

**ECSPM 2020 SYMPOSIUM - LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL (SUPER)DIVERSITY AT WORK:**  
**From theory and policy to action and (digital) practices**



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# BEAM (Bilingues Émergents À l'école Maternelle): A whole school approach to developing a plurilingual habitus

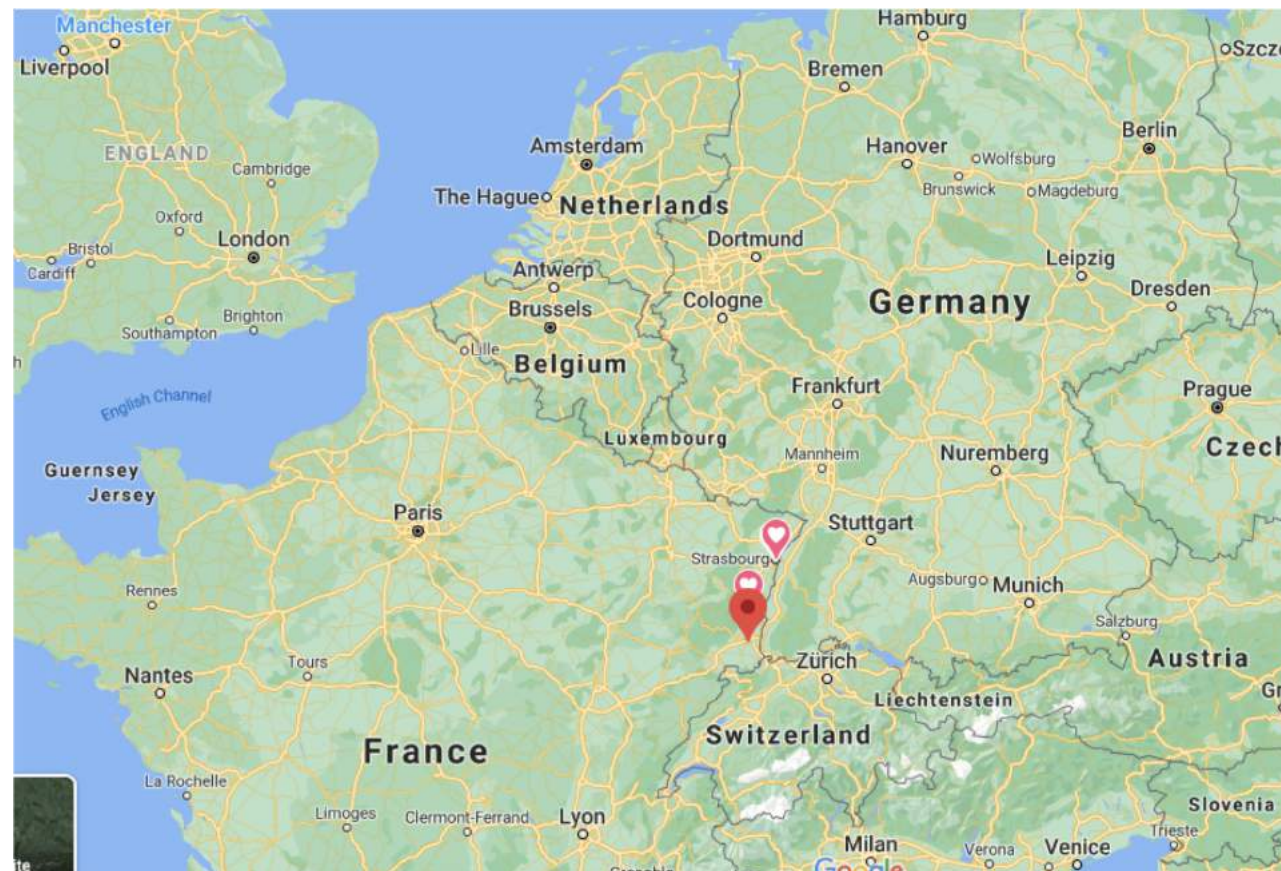


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# Plan

- The origins & development of the project
- Why maternelle?
- Why whole school?
- What do we mean by plurilingual habitus?
- Research questions, design & methodology
- The story so far...



