

A COMPARISON OF THE ATTITUDES OF GRADE VIII  
EARLY AND LATE FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS  
TOWARD FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR FOR THE  
SCHOOL YEAR 1989-90

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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GWENDOLYN IRENE BANNISTER, B.A.Ed., B.A.









**A COMPARISON OF THE ATTITUDES OF GRADE VIII EARLY AND LATE FRENCH  
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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1989-90**

by

© Gwendolyn Irene Bannister, B.A.Ed., B.A.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Grade VIII early and late French immersion students in Newfoundland and Labrador were administered questionnaires in April 1990, to determine similarities and differences in the attitudes of these students towards their immersion program. Both groups indicated that they felt an immersion program would enable them to become bilingual, thus providing them with better job opportunities. Most of the students in EFI and LFI felt they could perform adequately in out-of-school activities requiring the use of French. However, the EFI students perceived their speaking skills as being more proficient than the LFI students. The LFI students did feel that this skill would improve once they had spent more time in the program. Students in both groups indicated that they would recommend an immersion program to a younger sibling or friend, although there were differences in opinion between the two groups and within the LFI group as to which grade was the best time to start. Although both groups of students viewed their programs positively, some recommendations for improvement were suggested, especially in the area of French reading and reference materials.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM**

French Immersion programs were first piloted in Quebec in response to demands made by parents for more efficient French second language programs for their children (Lambert and Tucker, 1972). Core French programs, which were being offered in the schools, were not providing English-speaking students with the skills to use French outside the classroom to communicate with francophones in everyday situations. Since French was becoming increasingly important as the working language of Quebec in the late 1960's, parents of English-speaking children felt that the inability of their children to communicate effectively in the French language would limit career choices for their offspring. Moreover, these parents felt that their own lack of competence in French was contributing to the division between the French and English culture groups in Quebec (Genessee, 1987).

### **Immersion Classes in Canada**

#### St. Lambert Project

The first immersion experiment took place in St. Lambert, Quebec, a suburb of Montreal, in 1965. English-speaking

children entering kindergarten received close to 100 percent of their instruction in French until grade two when English language arts was introduced. Gradually other subject areas were introduced in English, and by grade VI the language of instruction was approximately fifty percent French and fifty percent English. The program was extensively evaluated with very positive results (Lambert and Tucker, 1972). The positive findings of this evaluation undoubtedly contributed to the spread of immersion programs across Canada.

#### Different Formats of French Immersion

Since the first French immersion class was opened, variations of this type of schooling have been introduced in different regions of Canada. The program started in St. Lambert came to be known as early French immersion (EFI) and is still the most popular form of immersion schooling in Canada. A second option is middle or intermediate French immersion (IFI), where students have close to 100 percent of their instruction in French starting at grade III, IV or V; the percentage of instruction in French decreases as students progress into higher grades. This option is not presently available in Newfoundland. A third type of French immersion program is referred to as late French immersion (LFI). Students enter this program in grade VII, and receive approximately seventy-five percent of their instruction through the medium of the French language in grades VII and

VIII, but decreased amounts thereafter. Recent statistics (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990) recorded 256,370 students who were enrolled in various types of immersion programs across Canada for the school year 1989-90.

### **History of French Immersion in Newfoundland**

The first French immersion class in Newfoundland was implemented in 1975 at Cape St. George on the Port-au Port Peninsula. Many residents living in this area of the province were of French descent and felt that their French culture and language were being eroded. Indeed, many of these people no longer spoke the French language. A French immersion class was started in this area, and it has since evolved into a French-as-a-first-language program.

The first French immersion class in a totally English-speaking area in Newfoundland was opened by the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's. In 1977, one stream of kindergarten children was enrolled in an EFI class at Holy Cross Primary school. The following year, another EFI program was started at Gander Academy by the Terra Nova Integrated School Board. In 1981, the Avalon Consolidated School Board and the Roman Catholic School Board for Labrador

began implementation of EFI programs. Eleven school boards presently offer EFI programs in the province, with a number of these boards having expanded the programs into several schools in their districts. In September, 1989, there were 3279 students enrolled in EFI programs in twenty-six schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1980, the Avalon Consolidated School Board implemented a LFI option at MacPherson Junior High School for students entering grade VII. This particular program is presently offered by four other school boards in the province. In September 1989, 701 students were enrolled in LFI programs in six schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In the 1989-90 school year, 3980 students were enrolled in immersion classes in Newfoundland and Labrador. Table 1.1 presents the student enrolment in early and late French immersion for individual school boards in Newfoundland and Labrador for this school year. Table 1.2 provides a breakdown of student enrolments by grade in early and late French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador for the same school year.

Table 1.1

**French Immersion Enrolments by School District in  
Newfoundland and Labrador for 1989-90.**

Early Immersion

- Avalon Consolidated School Board	645
- Bay of Islands-St.Georges-Burgeo-Ramon Integrated School Board	153
- Burin Peninsula Roman Catholic School Board	69
- Exploit's Valley Integrated School Board	113
- Humber-St. Barbe Roman Catholic School Board	192
- Labrador East Integrated School Board	110
- Labrador Roman Catholic School Board	238
- Labrador West Integrated School Board	146
- Port-au-Port Roman Catholic School Board	164
- St. John's Roman Catholic School Board	1148
- Terra Nova-Cape Freels Integrated School Board	301
Sub-total	<u>3279</u>

Late Immersion

- Avalon Consolidated School Board	284
- Avalon North Integrated School Board	101
- Conception Bay South Integrated School Board	33
- Labrador Roman Catholic School Board	110
- Labrador West Integrated School Board	116
- St. John's Roman Catholic School Board	57
Sub-total	<u>701</u>

Total EFI and LFI enrolment 3980

Table 1.2

**French Immersion Enrolments by Grade in Newfoundland  
and Labrador for 1989-90.**

	EFI	LFI
- Kindergarten	546	
- Grade 1	473	
- Grade 2	445	
- Grade 3	462	
- Grade 4	426	
- Grade 5	315	
- Grade 6	213	
- Grade 7	150	190
- Grade 8	83	156
- Grade 9	55	126
- Grade 10	49	124
- Grade 11	45	56
- Grade 12	17	49
Subtotals	<u>3279</u>	<u>701</u>



### Early French Immersion

The Report of the Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs (1986) defines Early French Immersion as:

... a program from Kindergarten to Level 3, beginning at the kindergarten level with approximately 100 percent of instruction in French. With the introduction of language Arts and other subjects in English, the percentage of instructional time in French decreases somewhat as students progress through the varying grade levels (pp. 37-38).

In EFI, students in kindergarten are offered close to one hundred percent of the curriculum in French, with mathematics, science, social studies and language arts being taught through the medium of the French language. English language reading skills are not introduced to students until grade III. Gradually other subjects previously taught in French are introduced in English. Throughout elementary school, between fifty and eighty percent of the instruction tends to be in French; in later years, between thirty and fifty percent tends to be in French.

### Late French Immersion

The Report of the Advisory Committee on French Programs (1986) defines Late French Immersion as:

... a program from Grade 7 to Level 3 with approximately 70% of instruction in French in grades 7 and 8. The percentage of instructional time in French decreases somewhat as students progress through the varying grade levels (p. 38).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, students enter LFI in grade

VII. Subjects usually studied in French include mathematics, science, social studies, and health. In grade IX, the percentage of instruction in French decreases as mathematics is once again taught in English, and, in subsequent years, approximately thirty percent of instruction is in French.

### **Purpose**

While the French Immersion options have existed in this province for a considerable period of time, there is little data available on how students actually perceive their program. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and feelings of EFI and LFI students at the grade VIII level toward French immersion. A comparison of viewpoints will be made between both cohorts to determine similarities and differences in students' attitudes toward their respective programs. Results of this study will also be compared with a similar investigation conducted with grade IX late immersion students in the 1986-87 school year (Drover, 1988).

### **Significance**

Most research on French immersion programs has focused on

academic outcomes and concerns. The only study that has been conducted to date on the attitudes of immersion students in Newfoundland and Labrador toward their programs is Drover's (1988) survey of the attitudes of LFI students toward their program as part of her study on late French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador. This study responds to one of Drover's (1988) recommendations that further study be done on the attitudes of immersion students toward their program.

This study, however, has a broader scope in the examination of students' attitudes toward French immersion programs in that it also involves students in EFI. Similar questionnaires were administered to LFI and EFI students at the grade VIII level so that a comparison of attitudes could be made between students in both programs.

Results of this study should add to our knowledge of how both EFI and LFI students in Newfoundland and Labrador perceive their programs. This type of information could potentially highlight the need for an examination of how to improve immersion programs in this province.

### **Rationale**

Studies comparing EFI and LFI students' attitudes have been done in many parts of Canada. However, there are

limitations in applying results of research from one area of Canada to another as both social and school environments tend to be quite different. Swain and Lapkin (1981) have pointed out the danger of inter-regional comparisons, as success of a program, especially programs in Quebec, may depend to some extent upon proximity to native French speakers, or the bilingual nature of the province. Newfoundland, due to its location and geographical features, is relatively isolated from regions of Canada where French is spoken as the first language in everyday situations. Students generally have little contact with francophones outside the school situation. It is therefore necessary that this province continue to monitor its immersion situation to detect problems which may be unique to Newfoundland.

Results from this study will also provide additional information for parents who are considering French immersion as an alternative form of schooling for their child. The information may also be useful to school boards and teachers in their attempts to improve the quality of immersion programs at the local level. While views expressed by grade VIII students in both French immersion programs will focus primarily on affective outcomes, they may also indicate a relationship between attitudinal-motivational variables and academic factors.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

Successful second language learning, as in any other area of learning, is attributable to a combination of factors. While intelligence and language aptitude play important roles, other factors can also affect student achievement in this area. Teachers have long been aware of the effects of the positive and negative attitudes students bring to the learning situation, including French second language classes.

This chapter will discuss research studies relevant to student success in second language programs. The first section will focus on student ability and discuss the effects of I.Q. and language aptitude on second language learning. The second section will discuss the concepts of attitude and motivation, and their relation to second language study. Part three will deal with research relating to students' perceptions of French immersion programs, while the fourth and final section will review criticisms of French immersion programs, as well as research comparing EFL and LFL options.

### **Language Aptitude, IQ, and Learning Disabilities**

French Immersion programs are often perceived as being programs for students with above average intelligence, or special abilities. Pimsleur (1968) found that a relationship exists between a student's I.Q. and average grades in all school subjects, and included these grades on his battery of tests for language aptitude. One of the six subsections on his test requires that students give their most recent year-end grades in English, mathematics, science and social studies. He also included items similar to those of Carroll and Sapon (1959).

Stern (1983) points out that there is much that is not known about the language learning process itself and these tests cannot be used as the sole predictor of success in language acquisition or learning. He states:

... they all have common weaknesses: they set out from no theoretical conception or solid empirical basis of what cognitive processes second language learning actually involves, and why these and not other skills have been singled out as indicative of qualities needed for language learning (pp. 374-375).

