). Such hyphenated coagulations provide spaces of agency for subjectivities originating and associating their differing individual and collective symbolic representations a strategic moment in time for solidarity and to then work together and against institutional violence. On the downside, however, as Coloma (in-press) points out, this same interpellation is utilized by mediated apparatuses like “the Canadian government in the form of census and other biopolitical technologies of surveillance and management to sort, regulate, and allocate resources to various populations by race and ethnicity” (p. 122). Following Coloma's argument, on one side we see Kiko's ability to form alliances with others in his class that self-identify as Asian, and alternatively, observe how his individual identity can be erased or misrepresented by others in this pan-Asian conceptual framework. In either case a quantum (third) space model affords us opportunities as educational researchers and teachers to understand Kiko's temporal existence in both of these spaces simultaneously, and at different times, and at different locales depending on the political, historical or cultural context of his engagement of others within the mediated apparatus of public schooling.

Trying to work with a cross-cultural curriculum, we acknowledged this student's national and cultural identifications in class, and he then asked to be called by his Filipino name (Kiko) rather than his “Canadian” name, Peter⁴ – the given baptismal anglicized “English” saint-hooded name registered to him by the school and in use by the

school administration, most students, and the education system in general. On the social network site and in his video assignments he went by his birth name for the first time in his public schooling career. Out of all of the students enrolled in the program, Kiko's cultural representations were the most prominent on the social network site (see Figure 5). Like Moe, he posted the flag of the Philippines and featured many famous Filipino artists and athletes on his site. He created a video for his Unit 2 culminating task that spoke to his experiences both in the Philippines and of leaving the Philippines. Consider the following letter that the Kiko wrote for one of his course assignments:

Leaving the Philippines, kind a hard cos thats where we all grew up at and so much memories fading from back then i really miss the long days of summer all year round, the beautiful beaches and the home cooked meals sutch as Tinola, Sinigang na hipon, Champorado [chocolaate rice], Nilaga but the best parts of the foods were the frech grown vegetabals and/or fruits, they are really diffrent from the fruits and vegetabls here, becuse in the Philippines its more tropical so the fruits are moree juicyer and there are alot more variets to choes from i could go on but it would take forever and i'll make my self hungery. Another awsome place is where all the mountains are, tropical water falls with unbeleavobly clean n' fresh water and the people are very nice even if they are living on the streets they always find a way to find happyness and make money, by making bags, hats, cooking food they are jsut reallf friendly people. Ghetto houses in the Philippines are huge compared to the houses here the called a project homes but they all still sell for a lot of money. they builed them big because usally there are more then 5 children in the family my grandmother had 13 kids so they had to have a big house to fit them all in, but alog time ago it wasnt really like that you would have to build your own home witch was really tiny and catch your own meals its gotten a bit better now but im still hoping to go back to the Pomis Land again someday."⁵

Kiko's videos documenting what it means to be Filipino in Canada are his personal statement, reflecting his worldview, speaking from his place as part of the diaspora in Canada. Considering Kiko in relation to Moe, here we try to begin to work with and in a modest way go beyond Coloma's call for comparative multiculturalism, to

look through one student's experiences to read another's. And like Coloma (2008), we try to "understand the postcolonial conditions of peoples of color both in their "native" countries and in the diaspora" (p. 37). Thus in taking Kiko's site as its own utterance, we find his homepage to be a different place from which to speak about geographical movement and growing up in different countries. Formerly silenced when lumped in with being Spanish or Chinese in the eyes of others, Kiko utilizes the quantum (third) space of social networking to represent memories and future desires of the "Promis[ed] Land," rich with colours, smells, tastes, and geography, while also negotiating the reorientations of such desires and their respective multiple literacies within the mediated institutional structures of public schooling here in Canada.



Figure 5. Screenshots of Kiko's Evolving "My Page".