Context of our studies

# (Future) teachers' questions concerning multilingual contexts

- How can we welcome a child and her family when the school language is not the language of the home?
- How can we help the child to learn French as quickly as possible so that she can catch up her peers and access the content being taught?
- How can we support language development and plurilingual and intercultural competences when we don't speak the languages of the learners?
- What role should the pupils' and their families' languages play at school?
- How can we provide inclusive education for these pupils and cater to their specific needs whilst encouraging openness towards otherness in order to promote social cohesion?

# How can teachers function effectively in complex multilingual & multicultural environments?

To know, to care  
& to act

(Banks, 2001)

# To know, to care, to act

(Banks, 2001)

- Knowledge of content and pedagogy alone not sufficient (Horan & Hersi, 2011)
- Established attitudes and ideologies about language (conscious or unconscious) serve as barriers to gaining new knowledge (Banks, 2001; Commerford, 2005; Garmon, 2004).
- Educators in particular ‘need to be able to empathize in order to act in a meaningful way’ (Dolby, 2012, p. 69).

# Empathy

- ‘taking on another’s perspective’ as well as **being able to respond to another from that perspective** (McAllister & Irvine, 2002, p. 433).
- Is thought to **contribute** to an **increased sensitivity to different cultures** (Germain, 1998; McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Tiedt & Tiedt, 2010)
- Is seen as an **essential quality** to be promoted in teacher education, especially in courses which aim to raise student teachers’ **awareness** of issues concerning **diversity** and **social justice** in their classrooms (Dolby, 2012)



# Dialogic approach

- **PBL (Problem-based learning)**
- Students work **collaboratively in small groups** in order to reflect on a real-life problem and to collectively generate solutions
- **Empowers learners** by giving them a voice and providing them with a forum in which they are invited to **consider alternative viewpoints & work collaboratively**
- “The **group**, as a learning context, **provides a forum** within which long held and often **unconscious stereotypes** and **biases** can be surfaced, **discussed and replaced** by a firsthand appreciation for the resilience and resourcefulness of those disadvantaged by social structures”  
(Commerford, 2005: 119)



# Research in pre-school context (2014-15)

## Actuality implies possibility!

- Pre-school priority education zone
- Class of 19 children (3 year olds)
- Languages spoken at home: Albanian, Arabic, Creole (la Réunion), French, Serbian, Turkish
- 7/19 children speak Turkish at home
- Teacher, Sylvie, 35 years of experience, 31 in multilingual classrooms, 18 in preschool, French-speaking, some knowledge of other languages (English, Turkish, Spanish)
- Double objective:
  - Research
  - Teacher education resources filmed in French context

# Video a powerful tool in teacher education

Effective means of placing the viewer within the action, distinct visual & aural qualities  
(Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2000)