### Language Aptitude, IQ, and French Proficiency

Studies comparing the performance of immersion students with students of similar I.Q. in the regular English stream, have generally shown that French immersion students perform

as well as their English stream cohorts on tests of mathematics and English language skills (Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Andrew, Lapkin and Swain, 1980; Shapson and Day, 1982a; 1982b). Moreover, the French language skills of these students tend to be much higher.

Genesee (1976a,1976b) studied the relationship between intelligence and performance for both early French immersion (EFI) and one year late French immersion (LFI) students. The immersion students' performance on tests in English language and mathematics were comparable to students in the regular English program. The below-average students in both the regular English and immersion programs scored lower than the average students in both programs. The average students in both programs also scored lower than the above-average students on English language and mathematics tests. However, on French language tests, the below-average immersion students scored as well as the average and above-average immersion groups on tests which measured interpersonal communication skills. These students demonstrated comparable skills in speaking and listening comprehension. This relationship was less consistent in the LFI students.

Genesee, Polich and Stanley (1977) evaluated a group of students in LFI each year from grade VIII until grade XI, comparing them with an English control group of similar size

at the same grade levels. The evaluation indicated that English language achievement and academic achievement of immersion students were not impaired. When three replication studies were undertaken with students of different levels of academic ability, the I.Q. level was not found to affect the acquisition of interpersonal communication skills.

Morrison and Pawley (1983) conducted a study of former French immersion students in grades VIII and IX in secondary post-immersion classes in Ottawa to compare their achievement in mathematics, geography and history with students in the regular English program. Adjustments were made for differences in scholastic aptitude between the groups. The immersion group who had taken mathematics in French performed significantly better on the mathematics test taken either in French or English than the group taking mathematics in English. On the geography and history test, the French group taking the test in English performed better than the group taking the test in French. However, no differences were found in test scores between the French immersion group who took the test in English and the English control group.

Swain and Lapkin (1981) in their review of French immersion research in Ontario conclude that:

1. after some temporary lags in English skills relative to the performance of English-program students, the



overall trend is for immersion students to perform as well as or better than students in the regular English stream;

2. the immersion students almost always perform significantly better in French than core French students;

3. the ability to communicate in a second language is not related to measured intelligence;

4. immersion education has not been found to have negative effects on the early immersion students' general intellectual development or on achievement in mathematics, science or social studies;

5. some evidence indicated that students in early partial immersion and in a late-entry group had difficulty relative to their comparison groups in acquiring skills in mathematics and science.

#### Language/Learning Disabled Students

Bruck (1982) conducted a study of language/learning disabled students in EFI. The cognitive, academic, first language, and second language abilities of students identified as learning disabled were assessed on a test battery. Similar tests were also administered to language impaired children in the regular stream, as well as "normal" children in both the regular and immersion streams. The language impaired immersion children were behind other children in their French immersion class in linguistic and cognitive domains. However,

when these children were compared to language impaired children in the regular English stream, no differences were found between these two groups. These language/learning disabled children demonstrated similar cognitive, first language and academic skills. While these children were below the other children in the immersion class in terms of second language oral production and French literacy skills, their comprehension of French was similar to that of "normal" children in their class.

Jackson and Duncan (1985) concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that children with average or below average ability achieve less well in immersion than they would in the regular class. The only real weakness in their written work was spelling skills, but this had disappeared completely by grade VI.

### **Attitudes and Motivation**

Researchers generally agree that affective factors influence human behaviour. More specifically, investigators such as Gardner and Lambert (1959), Lambert and Tucker (1972), Burstall (1975), and Bruck (1985a) have found that attitudinal-motivational variables influence second language learning.

While theorists, such as Harding et. al. (1954) and Allport (1968), have variously defined the term attitude, Fishbein and Azjen (1975:6) suggest that most researchers would agree that attitude can be described as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object."

Eiser (1986:11) incorporates these concepts in his explanation of attitude when he states that, "Attitude is a subjective experience involving an evaluation of something or somebody." He further adds that people are predisposed to organize their attitudes and beliefs into internally consistent structures.

These definitions appear to share common features in that attitudes are learned, they are consistent, and they predispose the action of an individual. The fact that they are learned points to the importance of present and past experiences. The attitude that a person holds with respect to the learning of a second language will therefore be influenced by experiences related to factors such as family, peers, school, community, as well as contact with speakers of the target language.

Much research suggests the existence of a relationship between attitudes and motivation, which Brown (1981:121)

defines as "an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action." Theorists have proposed a number of theories of motivation. Maslow (1970) describes motivation in terms of a hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy includes physical needs, need for security and safety, need for identity, need for self-esteem, and finally self-actualization. Ausubel (1968) defines motivation in terms of need for exploration, manipulation, activity, stimulation, knowledge and ego-enhancement; however, he does not view the needs as hierarchical in nature.

#### Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning

According to Littlewood (1984):

In second language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how much he perseveres (p.53).

He suggests that a major factor contributing to a person's success in second language learning is the extent to which s/he is motivated by communicative needs, of which there are two types. The first is functional needs where a person has the desire to convey messages and carry out transactions accurately and efficiently. The second is social needs where a person desires to use language which is socially acceptable to communicate with the second language group.

Researchers have examined the role of attitudes and

motivation in second language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1959) suggest that a learner's motivation for language study is influenced by the attitudes brought to the learning situation, and that these attitudes are influenced by the socio-cultural environment. They identify two independent factors related to achievement, language aptitude and an attitudinal-motivational index which includes a measure of attitudes towards speakers of the target language, learning other languages, the learning situation as well as other environmental influences. These factors were subsequently investigated by Smythe, Stennett and Feenstra (1972) and Gardner and Smythe (1975b) who found a significant relationship between attitudinal-motivational measures and achievement by students of French as a second language.

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) conducted a factor analytic study of the relationship between attitudes and motivation and second language achievement. They identified two different clusters of attitudinal-motivational variables which they referred to as instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. A learner with instrumental motivation is interested in learning the language for utilitarian purposes, while a learner with integrative motivation has a genuine interest in the target language community and is interested in learning the language to communicate or to gain closer contact with the community.

Gardner (1985) used results from thirty-three studies in Canada to determine whether or not certain attitudes might be possible predictors of success in second language learning. He compared five measures of language attitude with nine different criteria for success in French. He found that two predictors which consistently stood out as being indicative of success in French were attitudes toward the French learning situation and interest in foreign languages. Gardner suggests that motivation for learning a second language has four components: attitudes toward learning the language, the desire to learn the language, the motivational intensity or effort expended to learn the language as well as other attitudinal variables. The motivational intensity for second language learning is "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language". (Gardner 1985:10)

A relationship reportedly exists between learners' level of language acquisition and attitudinal-motivational variables, including orientation or reasons for learning the language.

Gardner, Smythe, Clement and Glikzman (1976) conducted a study on the relationship between attitude and motivation, and French language proficiency. They concluded that for two measures of French proficiency (marks obtained on an objective test and marks obtained in the course), the index of motivation correlated most highly. Interest in learning

another language was found to be a better predictor of French proficiency than other factors included in the index of motivation. Similarly, Spolsky (1969) found that integrative motivation generally accompanied higher scores on proficiency tests in a foreign language.

Burstall et. al. (1974) have questioned Gardner's theory that attitudes and motivation lead to successful second language learning. From longitudinal studies, they have concluded that, in second language learning, a relationship exists between successful learning and attitudes toward the learning situation, but it may be successful early language experiences that promote successful later learning as well as more positive attitudes, rather than vice versa. They also found that girls were not only more successful in learning French than boys, but that they had more favourable attitudes than boys. Boys who had negative attitudes toward learning French as a second language quickly left the course.

Pack (1979), while investigating the relationship between the attitudes of students in one Newfoundland school district and their decision to continue the study of core French in high school, or opt out when given a choice, obtained results similar to those found in the Burstall (1975) study. He found no significant relationship between a student's motivational orientation, or reasons for wanting to learn French, and the

decision to opt out. However, Pack did find that achievement and the student's attitude toward learning French were important factors in this decision. More girls than boys continued French studies at the high school level.

#### Research on Attitudinal/Motivational Variables

Olsen and Burns (1982), in a study of immersion parents from eight boards in northern Ontario, found that eighty percent of the parents said they enrolled their children in immersion because they believed that it would provide better access to jobs for their children and they believed that the mastering of a second language was an important part of an education. Sixty percent believed that French immersion programs brought Anglophones and Francophones closer together.

In Drover's (1988) study of LFI students, results indicate that most reasons for enrolling in an immersion program were of an instrumental nature. Approximately sixty percent felt that they would have better job opportunities with a knowledge of French. Only fifteen percent indicated that it would help them to communicate with French speaking people at home and abroad. Similarly, Kirkwood et al. (1986) found that improved job opportunities were seen by both parents and children as an important reason for becoming bilingual.



Bruck (1985a) assessed the cognitive, attitudinal, motivational, and affective characteristics of poor achieving children in early French immersion. Children who transferred out of the program ("transfers") were compared with those who continued despite having academic difficulties ("controls") in an attempt to tease out characteristics of pupils who switch out of French immersion. Bruck found that both transfers and controls had equivalent academic problems, as well as similar language, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. The parents' attitudes for both groups were positive, but an attitude survey of students showed that the transfers, unlike the controls, were not happy in school, did not like learning French, and were not comfortable using it in or out of class. Teacher "conduct" ratings of students also indicated that transfers had more behavioral problems than the controls.

### **Student Assessments of Programs and Outcomes**

#### French Language Proficiency

Genessee (1978a) reports that results of a questionnaire administered to students in grade VI and grade XI immersion classes indicated that these students felt more at ease about expressing themselves in French than students in the regular core French program.

Bonyon (1985), in a study of 400 EFI and LFI students in Ottawa, found that students tended to rate themselves higher on comprehension of spoken or written French than on writing or speaking the language. There appeared to be little difference in the way the two groups felt about their proficiency in French. Most expected to use French in some future job and to go on to post-secondary education.

In a New Brunswick study by Lapkin and Swain (1985), students were asked to rate how they were achieving in French language proficiency skills. A comparison of EFI and LFI student self-assessments indicated that the EFI students rated their French skills and confidence levels higher than the LFI cohort. Similar results were reported by Wesche et. al. (1986) on a study of graduates of EFI and LFI programs who were attending the University of Ottawa. When both groups of students were asked to rate themselves on functional reading and listening skills, the EFI students gave significantly higher self-assessments.

Drover (1988) administered a questionnaire to Newfoundland students in grade IX LFI. The student responses indicated that this group generally comprised high achievers who seemed very confident in their ability to use French. They viewed their program positively and felt they had gained a fair level of competence in French although they tended to

rate their competence in listening and reading comprehension higher than their competence in speaking and writing.

### Student Perceptions of Program

Morrison et. al.(1983), in a study of graduates of the Ottawa and Carlton School Boards, found that students expressed three major concerns about the program. They stated that wider selection of courses would enhance the program, more emphasis on speaking the language and using it in real life situations is needed, and teachers required more expertise and methodological training in their subject area. Approximately forty-two percent of the students cited better job opportunities as a major benefit of immersion programs, whereas only twenty-five percent listed learning another language as a major program benefit.