After Kiko's family immigrated to Canada, like many other immigrant families, they moved around frequently seeking employment opportunities. One of his Grade 8 teachers recommended that he attend vocational school because of his academic struggles with math and English. Kiko mentioned on several occasions that he did not find the work at the school challenging and often expressed

that certain teachers underestimated the capacities of the student body in general. During an interview, when asked what he thought students or teachers could learn from his experiences, Kiko responded:

They could learn how to treat the students better, respectful. And, like, change the work, 'cause, we need a challenge." He goes on to say "I think I am getting stupider. No it's true." and then "When I was back in grade school the work there was much harder than here."

Kiko's desire to belong, and in some ways to return to the joys of his youth in the Philippines is not addressed by the structures of schooling. As his family moves around the city and the world, he seems to be left desiring stability and academic challenges. And yet, when symbolically represented as a Filipino permanent resident, a hyphenated Canadian citizen, Kiko now somehow "feels stupider." The mediated apparatus of Ontario schooling identified him as an ESL student struggling with language and mathematics, placing his present and future lived experiences of the curriculum within the spaces of an adaptive vocational school.

Kiko's experience is hauntingly reminiscent of what Coloma (2009) describes about the history of Filipino/a migration to the USA, including the racialized "streaming" of Filipino/as into the African American system of education, and that "the transnational elaboration and implementation of the curriculum for African Americans toward Filipino/as produced... a two tiered educational program for different segments and different destinies - a liberal arts academic focus for the select few and an industrial-manual one for the majority" (p. 514). The aim of creating social cohesion through multiculturalism policies that target so-called "at risk" students, has in Kiko's case, left him feeling marginalized on the outside in a near social recapitulation of those early policies like in the United States, and also here in Canada, where "empire works alongside race as organizing principles to normalize and discipline colonized subjects" (ibid.). Kiko's perceived under-education alongside his colonial re-naming Peter leaves him caught between the "Canadian dream" of migration for

higher education, political stability, acceptance, and perhaps even economic prosperity, and the actual symbolic and material reality of his schooling experience in Ontario. Without our capacity to hear his voice as a hyphenated Canadian citizen occupying several fluid spaces, Kiko is not understood by the mainstream schooling system, which has streamed him (mediating him symbolically as sainthood) mainly into the wrong institutional programs of our educational apparatus of public schooling.

In the social network, Kiko is able to describe the imaginative spaces that return him to a different time and place – a (third) space which is both memory and desire. By being able to articulate his position from within the class, but outside the structured classroom in the dynamism of what we might now call the quantum third space of social networking. In this liminal space of hyph-e-nations, Kiko was able to enunciate different representational possibilities for his hyphenated subjectivity, beginning with the revelation as researchers and teachers that his real name was not Peter – his first steps towards caring about, and participating in our class, marked by a desire to shed the institutionally mediated and anglicized colonial symbolic name assigned to him. Therefore the social network enables Kiko to live a hyphenated curriculum of multiple symbolic cultural and linguistic representations. As Peter, his responses are mediated through the all-consuming Ontario apparatus of public schooling, then as Kiko on the social network, he could choose a different mode of self-identity apart from the anglicized name assigned to him. Kiko inverts the common colonizing practice of re-identifying those who do not fit-in to normative view of Canadian life by re-labeling Others with English names while in the quantum (third) space of the digital classroom space. His online enunciations provide a space where he can resist (as much as he wants or doesn't want to) wearing the Canadian name "Peter" that pressures him to enter the fold, or to become "Canadianized," and just another cog in the assimilating biopolitical machine. Kiko is able to articulate multiple cultural positions within the digital space, where being (in)visible in a digital

world affords him pedagogical and curricular opportunities to bring together the ambivalent and symbolic lived experience of “Peter” and “Kiko” within the mediated apparatus of public schooling. He experiences the multiple and often contradictory enunciations of schooling (from administration, teachers, and peers) even while online – formally when responding to the texts assigned to him, and personally when creating his digital identity that is renewed, recursive, and evolving with each new post.

Through participating in the program, things did begin to turn around academically for Kiko near the end of the year. He was more open during conversations in the class, he shared his ideas, and he became more comfortable in front of a video camera. Moreover, he expressed excitement about the different projects he was able to create and develop over the course of our program. His voice emerged through the media he was able to use, as his critiques of schooling, responses to literature and media, and reminiscences of his personal histories became ways of finding his place between the Philippines and Canada—living a social networking curriculum of hyph-e-nations within a quantum (third) space.