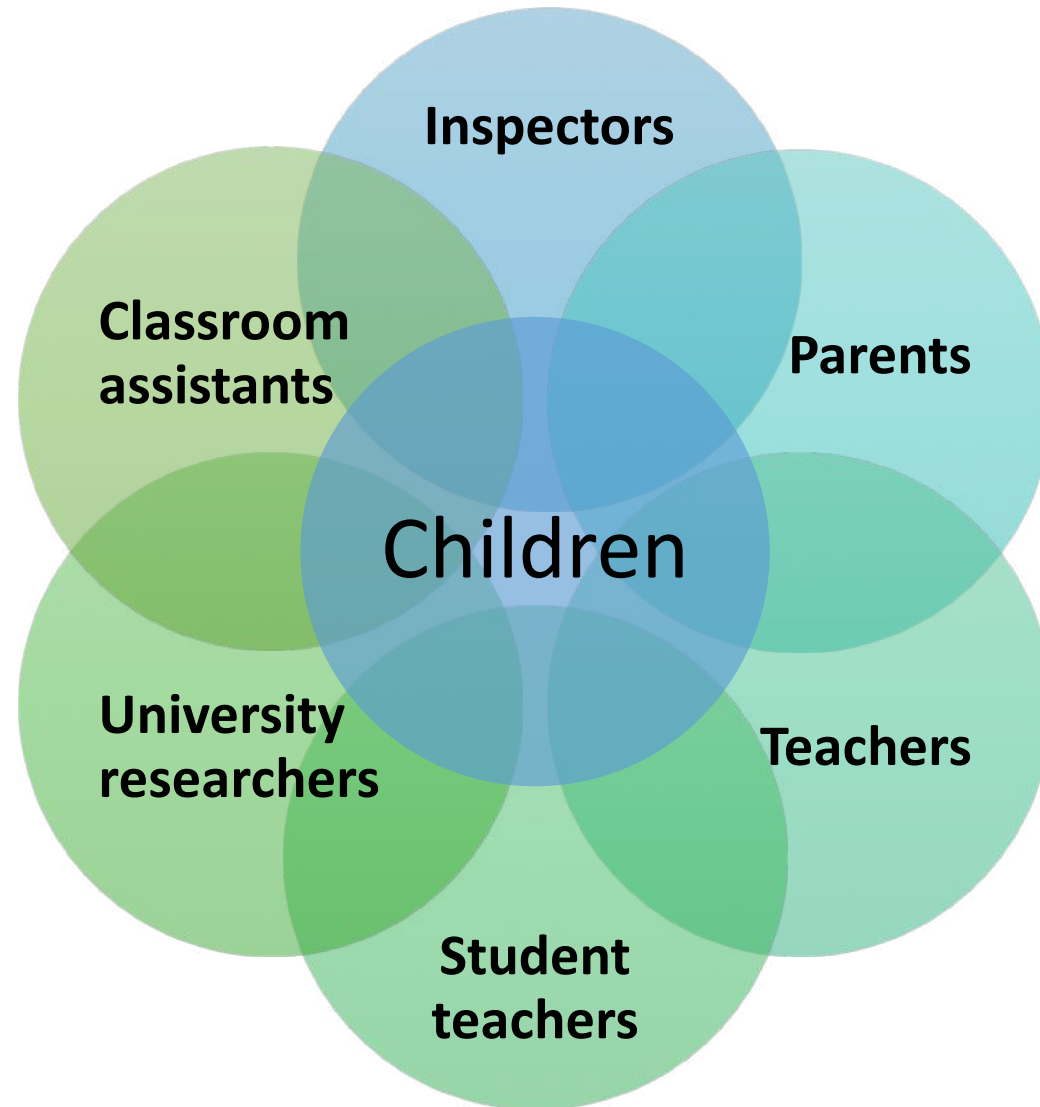
Elicits array of feelings, powerful cognitive & emotional impact on viewers  
(Berk, 2009)

Enhances “sense-making” & increases levels of motivation, participation and engagement (Wankel & Blessinger, 2013)

# Participatory research (with, not on)

- In collaboration with, who become co-researchers (Gibson et al., 2017)
- Involves different actors –participants, a sharing process which contributes to advancing knowledge (Braye and McDonnell, 2012)
- Deeper/fuller understanding of a phenomenon through including perspectives of those directly involved (Genat, 2009)
- -> Inclusion of interpretations/analyses of data (Nind, 2011)
- Objectives: empowerment & social justice (Small, 1995)

# Participants





# Langues, langage et littératie en petite section multilingue

## Language(s) & literacy in multilingual pre-school

1. Introduction
2. Context(e)
3. Regard bienveillant pose sur l'enfant/Positive image of the child
4. Reconnaître et faire une place aux langues des élèves/Valuing & making space for home languages
5. Relation parents-école/Home-school relations
6. Choix et gestion des langues familiales/Family language policies: choice & management
7. Etayage des apprentissages/Scaffolding learning
8. Littéracie/Literacy
9. Mondes interconnectés/Interconnected worlds
10. Epilogue

# Impact of resources: alternative perspectives & increased understanding

“The videos are very meaningful because they are real situations that were filmed. They allow you to concretely see what really happens” (Student E1)

“can see different perspectives that help you to form an opinion or to change your own initial idea” (Student E3)

“The diversity of materials allowed me to see the problem in its different dimensions. I particularly enjoyed the videos that allowed us to see the implementation [of practices] and the children’s behaviour” (Student E7)

“It allows you to reflect back to notions that you hadn’t necessarily understood in class” (Student E4).