In response to a questionnaire administered by Morrison, Pawley, Bonyon and Unitt(1986) to students in secondary post-immersion classes, many students felt that they were able to attain higher marks if they took a subject in English. They were somewhat handicapped by not knowing technical terms in English when they had taken a subject in French.

Drover (1988) found that while most ninth-grade LFL students viewed their program positively, and intended to take more courses in French, they identified three areas where they

would like to see program improvement in order to pursue their French studies effectively. The students responded that they found the teachers good, but felt they would like to see more French conversation in the classroom, and more French atmosphere in the school. They also said they would like to see more subject areas taught in French, as well as more extra-curricular activities in French, including additional excursions to a French milieu.

As to whether or not they felt grade VII was the best time for students to start French immersion, forty-five percent of the students in Drover's (1988) study felt that the optimal age for starting immersion was in kindergarten, whereas thirty-five percent felt that grade VII-IX was better. Reasons given most frequently for the earlier start included:

1. at this stage, the learning of a second language is easier and students felt that it would be easier to adapt to studying through the French medium at an earlier age;
2. one is not so afraid to speak French;
3. one is able to get a solid foundation in French.

Reasons given most often for a start in grade VII - IX :

1. the mother tongue is not established in the early grades;
2. before grade VII one is not able to speak and write

English adequately.

Most students indicated that they planned to continue in French studies and to use their French in part-time jobs while going to school. Their career goals were reported to be mainly professional and many students indicated that they expected to use French sometime in their career.

### **Controversy Regarding French Immersion Programs**

French Immersion programs, while a popular form of schooling, have not existed without controversy or criticism. Many people have questioned whether or not they are a viable alternative to core French classes for second language learning. Controversy also exists as to which format of French immersion programs is the best or most appropriate format to follow.

#### Criticism of French Immersion Programs

The inability of French immersion students to perform at the same level of speaking and writing proficiency as students who have French as a first language has led to criticism of this form of second language schooling. Bibeau (1984) says that while students in EFI are successful in developing French

language skills in the first three years, they tend to regress as time goes on. Moreover, the errors they make when they first start to communicate in the second language fossilize, and do not disappear over time. As Bibeau (1984) states:

It may be claimed that their language skills are much more developed than those of students in traditional second-language classes, but that they cannot be said to have language skills similar, equivalent or comparable to the competence of Francophones of the same age (p.45).

He suggests that these programs are usually composed of students from privileged backgrounds, and may therefore not be applicable to under-privileged children. He also contends that adults learn faster than adolescents, and adolescents better than younger children, except for pronunciation where younger children tend to have a more native-like accent. He advocates that 1500 hours of active exposure to the language would provide similar results to EFI if combined with a period of intensive language teaching/learning for one-third of the total time spent in the classroom.

Hammerly (1985) refers to the classroom as an artificial environment where children have limited access to native speakers of the second language, in most cases only the teacher. He proposes that the emphasis on communication, regardless of form, leads to the internalization of a faulty classroom pidgin. He suggests that the best time psychologically to start learning a second language would be at age ten, or after adolescence at age sixteen. Except for

pronunciation, which he feels can be corrected through training in phonetics, formal language training is much more successful with older children, and even more successful with adults. Hammerly states that:

As the Immersion Approach lacks the advantages inherent to both natural language acquisition and formal language learning, it cannot produce linguistic competence. Thus immersion is fundamentally flawed (p.29).

Lister (1987) is also concerned with the fossilization of errors that occurs when a second language is taught at an early age in an immersion situation. He expresses scepticism as to whether or not low I.Q. students are not at a disadvantage in French immersion classes stating that "in spite of the research, I remained skeptical, caught between what I read and what I saw and heard every day." (Lister 1987:701) He suggests that teachers use a linguistic syllabus which would have as its goal the prevention of early fossilization of immersion French, and that this be done in a graded and systematic way. Lyster proposes a system of contrastive analysis whereby students are taught to distinguish between positive and negative transfer from the first language. He concludes that French immersion classes need to concentrate as much on this as on communication, and that early immersion be replaced by mid-immersion beginning at grades four or five.

### Early Immersion Versus Late Immersion

Bruck, Lambert and Tucker (1975) compared students in EFI with grade VII LFI students who had a strong core French program. The EFI students generally performed better than the students in the one-year intensive French language program on tests of French reading, writing, speaking and listening. Both groups performed lower than a group of francophone speakers.

Adiv (1979a) compared students enrolled in EFI, and in two classes of LFI in grade VII and grade VII/VIII. The only difference found between the early immersion students and those in late VII/VIII immersion when tested at the grade X level was on the global comprehension of composition. Both immersion groups scored lower on production tests when compared with a French control group.

Pawley and Walsh (1980) compared the language level of EFI and LFI students in grade VIII. On three measures of French reading and writing, the early-entry groups had higher mean scores after adjustment for differences in aptitude. Both groups scored equally well on academic tests.

In a review of research conducted in Ontario for ten years, Swain and Lapkin (1981) concluded that the French language skills of LFI students appear to be below those of



francophone comparison groups whereas the EFI groups seem to reach near-native proficiency on tests of listening and reading used in the study, but not in speaking and writing. On examination of persuasive letters written by grade X students in a bilingual program, Pawley (1982) found that the only difference between the EFI and LFI groups as rated by a native francophone was on word choice. The EFI students had a greater proportion of ratings at the higher level.

Lapkin and Swain (1985) reported that on a province-wide evaluation of grade IX EFI and LFI students in New Brunswick, the EFI students performed as well as a comparison group of unilingual francophone students on listening comprehension tests and better than the LFI group. Both immersion groups performed lower than the francophone group on the reading test, as well as on all grammatical measures of speaking and writing and on some discourse measures.

Drover (1988) compared the achievement of EFI and LFI grade IX students in Newfoundland and Labrador on tests of mathematics and French listening and reading achievement. Test results in French listening and reading comprehension indicated similar levels of performance for both the EFI and LFI groups. LFI students scored consistently higher on a mathematics concepts subtest in both French and English. However, the students in the LFI group tended to be a more

academically able group; the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) scores for the LFI group were much higher than for the EFI group. When these differences in cognitive ability were taken into account, there was no significant difference in mathematics achievement between the two groups. However, scores on a mathematics problems subtest showed a tendency for the EFI students to achieve better than the LFI students when tested in both English and French regardless of the difference in academic ability. She states that this finding may support the view that EFI students have a higher degree of bilingual competence than do LFI students.

Wesche et.al. (1990) conducted a study of EFI and LFI students in the Ottawa area who were entering university. Neither group was found to be at a disadvantage with respect to those academic skills related to the academic environment. The EFI students performed significantly better than LFI students on listening and speaking measures, although no significant differences existed on written measures.

### **Summary**

A review of the research in second language learning seems to indicate that a variety of factors play a role in the

second language learning process. While intelligence may influence students' performance on tests in certain subject or skill areas, the ability to communicate in a second language has not been proven to be related to measured intelligence. Tests measuring language aptitude also have flaws in predicting success in second language learning, as research has still not delineated all factors involved in the concept of aptitude for second language learning. Researchers have concluded that a student's attitude and motivation for language learning are significantly related to successful language learning.

Researchers have demonstrated that French immersion programs, while not without controversy, have been successful in teaching French as a second language to students in Canada. Studies of various immersion programs have shown that students in immersion classes view their programs positively, and that studying through the medium of French does not seem to negatively affect their performance in school. The immersion students tend to perform as well as their cohorts in the regular English stream, and the French language skills of immersion students are generally superior to those of the students in core French programs.

While both the early and late French immersion students develop near-native proficiency in listening and reading,

their French speaking and reading skills tend to be lower than francophone students of the same age. Students in EFI tend to develop more native-like skills in speaking than those in LFI programs and generally perform better on tests of listening proficiency. However, the reading and writing skills of both groups appear to be similar.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

This study has been developed to assess the attitudes of students enrolled in EFI and LFI classes towards their programs of study. A questionnaire was administered to grade VIII students in the French immersion programs in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the winter of 1990. This chapter will describe the procedures used to conduct the study. Specific sections will deal with the intended population, including reasons for choosing students at the grade VIII level, procedures used for the validation and administration of the intended survey instrument, the collection of data, and data analysis.

#### **Research Questions**

This study is intended to respond to three questions:

1. What are the attitudes of EFI students towards their program?
2. What are the attitudes of LFI students towards their program?
3. Are there differences and similarities in the attitudes of EFI and LFI students towards their program?

### **Population Selected for the Study**

A questionnaire was administered to all grade VIII students in Newfoundland and Labrador who were enrolled in EFI and LFI programs during the 1989-90 school year. A list of school districts included in this study, as well as individual grade VIII class enrolments, is included in Appendix A.

This study is a follow-up to a previous study by Drover (1988) which assessed the attitudes of ninth-grade LFI students toward their program in one St. John's school. However, because of the limited population included in Drover's study, the results were not considered to be generalizable. Since that study was conducted, immersion programs have expanded in other school districts, thus making available a larger population. This study includes grade VIII students from both rural and urban areas of the province, 83 students in EFI and 156 students in LFI.

There were two main reasons for choosing grade VIII students in EFI and LFI for this research project, rather than students in grade VII or IX. In Newfoundland and Labrador, students start the LFI program in grade VII. While the population of grade VII students would be larger for both French immersion groups, students in the LFI group would have spent only seven months in the French immersion program when

this study was being conducted. This would have provided them only limited experiences on which to base their opinions. There may not have been sufficient time for them to determine their success in the program as they would not have yet been evaluated on a full year's work.

Many of the French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador are still being implemented and do not, as yet, have classes at the grade IX level. By choosing grade VIII, there were 83 students in the EFI sample from four school districts, and 156 in the LFI cohort from five school districts. If grade IX immersion students had been used, the sample would have been limited to 55 students in EFI and 126 in LFI, representing, as well, fewer school districts. Moreover, students at the grade IX level spend less time in a French instructional environment, and may, therefore, be less affected by the variable of French language instruction.

### **Collection of Data**

In December 1989, a letter requesting permission to administer a student survey was sent to superintendents of school districts who had students enrolled in grade VIII in either EFI or LFI. A sample copy of this letter can be found

in Appendix D. All school districts agreed to this request. Copies of letters received from these school boards can be found in Appendix E.

### **Survey Instruments**

Two student questionnaires were used in this survey, one for students in LFI, which is included in Appendix B, and one for EFI students which is included in Appendix C. Both questionnaires were adapted from a questionnaire developed and administered by Drover (1988) and included all items from that survey instrument, thereby enabling the researcher to make a direct comparison with results found in Drover's study. However, the student questionnaires also included questions relating to parental attitudes and educational background, as a review of the literature seems to suggest that these might have an effect on student enrolment in immersion programs as well as a students' attitude towards these programs.

Each questionnaire had a total of twenty-five questions. All questions were identical to those included in Drover's (1988) questionnaire, except for questions 1 and 2 which related to the students' school backgrounds, in particular their experiences with French language instruction. For



example, questions relating to the amount of time spent studying core French would be relevant only to LFI students. While many items required students to select one or more responses from a list, a comment section was provided at the end of many of the items. This enabled students to provide additional information, and to elaborate on answers which may have had particular significance for them.