Kiko’s teaches us here what multiculturalism means from his perspective. One of the inherent limits of any study which explores student engagement through new classroom techniques is that we cannot account for future student success, but Kiko’s work along with what we have shared of Little Moe’s would be examples of the potential these projects have for supporting the work of self formation and affirmation, essential elements in literacy development.⁶

Throughout the program other students who either racialized their identifies or were racialized by others as Latino, Arabic, Canadian, immigrant, Anglophone, white, gay, straight, and so on, and so on, also expressed their hyphenated identities on the social network in terms of gender, class, popular culture, sexuality, etc. What is evident in our research is that the social network site provided a space for some students to enunciate and perform their multiple identities in relation to their differing lived contexts either inside or outside the

institution of public schooling. Living a social network curriculum afforded their teachers, the researchers, and volunteers in the program to learn more about the complexity of students' lived experiences outside the classroom and then make subsequent changes to the curriculum developed for the Communication and Technology course. In a sense, we attempted to create spaces for students to both see and express their lived experiences in the school curriculum.

Many of the students in the program improved their overall attendance, worked to foster a sense of community, created spaces for both their voices and other to be heard, represented their differing literacies, and became politically engaged citizens within the larger school community. For example, two students who were expelled from the school the year before for being a physical risk to peers as well as teachers, were able to successfully pass all of their courses while enrolled in our program that school year. However, there were also students who had extenuating circumstances that continuously overshadowed what we were trying to accomplish in the program (incarceration or being kicked out of their parents' homes). Due to the parameters of our ethics approval from the local school board, we were not able to follow up with any of the students once they finished the program to see how integrating the character development initiatives affected their future experiences at the school. Our inability to follow up as well as sustain the project beyond two years was and remains a major limitation of this social action research project. However one of the English Teachers involved with the program continues to use one of the social networking sites we created to teach a novel study.

Our point in this paper is not to argue the various correlations between our program and student success in terms of the character development issues and educational excellence. Rather, what we put forth is a curricular provocation for fellow scholars, policy makers, school administrators, and teachers to reconsider the limitless possibilities of experimenting with new forms of technologies like social networking in the classroom when time and the necessary

technological support are in place to do so. And from this, we aim to learn about multiple literacies and more about quantum third spaces, the hyphenated curricula immigrant students live. While within the official discourse of Canada multiculturalism is framed as a means of integration, during this project we sought to explore the multiple performed enunciations of culture from different subject positions and perspectives.

LIVING A CURRICULUM OF HYPH-E-NATIONS

The social network affords students a quantum (third) space where they are able to bring forth their personal histories, across continents, and within the diasporas in Canada to articulate their identities beyond stereotypes that demand cultural intelligibility by teachers (Moon, 2010). Moe's and Kiko's identities are constantly in flux on the social network, where their "My Pages" become symbolic "cultural representations" of these students' constant evolution, their "coming into being" as subjects whose cultural identities might have particular roots/routes but are not fixed in any given time and place (see Butler, 1999). Furthermore, access to the World Wide Web of information on the Internet and digital connections via social networking forums provided students, like Moe and Kiko, civic opportunities to engage with what mattered to them while living within the mediated apparatus of public schooling.

What we learned during this social action curriculum project is that the concepts of authority and institutional legitimacy, of who has the power to validate knowledge production (cultural, epistemic, social, etc.), are in a constant state of flux within a public schooling system that is becoming more wireless. Students can now access information outside the classroom in fundamentally different ways from how they are asked to "learn" within the institutional structures of a classroom while still inside the school. "For perhaps the first time in human

history,” Lankshear and Knobel (2008) make clear, “new technologies have amplified the capacities and skills of the young to such an extent that many conventional assumptions about curriculum seem to have become inappropriate” (p. 8). Here the theoretical and poetic works of Canadian Poet Laureate Fred Wah (1996, 2000) have also helped us to re/conceptualize the thoughtful and playful spaces between cross-cultural hyph-e-nations, of curricular doublings, taking place within the intellectual theorizing of our research on multicultural education within the contexts of curriculum studies and social networking.