## Increased awareness of the value of language diversity

“You shouldn’t neglect the mother tongues of the children because they are a source of enrichment for their learning...usually when you think about a child who speaks another language you think ‘more work’ but in fact it’s a cultural wealth that should not be neglected” (E1, 2015)

“I’ve realized that the different languages of the pupils can become a real strength in the classroom” (E8, 2015)

“I’ve changed my mind about which languages are the most important to teach. In the end, all languages are important” (E14, 2015)

# Back to BEAM, Why maternelle?

- Key transition period, first formal education experience for learners & parents in their role as co-educators, sets the tone for next stages
- Vulnerability of young EBs, L1 loses its power, L2 not yet mastered, socialization, access to learning, pre-literacy development
- Teachers feel ill-equipped to handle the situation, strategy of avoidance rather than engagement, responsibility-> parents
- Monolingual habitus, language ideologies, home languages discouraged, children silenced
- Testimonies of former-EBL (need for interaction with peers, confusion, disempowerment, self-censorship, low self esteem...)
- Reports from inspectors: many EBL in spite of 3 years of schooling in maternelle still struggle with the language of education, *mutisme*, falling behind their peers...

# Maternelle in the French primary education system

| Age    | Ecole                | Cycles                         | Classes                                  |     |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|-----|
| 3 ans  | Ecole<br>maternelle  | Apprentissages<br>Premiers     | Petite Section                           | PS  |
| 4 ans  |                      |                                | Moyenne Section                          | MS  |
| 5 ans  |                      |                                | Grande Section                           | GS  |
| 6 ans  | Ecole<br>élémentaire | Apprentissages<br>fondamentaux | Cours Préparatoire                       | CP  |
| 7 ans  |                      |                                | Cours Elémentaire 1 <sup>ère</sup> année | CE1 |
| 8 ans  |                      |                                | Cours Elémentaire 2 <sup>ème</sup> année | CE2 |
| 9 ans  |                      | Consolidation                  | Cours Moyen 1 <sup>ère</sup> année       | CM1 |
| 10 ans |                      |                                | Cours Moyen 2 <sup>ème</sup> année       | CM2 |

# Why whole school?

- In spite of positive results of exceptional, experienced headteacher, Sylvie, colleagues never got on board.
- Need a team for support. Monolingual habitus so omnipresent.
- If good work of one professional not followed through by others in following years, consequences for EBL
  - bilingual development stunted,
  - untapped potential

# Resisting & challenging the monolingual habitus

“For 15 years there was an inspector, who still works for the Ministry of Education, who said, referring to me, ‘I don’t work with that school because the head teacher is crazy’. That’s how it started. Because two school teachers had said that it was chaos in my classroom, parents in the playground, parents in the corridors, in the classrooms, headscarves in the school...”

“But every time I said something...about these language questions they would systematically throw it back in my face, colleagues that is eh, ‘but parents should speak French, it’s shameful, I myself am from a Spanish immigrant background’, Italian whatever, etc., ... I got pulled up systematically ‘and it’s not right these parents who give up, who only speak Turkish at home’.”

(Interview, Sylvie, 26/01/2016, our translation)

## (Lack of) Support

There are a few colleagues who know some words [in the children's home languages], but there are some who **don't know any words**. My colleague next door **hasn't memorised any words in Turkish** even though she has lived in this area for 35 years and has been working with me in pre-school for a long time, because the objective she had in mind, I think, was rather to **eradicate Turkish**...

(Sylvie, 26/01/2016, our translation)

So, what changed was that one or two years ago, this question was **raised in an official way** and, **officially**, people like Mrs X. who has a certain **legitimacy** to speak about such things and to speak about things that are true etcetera **supported** this position, you, **when you came**, there were all those **conferences** and the **inspector who put her 'stamp of approval'** on it and well, that's just huge.

(Sylvie, interview, 26/01/16, our translation)

# What do we mean by mono/plurilingual habitus @ school?

## Monolingual habitus (status quo)

- Dominant & often exclusive language: French
- Children's home languages –a threat to acquisition of French
- Little/no TLA/CLA (lack of professional development...)
- Republican values- equality -no official recognition of minorities, -> language?
- Children's home languages not acknowledged/known
- Children's home languages excluded from classroom
- Many EBL struggle to acquire French through submersion, suffer from social exclusion, confused, withdrawn, silenced
- Teachers feel uncomfortable, shy away from interaction with EBL, wait for child to acquire French
- Parents often held responsible for child's lack of mastery of French
- Home/school –separate spaces, “co-education” ?