### **Reliability and Validity of Instruments**

As a means of verifying instrument reliability and validity, each questionnaire was administered to several seventh-grade students who were following the program type for which the survey instrument was intended. Thus the questionnaire designed for EFI was administered to a group of seventh-grade students in that program type, and the questionnaire intended for LFI was administered to a group of seventh-grade LFI students. In addition, the survey instrument included all the items from the questionnaire administered by Drover (1988), which had previously been tested for reliability and validity.

### **Administration of the Questionnaire**

During March, 1990, student questionnaires, as well as directions for their administration, were sent to the school districts which had given permission for the survey instrument to be administered. These questionnaires were administered by either the French program coordinator or the classroom teacher. Teachers/coordinators were asked to return these questionnaires to the researcher before April 7, 1990 in a pre-paid self-addressed envelope.

In order to protect student confidentiality, students were not required to put their name on the questionnaire.

### **Analysis of the Data**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaires. For multiple choice items, responses were tabulated and reported in terms of number and percentages of response. Student responses to questions requiring a yes or no answer, or a selection from a list of items, were compared using percentage of responses to determine what similarities or differences existed between the attitudes of students in EFI and LFI towards their program.

As well, answers to open-ended questions regarding aspects of the immersion program were grouped, and descriptive statistics, using counts and percentage of response, were again used. Comparisons between the opinions and attitudes of students in both types of French immersion programs were noted. These comparisons involved student attitude toward their programs, self-evaluation of French language proficiency, everyday use of French, and students' career goals.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Certain cautions must be taken when interpreting the results of this study.

Some school boards who offer EFI and LFI programs could not be included in this study as they are relatively new and do not as yet have students enrolled in grade VIII. Therefore, these results may not be generalizable to all school districts.

Screening processes are sometimes used as part of the entrance procedure for students applying to LFI programs. While these results are not often used to prevent a student from entering this program, they can influence a student's

decision to enrol. However, no screening procedures are used for EFI. The students in LFI may therefore be a different population in many ways from those enrolled in EFI, so caution must be exercised when interpreting results.

Students in LFI have also been part of the decision-making process in deciding to enrol in this program and this may mean that their attitudes, as a group, to second language learning are somewhat homogeneous. Students in EFI are there due to decisions made by their parents and may therefore be a more heterogeneous group.

Differences exist between classes at all grade levels, and French immersion is no exception. Attitudes toward the program may be affected by individual characteristics, availability of instructional materials, number of students in the class, and geographical location of the school.

The results of this study pertain to grade VIII and may therefore not be valid for earlier or later grades. Length of time in an immersion class might affect the attitude that a student has toward studying through the medium of the French language.

Subjects used in this study are Newfoundland and Labrador students. Since the province is geographically removed from the influence of a French milieu, with the exception of

schools in Labrador City, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other areas of Canada.

Questions relating to the educational level of parents will not apply to all French immersion students in this study as one school district requested that this question not be included on the questionnaire. Consequently, this information is not available for students in one EFI class and one LFI class.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

This chapter will present the results of questionnaires administered to students in grade VIII early and late French immersion classes in Newfoundland and Labrador. Questionnaires were completed by 70 students from a total population of 83 students enrolled in EFI, and 135 students from a total population of 156 students in LFI. The percentage of reply was 84.3 percent for the EFI group and 86.5 percent for the LFI group.

Students were asked to respond to statements or questions regarding their program, as well as to statements and questions outside the school situation which might affect their attitude toward second language learning. Some questions involved a yes or no response, whereas other questions required students to select relevant responses from a given list. Both groups were also asked to provide information regarding French language learning at the elementary school level. A comment section was usually included with each item where students could give additional information if they so wished. This chapter will discuss these results.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the attitudes of EFI and LFI students at the grade VIII level towards the early and late French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador. Student responses were then compared to denote inter-group similarities and differences in their attitudes towards their programs.

Table 4.1 presents the number of respondents enrolled in each immersion program by sex.

Table 4.1

Enrolment (by sex) of EFI and LFI Students in Grade VIII  
for the School Year 1989-90

	Male	Female	Total
EFI	32 (46%)	38 (54%)	70
LFI	50 (37%)	85 (63%)	135
Total	82 (40%)	123 (60%)	205

As indicated in Table 4.1, 46 percent of the students in the EFI group were male, and 54 percent were female; in the LFI group, approximately 37 percent were male, and 63 percent were female. While the proportion of females to males was greater for both immersion groups at the grade VIII level for the school year 1989-90, there was a greater difference in the percentage of males and females for the LFI group.

# French Language Instruction from Kindergarten to Grade VI

## Late French Immersion

In order to determine the French language background of the LFI group, these students were asked to indicate the amount of time they had studied core French before entering the immersion program in grade VII. As indicated in Table 4.2, the reported amount of French instruction for these students increased as the students moved from grade IV to VI. In grade IV, 56.3 percent of the students indicated that they had received more than two periods of French per week. This compared to 67.4 percent in grade V, and 76.3 percent by grade VI. Similarly, the percentage of students receiving two periods or less of French decreased as the students moved through the elementary grades.

Table 4.2

Number of Periods of Core French Reportedly  
Received by LFI Students in Grades IV, V, and VI

No. of periods per week	Percentage of Students		
	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI
More than 2	56.3	67.4	76.3
2 periods	26.7	28.1	20.0
1 period	13.3	3.7	3.7
No French	3.7	0.8	0.0



As Table 4.2 indicates, 3.7 percent of the students in grade IV reportedly had received no core French instruction, but by grade VI all students had received at least one period of core French per week.

Students who indicated that they had received two or more periods of French per week in grades IV, V, or VI were asked to give the number of classes per week. The results are contained in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3  
Reported Number of Core French Periods  
per Week in Grades IV, V or VI.

No. of periods	Percent of Students		
	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI
3 periods	27.4	27.4	25.2
4 periods	8.9	11.9	16.3
5 periods	13.3	22.2	28.1
6 periods	0.7	0.7	1.5
7 periods	0.7	0.7	0.7

As indicated in Table 4.3, 27.4 percent of the students replied that they had received three periods of core French per week in grades IV and V, as did 25.2 percent of the students in grade VI. The number of students receiving four or five periods per week reportedly increased as they moved to

a higher grade. Few students received more than five French periods per week.

These figures indicate that considerable disparity exists in the amount of core French instruction received by students in the elementary grades. Moreover, student responses indicated that, while daily periods of thirty minutes of French instruction are recommended by the Department of Education, many students had not received this amount of instructional time. This may have been due to a variety of factors, including the number of teachers in the school who had a background in French.

Many LFI students had studied core French in the primary grades. As shown in Table 4.4, however, the grade at which students reportedly began core French varied considerably.

Table 4.4  
Grades at Which LFI Students Reported Studying  
Primary Core French

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent of LFI Students</u>
K	0.7
K - 1	2.2
K - 2	0.7
K - 3	11.9
1 - 2	1.5
1 - 3	17.0
2 - 3	5.9
3	21.5

One may deduce from Table 4.4 that most students had French language instruction in grade III, although there were cases where students who had studied French prior to grade III did not continue with French in this grade. It is possible that some of these students may have moved to a school where French programs had not been instituted in grade III. A variety of factors could have influenced the absence of core French at this level, including its optional status and the availability of teaching personnel qualified to deliver the program.

### Early French Immersion

Provincial guidelines for EFI state that for the first three years of school, students in the immersion program should spend close to 100 percent of their instructional time in French. The Department of Education further recommends that English language arts instruction be introduced at grade III, resulting in a decrease in the amount of instruction in French. In grades IV to VI the amount of French instruction is gradually decreased to about 50 percent of the total instructional time.

EFI students were asked to indicate the percentage of instructional time in French in the elementary grades. The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Reported Amount of Instruction through the French Medium for EFI Students in Grades IV, V and VI

Amount of Instruction	Percent of Students Responding		
	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI
80 - 100%	24.1	5.6	5.6
60 - 79%	66.7	59.3	42.6
40 - 59%	9.3	35.2	51.9

As can be seen from Table 4.5, the reported estimates for the percentage of instruction through the medium of French in

grades V and VI seem to be more congruent with provincial guidelines than the reported estimates for grade IV. While the reported percentages for grade IV may, in fact, be accurate, it is possible that, due to the increase in the number of subjects being taught in English over previous years, students may have underestimated the amount of teaching still occurring through the French medium. Students may also have had more difficulty remembering events that occurred earlier in their schooling, and consequently, responses given regarding earlier school years may be less reliable than for later years.

Approximately 89 percent of the EFI students indicated that they started English reading instruction in grade III. A few students replied that they had started instruction earlier, while one student stated that s/he had begun reading instruction at grade IV, and another at grade VI.

### **Academic Background**

The questionnaire attempted to determine achievement levels of students in both the EFI and LFI programs. To obtain this information, students were asked to report their overall average in all subjects for the 1989-90 school year. These results are contained in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Reported Overall Student Average in All Subjects  
for the School Year 1989-90

Overall average	Percent of Students Responding	
	EFI	LFI
Over 85%	43.5	38.5
84 - 80%	20.3	22.2
79 - 75%	14.5	23.0
74 - 70%	8.7	9.6
69 - 65%	4.3	5.2
64 - 60%	2.9	0.7
59 - 50%	4.3	0.7
Below 50%	1.4	0.0

The reported student averages in Table 4.6 indicate that both the EFI and LFI groups are composed mainly of academically able students as 91.3 percent of the EFI group and 98.5 percent of the LFI cohort reported a yearly average of 65 percent or above. However, while the number of students reporting a yearly average of 85 percent or above was 5 percent higher for the EFI students than the LFI students, this difference may become less in future years. Many students in LFI commented that their marks had tended to drop a little when they entered the program, which may account for this difference. The LFI students were not asked to give their overall average prior to entering the program.

In the EFI group, 8.6 percent of the students reported yearly averages of 64 percent or less compared to 1.4 percent of the students in the LFI group. This would seem to indicate that the EFI group in this study may be somewhat more heterogeneous than the LFI cohort, but not as heterogeneous as one would expect to find in a class in the regular English stream.

### **French Language Proficiency**

#### Reported Yearly Averages of Students

Students in both programs were asked to give their average French marks for the 1989-90 school year to determine their proficiency in French, as measured by classroom tests. These results are recorded in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7  
Reported Average Marks in French  
for the School Year 1989-90

Average Mark in French	Percent Responding	
	EFI	LFI
Over 85%	29.4	28.4
84 - 80%	17.6	28.4
79 - 75%	22.1	17.2
74 - 70%	10.3	11.2
69 - 65%	5.9	10.4
64 - 60%	4.4	3.7
59 - 50%	8.8	0.7
Below 50%	1.5	0.0

The reported student averages in French would seem to indicate that both groups consisted largely of students who had a high aptitude and motivation for second language learning, as 29.4 percent of the EFI group and 28.4 percent of the LFI group indicated that their average for the year in French was over 85 percent. However, while both groups again seem to be more homogeneous than one would expect to find in the regular English stream, the LFI group seem overall to consist of more capable students in that 95.6 percent of the LFI students compared to 85.3 percent of the EFI students reported averages in French of 65 percent or above. At the lower end of the scale, 10.3 percent of the EFI group compared



to 0.7 percent of the LFI group reported an average French mark of 59 percent or below. A possible explanation for this may be that most students who choose the LFI option are students who have done well in French in previous years, with the lower achieving students in the regular grade VI core French program avoiding the LFI option. Most students in the EFI program had no previous French language experience before entering kindergarten. Aptitude for second language learning would not have, therefore, been a factor on which enrolment in the EFI program would have been based.