Lingering within the poetics of the hyph-e-nated spaces of social networking as one example is where the temporal hyphens among nation, culture and subject, both binds and divides (Wah, 2000). But even when it is notated like through the symbolic representation of a flag, a song, or popular culture, as Wah (2000) reminds us, the hyphen “is often silent and transparent” (p. 73) within the contexts of public school. In our work within such cross-cultural hyph-e-nations within quantum third spaces, as teachers and educational researchers, we must attune ourselves toward alternative curricular possibilities that break through such silences and erasures toward understanding curriculum, or multicultural education within the context of public schooling even in Canada or Ontario, in what Aoki has called a “curriculum in a new key.” Much like the poetic bio-texts of Fred Wah (1996, 2000), our curriculum theorizing, designs, implementation and evaluation, can make the interstices at the margins of the hyphen (and in-between its connective spaces) more audible and their cross-cultural pigmentations more visible. Here the transparency of the hyphen thus becomes a thorn—an aporia, a perpetual deferral of signs, signifiers, and signified—in the side of what we might call “predetermined” colonial configurations (Stanley, 2009). And within this hyphenated quantum (third) space of infinite discursive and symbolic representational possibilities, we in turn can then create alternative conceptual interpretations of concepts like diversity, equity, and multicultural education within the contexts of public schooling.

Such conceptual navigations and reconceptualizations of multicultural education as a temporary temporal assemblage of curricular hyph-e-nations might then play with what Wah (2000) calls the contradictions, paradoxes, and theoretical assumptions active at the edges of the hyphen, in our classrooms, of our hyphenated Canadian students. "This constant pressure that the hyphen brings to bear against the master narratives of duality, multiculturalism, and apartheid," Wah (2000) tells us, "creates a volatile space that is inhabited by a wide range of voices" (p. 74). Here our curriculum theorizing and its respective curricular designs would then involve the geopolitical, cultural, and psychic play with the "poetics of the "trans," methods of translation, transference, transposition, or poetics that speaks of the awareness and use of any means of occupying" the diverse narrative locations students choose to produce and occupy either within our classrooms or on social network sites like www.ning.com (p. 90). It is within the interstitial margins of these narrative locations, their lived hyph-e-nated locations, that we as teachers and educational researchers can then perform the aesthetic dynamics of recursively questioning concepts like curriculum, social networking, quantum third space, equity, diversity, and multicultural education in relation to our (re)readings of the differing enunciated symbolic representations of the past, present and future (of often) marginalized (immigrant) students, and the multiplicities of their subjectivities. And remember that these youth have the limitless potentialities to inhabit multiple identities within the institutional mediated places of our classrooms.

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their collaborations with marginalized students to integrate different ways of utilizing digital technologies like social networking in the classroom at their annual conference in Seoul, Korea.

- 2) The use of the term “shell” is linked to chemistry as well, as in the shell of the Bohr model of the atom or the idea of a nucleus. In quantum physics, particles are only contained by probabilities, not strict “shells” as in earlier models of the atom. This idea of probabilities allows for multiple positions at once – in other words, just as a particle changes through the act of observation (Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle), the act of interaction within a social network, the act of being observed because of self-representation and interaction one one’s homepage, can change the networker’s behaviour (our students in the classroom). The defining of the self in this space is fluid and multiple, simultaneously and ambivalently an attempt at self-definition and deferral.
- 3) We recorded interviews with Moe and Kiko in school library at end of first year of the project.
- 4) Moe, Peter, Kiko, and Sara are pseudonyms.
- 5) Kiko created this later as part of his final assignment for the second unit of study for our program. Kiko remixed his reading of the letter to music and video and then published in on the social network for his peers to listen to and read.
- 6) To read more about the lived experiences of other students enrolled in the program dealing with similar but different dimensions of the project see our forthcoming 2013 article in the Canadian Journal of Action Research.

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