## Plurilingual habitus

- Inclusive space where ALL language have a place
- Home languages –a resource for learning
- Teachers enact language policies supported by their KAL
  - Taking an active interest in their learners' home languages
  - Encouraging EBL to use the languages in their repertoires, & teaching for transfer between languages
  - Using translanguageing as a pedagogical tool to support interaction & learning
- Learners develop awareness of own personal repertoires & how to deploy them for learning
- Parents empowered to participate & support the child's learning through the language of their choice, -> co-education?



# Research questions

- What obstacles do professionals encounter when welcoming and supporting EBL in the maternelle?
- What inclusive pedagogical practices do professionals working in multilingual and multicultural contexts employ?
- How can these professionals be supported in order to encourage a deeper understanding of the issues relating to plurilingualism and to promote pedagogical practices which consider linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource rather than a problem?
- How can professionals' attitudes, often deeply rooted in a monolingual habitus, be influenced?
- How can bridges between the L1 and the L2 be built which facilitate the development of the language of education and encourage the transfer of skills and knowledge from one language to the other?
- How can home-school relations which develop *co-education* be nurtured?

# Participative, ethnographic research in 3 multilingual pre-schools in Mulhouse, eastern France

- Qualitative, ethnographic, whole school
- Longitudinal (one full year/school, Sep 2019 - July 2023)
- Regular, bi-monthly school visits
- Observation, discussion and exchanges with participants (teachers & classroom assistants)
- Fieldnotes, video & audio recordings, photographs
- Filmed stimulated recall sessions