A caution which should be noted in interpreting these figures relates to the different nature of the French language program for the EFI and LFI students. While both groups of students received subject teaching through the medium of the French language, the French language course was different for the two groups. French for the EFI students in grades VII and VIII consisted of a program somewhat similar to the English language arts program with emphasis on listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the study of French literature. Although the LFI group were exposed to some French literature, the French language course was generally more similar to core French, with more emphasis on the everyday use of language to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Self Assessment of French Language Skills

Students were asked to evaluate on a three-point scale their competence in French for the receptive skills of listening and reading, and the production skills of speaking and writing. These results are reported in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Student Self-Assessments of French Language Proficiency

Skill Area	Percent of Students Responding					
	Confidently		Adequately		Considerable Difficulty	
	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI
Listening	57.1	49.6	40.0	45.1	2.9	5.3
Speaking	57.1	35.3	41.4	60.9	1.4	3.8
Reading	60.0	64.9	31.4	34.3	8.6	0.7
Writing	47.1	32.1	44.3	61.2	8.6	6.7

As indicated in Table 4.8, while most students in both groups reported that they could perform at least adequately in these four areas, notable differences existed between the two groups, and some interesting comments were made by students. In the EFI group, 57.1 percent of the students indicated confidence in both their listening and speaking skills, compared to 49.2 percent for the LFI group in listening, and 35.3 percent in speaking. While the EFI cohort seemed equally confident in listening and speaking, the LFI group reported

more confidence in their listening skills than their speaking skills. This result might not be unexpected as the LFI group had only been in the program for about two years as compared to nine years for the EFI group. Many students in the LFI group commented that they felt their French speaking skills would improve when they had spent more time in the LFI program. Also, several students in the LFI group reported that they received very little instruction in French before entering LFI and commented that they would have liked to have had a better basis in core French before entering the immersion program. As one LFI student stated, "Core French in the regular program does not go far enough."

Both groups, however, reported that they felt they could perform adequately in speaking and listening activities outside of school. The percentage of students indicating considerable difficulty in French listening proficiency was low with 2.9 percent of the EFI group and 5.3 percent of the LFI group indicating considerable difficulty in French listening activities. Similarly, only 1.4 percent of the EFI group and 3.8 percent of the LFI group indicated considerable difficulty in speaking French.

Students in both groups commented on their French listening proficiency, with most comments related to the difficulty in understanding francophones because of the speed

with which people speak, or because of the speaker's accent. As one student stated, "If someone is speaking too fast, or with a different accent, I have some trouble understanding it." Another student expanded on this point by stating, "It depends on where the French came from. Quebec, St. Pierre, and France all have differences in their language."

Only a few comments were made regarding students' proficiency in speaking French. One student in LFI stated that, "I could probably speak adequately, but my accent is not the best." Another LFI student felt that more opportunities for speaking French should be provided in school.

Although 60 percent of the students in the EFI group and 64.9 of the students in the LFI group felt confident in their ability to read French material, 8.6 percent of the students in the EFI group indicated that they were having considerable difficulty in this area, compared to 0.7 percent for the LFI group. This may again be related to the nature of the French language arts program for the EFI students where they are more exposed to French literature. Three typical comments made by EFI students on their difficulty with reading were:

"I feel that French immersion students are not skilled enough in everyday French, or complicated words."

"I do not feel I am overly equipped with French overall."

"I'm poor at reading because their books are boring and not interesting."

These comments would seem to indicate that a need exists for a greater variety of books relating to both the interests and reading level of students.

Both groups expressed that they had the least amount of confidence in their writing ability. per percentage of the EFI group indicated a higher level of proficiency in this area than the LFI group. About 47.1 percent of the EFI students felt they could write with confidence compared to 32.1 percent for the LFI group. However, 8.6 percent of the students in the EFI group and 6.7 percent of the LFI cohort indicated they were having considerable difficulty in this area.

Comments made by students in both groups regarding writing were similar. Many students found French grammar difficult, especially the verbs. The following comments by one EFI and one LFI student are typical of comments related to writing in French:

"Even though I have been in French for nine years, I have difficulty with spelling, e.g. verbs."

"With writing I get confused with accents, and the different times, past, present, etc."

These comments seem to indicate that students in both groups feel they need more writing experiences and instruction in

*French grammar, especially with verb forms.*

### **Achievement and Expectations**

Students were asked to indicate on a three-point scale what they perceived to be their present level of proficiency in French as compared to their expectations when they entered the immersion program. These results are reported in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9  
Students' Perceptions of Their Present Level  
of French Proficiency

Level of Expectation	Percent of Students Responding	
	EFI	LFI
More than expected	32.4	54.1
What I expected	58.8	39.3
Less than expected	8.8	6.7

As indicated in Table 4.9, 54.1 percent of the LFI group, compared to 32.4 percent of the EFI group responded that they felt their level of French proficiency was higher than they thought it would be at this time. Comments made by the LFI students indicated that this group were very surprised at the

speed at which they learned French compared to their previous time spent in core French. This is supported by comments such as the following:

"I did not think I would be able to speak French as well as this until grade 10 or 11."

"I'm quite shocked with how much I have achieved. I came into the "programme" not expecting to end up half as fluent as I am."

It is interesting to note that 34 percent of the LFI students added comments to this question whereas only 8 percent of the EFI students provided additional information. The comments of EFI cohorts who said they had achieved what they expected seemed to indicate that this was a very difficult question for them to answer, as they were very young at the time they entered the French immersion program and could not remember whether or not they had any expectations. This point is supported by the following comments:

"I was in kindergarten at the time, I don't really remember what I expected."

"When I entered an immersion program I was only 5 years old so I didn't know what to expect."

Perhaps the EFI students who thought they were making good progress in French felt that they must be achieving what they expected when they entered kindergarten. As one EFI

student stated, "I didn't really know what my level of expectation was because I entered immersion in kindergarten, but I feel I speak up to my ability."

Only 8.8 percent of the EFI group and 6.7 percent of the LFI group stated that their level of proficiency was not as good as they had expected. When reportedly less proficient EFI students provided comments, they tended to discuss weaknesses in specific skills or overall difficulty with the French language. The following comments are typical of the comments from this group:

"Our speaking is excellent, but we do not know expressions or complicated language."

"I have problems with writing."

On the other hand, LFI students tended to comment on the difficulty of the program and the fact that their marks had dropped:

"Before I entered I had all A's but now I don't."

"I didn't know it would be so hard."

The comments of both groups would seem to indicate that some students in the EFI group were experiencing difficulty in a specific area, whereas the LFI group were comparing French immersion to the regular English program.

When asked on another question how they would rate



their fluency in speaking French by the end of grade VIII, 13 percent of the EFI students, compared to 4.5 percent of the LFI group, indicated that they would be able to speak French like a native speaker. However, 95.5 percent of the LFI group indicated that they could make themselves understood in a conversation as did 84.1 percent of the EFI group. None of the LFI students and only 2.9 percent of the EFI group felt they could not communicate well at all.

#### **Motivation to Enter a French Immersion Program**

Students were asked to select from a list the most important reasons for them to be in a French immersion program. These results are included in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10  
Motivation for Entering a French Immersion Program.

Reasons	Percent of Students Responding	
	EPI	LPI
Better Job Opportunities	97.1	95.6
To have something more challenging to do at school	27.1	45.2
To acquire an appreciation and understanding for French people	22.9	34.8
To improve your native language skills	21.4	32.6
To help you learn another language better (i.e. an appreciation of language and how it works)	52.9	65.2
To enable you to communicate with French-speaking people at home and abroad	84.3	79.3
To please your parents	28.6	13.3

As Table 4.10 indicates, both groups chose the same three reasons as the most important ones for being in an immersion program. Great emphasis was placed on the economic realities of living in a bilingual country with 97.1 percent of the EPI group and 95.6 percent of the LPI group selecting better job opportunities as the primary reason for being in a French immersion program. The ability

to communicate with francophones was chosen as the second most important reason by 84.3 percent of the EFI group and 79.3 percent of the LFI group. However, while both groups rated learning another language better as their third reason, 65.2 of the students in LFI selected this as compared to 52.9 percent of the EFI students.

A greater percentage of LFI students than EFI students felt that having something more challenging to do at school was a good reason to be in an immersion program. Table 4.10 indicates that 45.2 percent of the LFI respondents chose this reason compared to 27.1 percent of the EFI group. While both groups of students appeared to be overall academically able, as reported in Table 4.6, the LFI students commented that being in the immersion program meant that they had to work much harder if they did not want their marks to drop. The EFI students, however, had been studying through the medium of French since kindergarten, so perhaps continuing to take subjects at the junior high level was not seen to be any more challenging for them.

Improving your native language skills, and acquiring an appreciation and understanding for French people were seen by both the EFI and LFI students as being less important reasons for being in an immersion program. However, as seen from Table 4.10, approximately 11 percent more of the LFI

students than EFI students selected these as reasons for following an immersion program.

It is interesting to note that pleasing one's parents was regarded by the LFI students to be the least important reason for them to be in an immersion program with only 13.3 percent of the respondents choosing this reason. Parental pressure did not seem to be a major factor for the LFI students in this study choosing an immersion option. EFI students ranked pleasing one's parents as the fourth most important reason for being in an immersion program, with 28.6 percent choosing this reason.

### **Friendship Patterns**

Another question in the study related to the friendship patterns of students. Students were asked to indicate on a five-point scale the number of friends they had in French immersion. These results are noted in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11  
 Friendship Patterns of Students in EFI and LFI

No. of Friends	Percent of Students Responding	
	EFI	LFI
All	10.0	8.1
Most	55.7	43.0
Almost half	10.0	11.9
Some	22.9	34.8
None	1.4	2.2

As seen in Table 4.11, both groups reported that more than half of their friends were in immersion programs. About 65.7 percent of the students in EFI stated that most or all of their friends were in immersion programs, compared to 51.1 percent for the LFI students. Moreover, 22.9 percent of the students in EFI indicated that only some of their friends were in immersion compared to 34.8 percent for LFI students. It would seem that most students formed many of their friendships through school and that LFI students still retained friendships made in the regular English stream. This study did not ask the LFI students whether their friends in immersion were new friends they had made, or whether they were friends who had entered LFI with them. Only 1.4 percent of the EFI students, and 2.2 percent of the LFI students stated that they had no friends in the

immersion program.