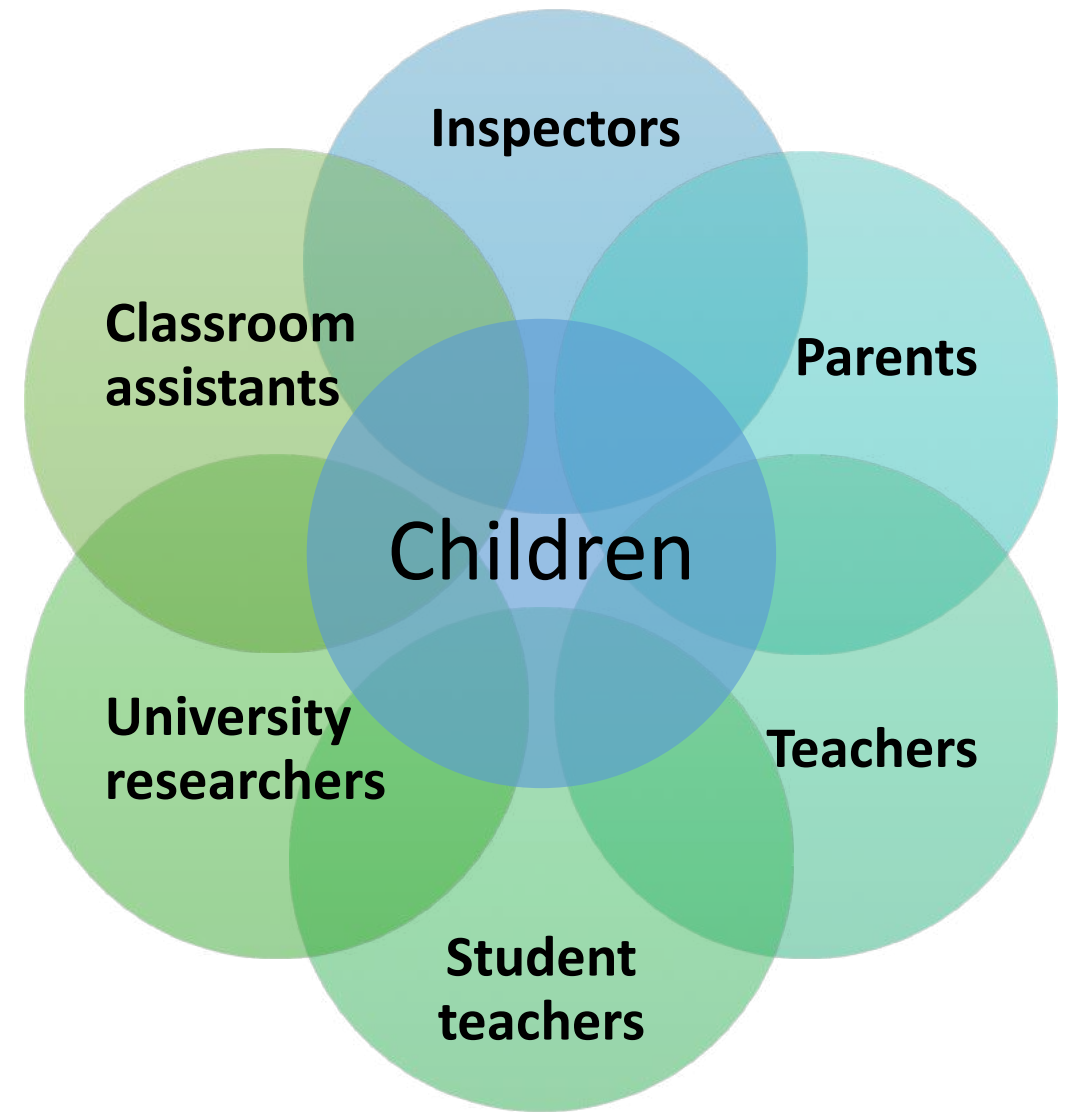
One class

One school

3 *circonscriptions*

# Projet design

1. Meetings with inspectors, town council rep for ECEC, headteacher
2. Meeting with teachers
3. Classroom activities filmed (one full morning in each class)
4. Monthly group sessions with participants
  - Needs analysis (questionnaire & discussion)
  - Research-informed professional development (short articles, video clips of inclusive practices, personal testimonies, multilingual resources...)
  - Stimulated recall (video clips) & discussion
  - Elaboration of strategies /pedagogical projects



2019-2020

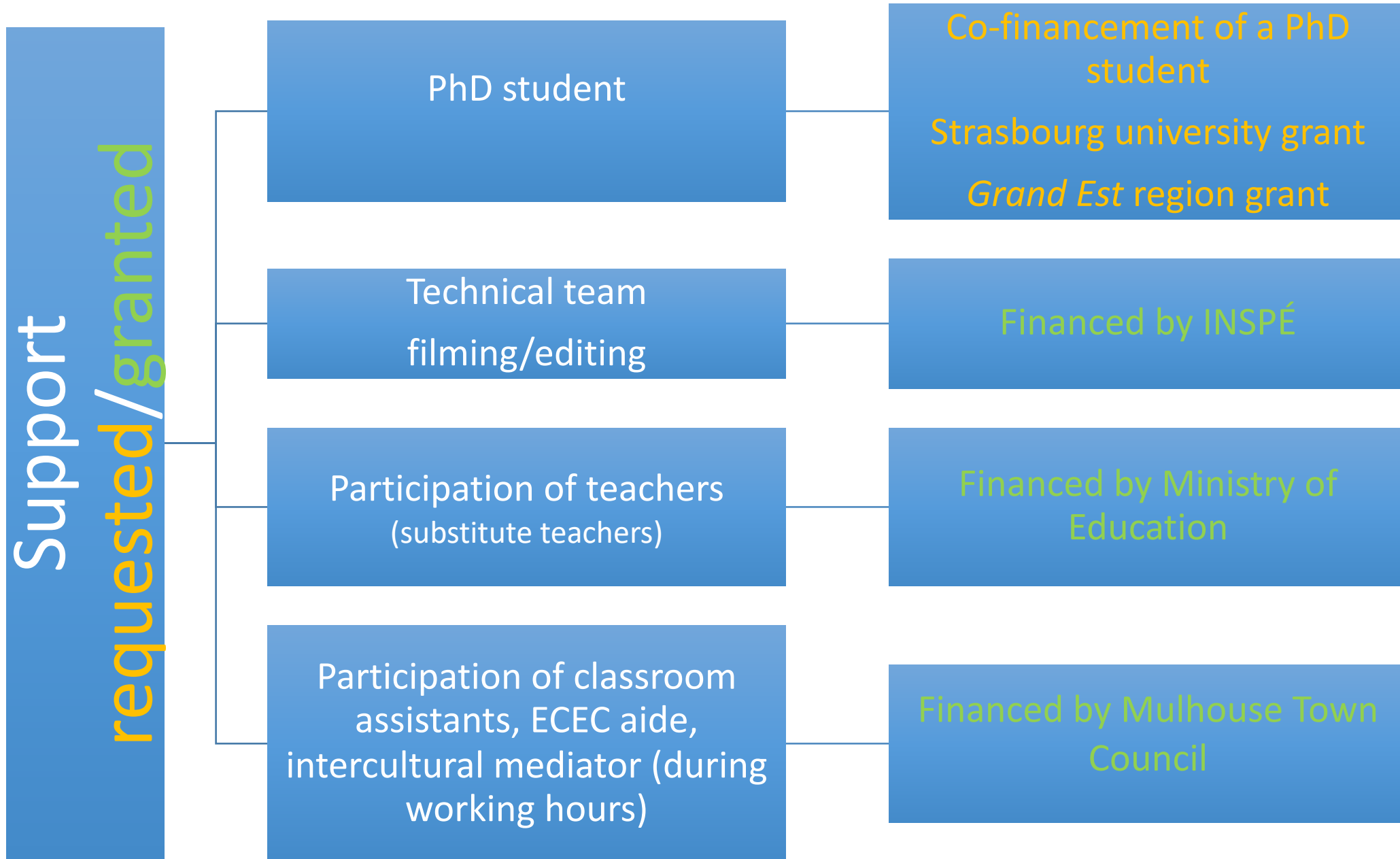
Ecole maternelle 1  
(Mulhouse 1)