### Use of French Outside the Classroom

The questionnaire also asked students to indicate from a three-point scale the frequency with which they spoke French outside the classroom with friends, parents, and teachers. A summary of student responses is presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12  
Frequency of French Use Outside the Classroom

Activity	Percent of Students Responding					
	Often		Sometimes		Never	
Student Speaks French with:	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI
Friends	2.9	8.3	31.4	54.9	65.7	36.8
Teachers	29.0	45.5	62.3	47.8	8.7	6.7
Parents	8.6	3.8	21.4	35.3	70.0	60.9

As Table 4.12 indicates, students in both groups reported that they spoke French more often outside the classroom with teachers, than with friends or parents. About 45.5 percent of the LFI group and 29.0 of the EFI

group stated they often spoke in French to teachers outside the classroom. This could be due to the fact that students in LFI receive more of their instruction at the grades VII and VIII level through the medium of French, than do the EFI students. Although the percentage of French instruction varies somewhat between schools, the LFI students receive approximately 70 percent of their instruction in French, compared to about 40 percent for the EFI group at this level. Most of the teachers for the LFI group would therefore have been French immersion teachers, whereas the EFI group could have had a large number of teachers from the regular English stream who may or may not have been able to speak French. It is possible that the language spoken between teachers and students in class, was also the language spoken between them outside of class.

Students in LFI reported more frequent use of French with friends outside class than did students in EFI. Of the LFI cohort, 63.2 percent indicated they spoke to friends at least sometimes in French, compared to 34.3 percent of EFI students. Students in EFI may not have felt the same need to communicate in French with friends outside school. As one student in EFI stated, "We (my friends and I) speak a lot of French in the classroom, so we don't speak much to friends outside the class." On the other hand, comments made by the LFI students seemed to indicate that they were

eager to practise and use their newly developed second language skills. Comments made by these students which seem to support this conclusion include:

"My friends and I like to speak French to each other because it's just nice to know we can speak French."

"My friends and I fool around on the phone speaking French."

Most students in both groups reported that they seldom spoke with their parents in French. Comments made by students seemed to indicate that the main reason for this was that their parents were unable to communicate in French, or had only limited ability in this language. Some students did report that their parents were presently taking French courses in order to learn the language.

Again, the percentage of students who reportedly never spoke French to their parents exhibited inter-group variation with 70 percent of the EFI group compared to 60.9 percent of the LFI group indicating they did not communicate with parents in their second language. Comments made by students in both groups seemed to indicate that speaking to parents in French consisted mainly of activities where parents would ask students to translate something or to teach them words in French. However, while comments made by the LFI students tended to indicate that they were eager to demonstrate their



newly-acquired skills, the novelty of being able to speak French may have worn off for the students in the EFI program, even though parents were still eager for their children to speak to them in French. As one EFI student stated, "My dad usually speaks to me in French but I ignore him."

Two comments made by students indicated that other factors also affected whether or not a student spoke with significant others outside of school. One student referred to the English environment outside of school. "French to me is more of school work, except when I am in a French environment." Another student commented on the expectations of others regarding the French proficiency of immersion students. "I don't often speak French outside of school because I find people bother me by asking, 'How do you say this in French?,' and people expect me to be an expert." This might particularly affect students who feel their French proficiency is not as good as it should be, or who are self-conscious, thereby contributing to their reluctance to speak French outside the school setting.

### **Opportunities For French Language Use**

When asked whether or not they had opportunities to use

French outside school, 90 percent of the EFI students and 89 percent of the LFI students responded affirmatively. Most students listed school trips to French-speaking areas, in particular St. Pierre, Baie Comeau, and Quebec City as opportunities for extra-school second language use. Other opportunities given were family vacations to French-speaking areas, French summer school, French summer camps, and activities with the francophone society. Students in the Labrador City area also listed shopping trips to Fermont. While most students had spent between three days and one week in one or two activities, a few students spent as long as one to two months at a time in a French-speaking environment.

On another question, students were asked to indicate on a three-point scale the amount of time spent watching French television, listening to French radio, or reading French. These results are contained in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Time Spent Outside School Watching French Television,  
Listening to French Radio, or Reading French Materials

Activity	Percent of Students Responding					
	Often		Sometimes		Never	
	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI
Watching T.V.	4.3	5.9	61.4	74.8	34.3	19.3
Listening to radio	0.0	3.0	15.7	25.9	84.3	71.1
Reading	22.9	16.3	58.6	68.1	18.6	15.6

As seen in Table 4.13, students in both groups indicated that outside of school, a higher percentage of students read in French than watched French television or listened to French radio. However, 18.6 percent of the EFI group and 14.6 percent of the LFI group indicated they never read in French outside school. An examination of student comments seemed to indicate that reading in French may be mainly related to school assignments, especially book reports or assigned readings in subject areas, and that many of them did not always enjoy this activity. Typical student comments included:

"Our teacher makes us read in French. If she didn't make us I don't think I would read in French."

"I read French when I am forced or threatened."

Some students also said that they found the French books and texts boring, and another stated that s/he mainly read books his/her father brought back from Quebec. One student in LFI stated that s/he found reading in French difficult because s/he had to look up a lot of words. "I've tried reading but I have to look up 5 out of 6 words."

Although only 4.3 percent of the EFI group and 5.9 percent of the LFI group indicated that they watched French television often, 61.4 percent of the EFI students and 74.8 percent of the LFI students indicated that they sometimes

watched French television. French programs that seemed to be the most popular with students included hockey and cartoons, followed by the news. While students in both groups commented that they found many of the French shows boring, and that the speakers sometimes spoke too fast for them to understand, some LFI students reported that they found this activity a good way to improve their listening skills. One student in LFI suggested students should be given more of an incentive to watch French television. S/he suggested that, "We should have a French class where we discuss shows on television dealing with different issues."

An noteworthy comment made by a number of students in both groups was that they were unable to receive the French channel or that the reception was "fuzzy". This was confirmed by the public relations department of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation at St. John's who said that channels may be hard to tune in if the household does not have cable television. The signal for the French station may be a little weaker than signals for the English channels as this signal is first transmitted from Montreal to St. John's, and then relayed to other parts of the province.

French radio was not very popular with either group, although it was reportedly less popular with the EFI group as 84.3 percent of the EFI students compared to 71.1 percent of

the LFI students stated they never listened to French radio. It may be again that more students in LFI than in EFI perceive their listening skills as needing improvement and therefore listen to French radio for practice.

Students in both groups stated they found that the music on French radio was boring, the programs were less interesting than the programs on the English stations, or the announcers spoke too fast. As one student in EFI commented, "I hardly ever listen to French on radio because their songs aren't too good, and the people speak too fast for me." A similar comment made by an LFI student was that, "There is no station with good French music, only the 'informative' Radio Canada."

#### **Future Plans for French Study**

When asked to respond to questions regarding their future plans for French study, 90 percent of the EFI students and 94.8 of the LFI students indicated that they felt their present level of French would enable them to study in French in future education.

On another question relating to French language study in grade IX, all students, except for one, who indicated s/he

would be moving to another community, stated that they would be taking subject areas in French next year. Most students in EFI reported that they would be taking three courses, including history, geography (social studies), health, science or religion. Of the LFI cohort, about 25 percent reported that they would be taking one subject in French, about 50 percent indicated they would be taking two courses in French, and 25 percent stated they would be taking three courses in French. All schools involved in LFI programs offered history and/or geography, some offered religion, and students in one school reported that science would be offered in Grade IX.

Students in both programs were asked to indicate on a three-point scale their plans for studying French in senior high school. The results are contained in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

Student Plans for Studying French in Senior High School

Number of Courses in French Per Year	Percent Responding	
	EFI	LFI
1. 2 or more courses	74.3	79.1
2. 1 course	24.3	20.1
3. No courses	1.4	0.7

Students in both groups reported similar plans for taking

subjects in French in senior high, as 74.3 percent of the EFI group and 79.1 percent of the LFI group reportedly planned to take two or more courses per year; 24.3 percent of the EFI group and 20.1 percent of the LFI group indicated they planned to take one course per year. Only one student from each group indicated that s/he did not plan to take any courses in French at this level.

On another question, students were asked to indicate on a three-point scale how comfortable they would feel in taking courses in history or geography, mathematics, science, and art and music at the senior high level in which the language of instruction would be French. Table 4.15 summarizes these results.

Table 4.15

Attitudes of Students Toward Taking Particular Courses  
through the Medium of French in Senior High School

Course	Percent of Students Responding					
	Not at all comfortable		Comfortable		Very Comfortable	
	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI
History/geography	38.6	28.1	52.9	55.6	8.6	16.3
Mathematics	52.9	20.0	32.9	45.2	14.3	34.8
Science	31.4	43.3	44.3	44.8	24.3	11.9
Art and music	45.7	37.8	35.7	39.3	18.6	23.0

As seen from Table 4.15, 52.9 percent of the EFI students but only 20 percent of the LFI students indicated that they would not be comfortable taking mathematics in French. As well, 34.8 percent of the LFI group said they would be very comfortable taking this subject in French compared to only 14.3 percent for the EFI cohort. The difference between the EFI and LFI students' attitudes toward studying mathematics in French may be related to the fact that the LFI students had been studying mathematics in French in grades VII and VIII, whereas the EFI students had not been doing mathematics in French since grade V. In addition, since marks in mathematics is sometimes a criterion for entering a French immersion program, students entering LFI may have generally been high achievers in mathematics in school. Some EFI students, who had not studied mathematics in French for nearly three years, may perceive studying this subject through the French medium in senior high as more difficult. However, the LFI students may perceive it as no different as they are presently studying mathematics in French at the grade VIII level.

As a group, the EFI students also indicated that they generally felt less comfortable than the LFI students in studying history or geography in French. As seen in Table 4.15, 38.6 percent of the EFI students reportedly would be uncomfortable studying history/geography in French compared to



28.1 percent of the LFI students. A possible explanation for this difference may be related to the emphasis put on writing for assignments in these areas, especially in history. Although both groups had previously indicated that the area in which they had the most difficulty was writing, the pressure to write accurately and expand on ideas may have been greater for the EFI group. The EFI students had been studying French language arts since kindergarten and it may therefore be that the expectations of teachers for the EFI group in writing assignments were greater than the expectations for the LFI group, some of whom had little exposure to French before grade VII. Students in EFI who have more difficulty with writing might prefer to avoid these areas, if possible. On the other hand, students in EFI who have good writing skills may be more comfortable than the LFI students in this area. This hypothesis may be suggested by the fact that 16.3 percent of the LFI students compared to 8.6 percent of the EFI students said they would be very comfortable taking history or geography in French.

The EFI group indicated that the subject in which they would feel the most comfortable studying in French was science. However, 11.9 percent of the students in LFI indicated that they would not be at all comfortable studying this subject in French. A possible explanation for this might be that the LFI students probably had little, if any, exposure

to French scientific terms before entering the late immersion program. It may therefore follow that, as the LFI students have a limited French vocabulary in this subject area, they may feel that they would have more difficulty grasping concepts in science than in other subjects. The EFI students, on the other hand, would have had the opportunity to acquire many of the terms specific to science, since they would have studied science through the medium of the French language in primary and elementary school. In fact, it may be that the EFI students feel more comfortable with French scientific terms than the same terms in English, as they may not have had exposure to some of this specialized vocabulary outside the school situation.

Art and music were reported by both groups of students to be the areas in which they felt the least comfortable for studying in French. As Table 4.15 indicates, 45.7 percent of the EFI group and 37.8 percent of the LFI group would reportedly be uncomfortable taking art or music in French. Some students may be avoiding subjects which have not previously been taught in French. As well, art and music are subjects which tend to be taught by specialists in the junior and senior high schools, and may therefore have been taught in English at grades VII and VIII as well as the earlier grades. Another possible explanation for students wanting to avoid art and music in French may be that they do not feel that they

have a particular aptitude for these areas and would not take these subjects in English either. It is interesting to note that similar percentages, 18.6 of the EFI group and 23 percent of the LFI group, said they would feel very comfortable taking these subjects, and this may have involved students who felt they had talent in these areas.

### **Work/Career Aspirations**

The questionnaire requested students to complete items relating to their future plans. On a question relating to working part-time before completing senior high school, 94.2 percent of EFI students and 89.6 percent of LFI students reported that they planned to look for a part-time job before completing school. However, 92.9 percent of the EFI students felt that French would be of help to them in finding such a job compared to only 72.5 percent for the LFI group. Yet, when asked on a third question whether they would be prepared to use French in a job, there was little inter-group variability with 98.6 percent of the EFI students and 97.8 percent of the LFI students indicating they would be prepared to do this.

Students were asked to select from a list what they planned to do after completing senior high school. As well,

students were given the opportunity to add to this list if the given responses did not match their plans. These results are found in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16  
Student Plans Upon Completing Senior High School

Future Plans	Percent of Students Responding	
	EFI	LFI
1. Go to university	88.4	91.7
2. Go to university or other business/technical school	2.9	3.0
3. Get a full time job	1.4	0.8
4. Other	1.4	3.0
5. Don't Know	5.8	1.5

Students in both immersion groups seemed to be very academically oriented in that 91.3 percent of the EFI students and 94.7 of the LFI students reportedly planned to go to university or some other post secondary institution upon completion of senior high. Only 5.8 percent of the EFI group and 1.5 percent of the LFI group reported that they had not yet decided on what they would do after completing high school.

When students were asked to comment on their long range

career goals, many students in both the EFI and LFI group reported that they had not yet made a final decision regarding their future careers. Students in both groups tended to have high career aspirations and commented that they were considering careers in two or three areas. For the EFI group, the five careers cited most often were: medicine, law, architecture, fine or performing arts, and marine biology. Other careers included: teaching, writing, fashion design, aviation, social work, veterinary science, computer technology, physiotherapy, business, modelling, or journalism. The five careers cited most often by students in the LFI group were: law, medicine, teaching, marine biology and fine arts. Other careers listed were similar to those of the EFI group although the range was a little greater. This was not unexpected because of the greater number of students responding. Many students in both groups also responded that they would specialize in the area they had chosen and that they hoped to use French in their profession.

While 27 percent of the EFI respondents and 21 percent of the LFI respondents stated that they did not know what their career choice might be, many of these students commented that they would be studying at university, they wanted a well paying job which they would enjoy, and/or they would choose an area where they could use their bilingual skills.

### Educational Level of Parents

Students were asked to indicate from a list the educational level of their parents. The intent of this question was to determine if the educational background of parents in the EFI and LFI group were similar, and whether or not the future educational plans of students were similar to the educational levels of their parents. However, this question was not included for students in one EFI and one LFI class at the request of their school board, and therefore the number of students surveyed on this question was less than for the others. The responses are summarized in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Educational Level of Parents of Grade VIII EFI and LFI  
Students for the School Year 1989-90

Educational Level	Mothers		Fathers	
	EFI	LFI	EFI	LFI
1. Elementary school	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.9
2. Some high school	6.7	9.7	4.5	9.8
3. High school	11.1	15.9	6.8	9.8
4. Some community college	8.9	15.0	13.6	7.1
5. Graduate community college	17.8	15.9	6.8	20.5
6. Some university	8.9	13.3	2.3	8.0
7. University degree	35.6	17.7	29.5	16.1
8. Graduate degree	11.1	10.6	36.4	27.7

As can be observed from Table 4.17, the majority of parents of both the EFI and LFI students reportedly had high levels of education, with most of them having completed at least some post-secondary education. While many of the parents in both groups had university or graduate degrees, the percentage of parents having these degrees was higher for both the mothers and fathers of students in the EFI group. It is also interesting to note that a higher percentage of fathers in both groups had university or graduate degrees. The level of education of both groups of parents is more homogeneous than one would expect to find from parents of students in the regular English stream in Newfoundland and Labrador. As noted earlier, students in both EFI and LFI indicated that they placed priority on a university education after completing high school. Students' aspirations seemed to be somewhat congruent with the educational level of their parents and the overall high level of their parents' education might explain the high educational and career aspiration of the students in both groups.

### **Opinions About French Immersion Programs**

#### Perceived Benefits of Immersion

Students were asked to comment on aspects of their French immersion program which they found particularly good.

Students in both EFI and LFI stated that they particularly enjoyed speaking French, and that they felt an immersion program was a good way of learning the French language. The LFI group commented that they enjoyed the challenge which an immersion program offered, and many of them were surprised at the rate at which they learned French.

Both groups reported that they enjoyed the extra activities which were offered, such as going to French movies and plays, participating in French public speaking events, or conducting science fairs through the medium of French. Students in both immersion programs mentioned that they especially enjoyed their trips to French-speaking areas of Canada which enabled them to use their French outside school. The LFI students in particular felt that interesting field trips were an advantage of the French immersion program.

Many students in both groups reported that they found the immersion teachers good, although this tended to be mentioned more frequently by the LFI group. Students commented on the high aspirations that the teachers had for their students. As one student in EFI commented, "The teachers have pushed hard, something I'll always appreciate." Many students in LFI stated that teachers demonstrated patience with them while they were adjusting to the immersion situation, and that the quality of teaching was high.



Comments made by many LFI students indicated that these students enjoyed the new friends they met in grade VII, although a few students felt that more mixing should occur between the French and English streams. As one LFI student stated, "Sometimes we are considered snobs, and students in the regular stream do not like to mix with us." Some students in EFI reported that they did not have many opportunities to make new friends because they were always with the same group of students from one year to another. One EFI student stated that s/he wished students could be mixed with the English stream so that they would not always be known as "the French class".

#### Perceived Areas for Improvement

When students were asked to comment on improvements which they felt could be made to immersion programs, the major improvement that both groups would reportedly like to see was in the area of reading materials. Many students would reportedly like to have more interesting textbooks and recreational reading material. Students from both groups also indicated that more reference material in French is needed.

Other areas in which immersion students reportedly felt immersion programs could be improved were as follows:

- More trips should be provided for students to French-speaking areas.

- More extra-curricular activities should be available in French, such as public speaking or science fairs.
- Immersion programs, both EFI and LFI, should be offered in more schools, as many students have to travel a considerable distance to attend these programs.
- More places should be available for students in LFI programs, since not everyone who applies is able to get in.
- Students should be exposed to core French programs in primary, as well as more extensive and interesting programs at the elementary level to provide them with a good French background in preparation for LFI.
- After school tutorials should be available to students in immersion programs who are having difficulty in subject areas taught in French.
- Substitute teachers should be able to communicate well in French.

While these recommendations were made for improvements to immersion programs, some students reported that the immersion program was fine and needed no change.

Students were asked whether or not they were satisfied with the amount of French used in their immersion program. While 83.1 percent of the EFI group and 91.7 percent of the

LFI group indicated that they were satisfied with the amount of French used in their current program, some students in the LFI group commented that they would like to see more opportunities for the use of French in grade IX.

### **Recommendation of French Immersion for Others**

The questionnaire asked students whether or not they would recommend a French immersion program to a sibling or friend. These results are included in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Student Views on Whether They Would Recommend  
French Immersion to a Sibling or Friend

Student Opinion	Percent of Students Responding	
	EPI	LFI
1. Would recommend immersion	82.6	83.7
2. Would not recommend immersion	1.4	3.7
3. Not sure	15.9	12.6

Findings indicate that most students in both groups had a high level of satisfaction toward the immersion program. As seen in Table 4.18, 82.6 percent of the EPI group and 83.7 percent of the LFI group reported that they would recommend a

French immersion program to a sibling or friend. Students in both groups commented that being in an immersion program enabled them to become bilingual which in turn provided them with more varied and better job opportunities. They also felt that in a bilingual country, everyone should be able to speak both languages. Some students in LFI also commented on the quality of the immersion program. As one student stated, "The French immersion program taught me a lot and gave me a lot of chances. I'd want others to get the same quality of education." Another LFI student referred to the immersion program as being "fun and challenging".

However, 15.9 percent of the EFI students and 12.6 percent of the LFI students reported that they were not sure if they would recommend an immersion program to everyone. Students in both groups commented that they would only recommend an immersion program if the person wanted to enter one. Some members of the LFI group also commented that it would depend on the ability of the student in question, and whether or not the person could accept a drop in marks.

Only 1.4 percent of the EFI group and 3.7 percent of the LFI students reported they would not recommend immersion. A reason given for this by one student was that s/he wouldn't want his/her sibling in the same school.

On another question, students were asked to indicate what they would consider to be the best time to enter an immersion program. These results are contained in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19  
Student Views on Which Grade a  
French Immersion Program Should Begin

Grade	Percent of Students Responding	
	EFI	LFI
Kindergarten to III	98.6	33.6
IV to VI	0.0	20.9
VII to IX	1.4	45.5

From Table 4.19, it would seem that the EFI students in this study are pleased with the age at which they started French immersion, with 98.6 percent of the EFI students indicating that they felt kindergarten to Grade III was the best time for a student to enter such a program. These students felt that starting earlier not only provided more time for students to learn the second language, but that younger learners learned the second language faster and grasped better speech techniques than older learners.

About 54.5 percent of the LFI students felt that students should start a French immersion program earlier than grade VII, with 33.6 percent indicating a preference for the

kindergarten to grade three start. While tending to agree with the EFI students' comments, the LFI students also felt that starting in a higher grade takes more responsibility and hard work than starting in the earlier school years. They also felt younger children are not embarrassed to make new and different sounds, as are students at the junior high level.

Other LFI students reportedly felt that a start at the kindergarten level was too early and 20.9 percent of the LFI group felt that a start between grades 4 and 6 would be best. These respondents felt that at this level students can be involved in the decision to enter this program. Moreover, after being in school a few years, students are aware of their ability and can therefore better decide whether or not they could cope with an immersion program. Starting at grade IV to VI would allow students to first acquire a good grounding in English, while still affording more time than a later start to acquire the second language. As well, students who start immersion classes at the elementary level would be given time in the program before having to write their first exam in French.

About 45.5 percent of the LFI group felt that grades VII to IX were the best grades to start an immersion program, and many of the students commented that grade VII was better than grade VIII or IX as it allowed more time for a student to

become bilingual. The respondents commented that they felt students should have a good base in English before starting an immersion program, and they felt it takes seven years of school to attain this. They also stated they felt that students at the junior high level are old enough to choose and commit themselves, they can take in more information in a shorter time than younger students, and they are able to learn a new language faster. These respondents also felt that teachers in junior high will correct students' mistakes more readily because older students are able to understand French grammar easier than younger students.