2020-2021

Ecole maternelle 2  
(Mulhouse 2)

2021-2022

Ecole maternelle 3  
(Mulhouse 3)



# Developing critical teacher language awareness

## Challenges:

- Criticality – public servants who owe allegiance to the State
- Time constraints for participants
- Funding for doctoral students

## Questions:

- Ethical considerations (choice of clips for stimulated recall sessions)
- Choice of school, needs, commitment, openness?

## Opportunities:

- Needs of practitioners (realisation that submersion is not working)
- Requests from inspectors to address these issues
- INSPE ministerial remit *to prepare teachers for issues concerning plurilingualism and the schooling of “allophones”*

# Publications

Mary, L. & Young, A. (2020). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards home language maintenance and their effects, pp. 444-463 in Schalley, A.C. & Eisenclas, S.A. (eds.), *Handbook of Home Language Maintenance and Development. Social and Affective Factors*. Handbooks of Applied Linguistics (HAL) 18, De Gruyter Mouton.

Mary, Latisha & Young, Andrea S. (2018) Black-blanc-beur: Challenges and opportunities for developing language awareness in teacher education in France, pp.275-300 in Christine Hélot, Carolien Frijns, Koen Van Gorp, Sven Sierens (eds.), *Language Awareness in Multilingual Classrooms in Europe: From Theory to Practice*, Berlin & Boston, De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501501326-009>

Mary, Latisha & Young, Andrea (2018) Parents in the playground, headscarves in the school and an inspector taken hostage: exercising agency and challenging dominant deficit discourses in a multilingual pre-school in France, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Volume 31, Issue 3, pp.318-332.

Mary, L.& Young, A. S. (2017) Engaging with emergent bilinguals and their families in the pre-primary classroom to foster well-being, learning and inclusion, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, Volume 17, Issue 4, pp. 455-473.

Mary, L. & Young, A. (2017) From silencing to translanguaging: turning the tide to support emergent bilinguals in transition from home to pre-school, pp.108-128. Dans Wedin, A.; Rosén, J.; Paulsrud, BA. & Straszer, B. *Translanguaging and Education: New Perspectives from the Field* . Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

どうもありがとう

Kiitos

Asante

Takk

Kia ora

Tesekkür ederim

谢谢

tous différents  
tous é g a u x

Merci

Enkosi

Ευχαριστώ

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*Thank ye*

شکرا

Amesegënallô

Dankie

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