### **Summary**

Results from the student questionnaires indicated that both the EFI and LFI students in this study had a positive attitude towards their French immersion program, and felt that it had been a worthwhile experience. While students were generally satisfied with their program, some recommendations were made for change, especially in the area of reading materials. Students in both programs felt that they had benefitted from the immersion program, and that being bilingual would afford them better career opportunities. Both groups reported that they would recommend a similar experience to a sibling or friend, although there were

differences in opinion as to which grade was the more appropriate one in which to start.

Overall, students in the EFI group perceived their level of French proficiency in listening, speaking, and writing to be higher than did the LFI group. However, students in the LFI group felt that these skills would improve during the rest of their schooling, and students in both groups felt that they would be bilingual by the end of high school.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **General Conclusions**

The conclusions suggested by data in this study indicate that, overall, the early and late French immersion students had similar attitudes towards their program. Both cohorts appeared to consist of generally very academically able students who viewed their programs positively. Students commented that they were enjoying the French immersion experience, and felt that an immersion program would enable them to become bilingual by the end of high school. While students reported they were satisfied with most aspects of their immersion program, some recommendations were made for changes which they felt would improve present programs. Both groups indicated that they would recommend an immersion program to a younger sibling or friend.

Students in both groups felt that French immersion was a good program for learning the language, and made very positive comments about their programs. They particularly enjoyed the trips to French-speaking areas, and many students felt that their success in the French immersion program was largely due to the high quality of the teaching.

Students in both EFI and LFI expressed the need for more opportunities for students to speak French, both within the school and in extracurricular activities, especially field trips. They also expressed the need for a larger and better selection of French reading materials to be available to students. It was recommended that more courses should be offered in French at the senior high level. While both groups seemed to be satisfied with the amount of French used in their current program, many LFI students expressed the need for more French at the grade IX level.

Most EFI and LFI students planned to look for a part time job before completing school. Although a higher percentage of the EFI students felt that French would be of help to them in finding such a job, most students in both groups stated they would be prepared to use French in a job.

A high percentage of the students in both groups indicated that they intended to attend university, and most of them were planning to enter professional fields. They wanted to continue studying French in future education, and most of them reported that they hoped to use French in their chosen career.

Parents of students in EFI and LFI are overall very well educated, with a vast majority of them having spent at least

some time in post-secondary institutions. Parental attitudes have been shown to have an effect on student academic achievement and language acquisition (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), and this may be one reason for the high academic and career aspirations of these students.

While the attitudes of the EFI and LFI students toward their program showed many similarities, some differences between the cohorts were noted in the areas which follow.

#### Academic Background

Most students in the EFI and LFI groups reported that they were achieving high average and above average grades, which suggests that both groups of students in this study were more homogeneous than one would expect to find in the regular English stream. The EFI group seemed to be more heterogeneous than the LFI group in that a few more students were receiving grades in the lower average range. The academic background of the students in the LFI group was similar to that of the LFI group in Drover's (1988) study.

#### French Language Proficiency

While most students in both groups reported that they were attaining average or above average marks in French, more students in EFI than in LFI reported having below average grades in French.

Most of the EFI and LFI students indicated that they felt they could participate adequately in out-of-school situations requiring the use of French. However, students in EFI perceived their proficiency in French listening, speaking, and writing to be at a higher level than did students in the LFI group. Both groups indicated that the French language skill in which they were weakest was writing. A similar difference between self-assessments of French listening and speaking proficiency for LFI students was noted in a previous study by Drover (1988).

#### Expectations for French Language Achievement

About one-eighth of the students in EFI felt they would be able to speak French like a native speaker by the end of grade VIII, as did a smaller percentage of the students in LFI. Most of the students in both groups indicated that, if conversing in French, they would be able to make themselves understood.

A greater percentage of the LFI group than the EFI cohort felt their level of French language proficiency was higher than they had expected it would be, mainly because they were surprised at the rate at which they learned French from previous years. Less than ten percent of both groups stated they were not performing as well as expected.

### Motivation to Enter a French Immersion Program

Both groups gave improved job opportunities and the ability to communicate with francophones as the two most important reasons for deciding to enrol in an immersion program. While the EFI group felt that pleasing one's parents was a factor in enrolling in immersion, this tended not to be a significant factor for the LFI group who stated that having something more challenging to do at school was of much greater importance.

### Use of French Outside the Classroom

Both groups indicated that their use of French outside the classroom was generally with teachers. They reported speaking to friends less often, and only rarely with parents. In all instances, the LFI students communicated more often in French with these groups than did the EFI students, even though the EFI students reported having more friends in immersion than did the LFI group. This seems to suggest that the LFI students have more self motivation to use French outside the classroom.

### Opportunities for French Language Use

Most EFI and LFI students indicated that they had spent at least a few days in a French-speaking area, usually through school trips to St. Pierre or Quebec. Students in Labrador also reported that they had gone shopping in Fermont, and a

few students stated they had travelled to a French-speaking area for a family vacation.

Both groups spent a similar amount of time reading French material outside school, but the LFI group tended to watch more French television. Radio was the least popular medium for both groups, although again there was a tendency for the LFI group to spend more time involved in this activity.

#### Future Plans for French Study

Students in both cohorts felt that their level of French would enable them to study in French in future education, and almost all students indicated they would be taking courses in French in Grade IX, as well as in senior high school. The LFI group indicated they would be more comfortable than the EFI group in taking high school courses through the medium of French in history or geography, mathematics, and art and music. The EFI group indicated they would be more comfortable studying science in French than the LFI group.

#### Opinions About Immersion

While students in both groups reported that they would recommend an immersion program to a sibling or friend, almost all students in EFI felt that the best time to enter this program was in kindergarten to Grade III, whereas only one third of the LFI students thought this was the best time.

About half of the LFI students felt grade VII was the best time to start, while the remainder felt grade IV to VI was the best entry level. The opinions expressed by the LFI students in this study regarding the most appropriate entry level were similar to those reported by LFI students in a previous study by Drover (1988).

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested from the conclusions drawn in this study:

1. Given the geographical location of the province, schools should continue to offer school trips to francophone areas so that students are not only exposed to French culture, but are provided the opportunity to communicate with a variety of native French speakers. However, schools should also encourage students to utilize French language resources which are available to them to help them improve their skills, especially French radio and television. Teachers should help students develop better attitudes to these media, and motivate their use through class and home assignments organized around such things as games or debates.

2. Schools and/or school boards should provide seminars to

make parents aware of programs available for them to learn French. Should parents take advantage of these second language classes, students might be motivated to communicate with parents in French, and families might be encouraged to spend a vacation in a French-speaking environment.

3. There is a need for more French reading and reference materials to be made available to students. Public libraries in areas of the province which have French immersion classes should consider including the purchase of French reading materials in their budget.

4. There is a need for more teachers trained in French, especially as substitute teachers for French immersion. Given the need for French teachers in this province, Memorial University of Newfoundland might consider designing a special program at the undergraduate level for French language teaching.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

1. A follow-up study should be conducted with this group of students when they have reached senior high to determine if the attitudes of the EFI and LFI students have changed over



time.

2. A student questionnaire similar to the one used in this study should be administered to Grade VIII students in other school years to determine if the attitudes of students towards French immersion is similar to the students included in this study.

3. A study might be conducted to determine if there is a correlation between the French recreational reading of students and their ability to write in French.

4. Further study is needed to determine if the English language skills of the EFI students are similar to those of the LPI and regular English stream students at the junior high level.

5. Further study might be undertaken to examine the ratio of boys to girls in all French immersion classes in Newfoundland and Labrador to determine if similar numbers of male and female students are choosing the immersion option.

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**APPENDIX A**

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador  
School Districts and Individual School Enrolments  
Enrolments - Grade VIII

Late French Immersion - Total 156

Avalon Consolidated School Board  
Macpherson Junior High - 62

Avalon North Integrated School Board  
Holy Redeemer, Bay Roberts - 18

Labrador West Integrated School Board  
Menihek, Labrador City - 28

Labrador Roman Catholic School Board  
Labrador City Collegiate - 19

St. John's Roman Catholic School Board  
St. Pius X - 29

Early French Immersion - Total 83

St. John's Roman Catholic School Board  
St. Joseph's - 22

Labrador Roman Catholic School Board  
Labrador City Collegiate - 10

Avalon Consolidated School Board  
Macdonald Drive Junior High - 30

Terra Nova Integrated School Board  
Gander Collegiate - 21

**APPENDIX B**

GRADE EIGHT STUDENT SURVEY

LATE FRENCH IMMERSION

1990



**Student Survey for Grade 8 Late French Immersion**

School \_\_\_\_\_

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This survey is a research project on French immersion. Your answers will be very helpful in evaluating French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador from the viewpoint of a student. Please answer all questions as best you can. You may ask the teacher about any questions you are having trouble understanding.

The questions ask about your background, how you feel about your abilities in French, your opinion about French immersion programs, and about your future plans. THIS IS NOT A TEST. These are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

Your answers will be strictly confidential. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER.

For the question which asks for information about your parents, "mother" means mother, stepmother, or female guardian; "father" means father, stepfather, or male guardian. (A guardian is someone you live with who has responsibility for you, just like a parent if the parent doesn't live with you.)

Please read the questions carefully. Answer as well as you can but don't spend too much time on one question. You need to answer honestly about your experiences and opinions. You do not need to answer the comment sections if you do not have anything else to say about the answer you have given.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

1. In the chart below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

How much instruction in French did you receive in each of the following grades:

Grade	More than 2 Periods per Week	2 Periods Per Week	1 Period Per Week	No French at All
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____

If more than 2 periods per week, please specify how many.  
 grade 4 \_\_\_\_\_ grade 5 \_\_\_\_\_ grade 6 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you study French in the primary grades (K - 3) ?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, which grades? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you had any opportunities to learn French outside school? (e.g. trip to Montreal)

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, please describe them below.

Type of Opportunity

Approximate Time (year and duration)

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4. What do you feel are the most important reasons for you to be in a French immersion program? (Circle as many as apply)

1. Better job opportunities
2. To have something more challenging to do at school
3. To acquire an appreciation and understanding for French culture and people
4. To help improve your native language skills
5. To help you learn another language better (i.e. an appreciation of the nature of language and how it works)
6. To enable you to communicate with French-speaking people at home and abroad
7. To please your parents

5. How many of your friends at school are in the French immersion program? Circle the appropriate answer.

1. all
2. most
3. almost half
4. some
5. none

6. Will you take subjects in French next year?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, which subjects will you take?

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---

7. What are your plans for studying French in senior high school? (Circle ONE)

1. take two or more courses in French per year
2. take one course in French per year
3. take no courses in French

8. In the chart below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

How comfortable would you feel about taking senior high school courses in French in the following areas?

course	not at all comfortable	comfortable	very comfortable
history / geography	_____	_____	_____
mathematics	_____	_____	_____
science	_____	_____	_____
art and music	_____	_____	_____

9. Will your level of French enable you to study in French in future education?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

- 10a Do you plan to look for a part time job before completing school?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

- b Do you think that French will be of help to you in finding such a job?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

11a. Will you be prepared to use French in a job?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

b. If NO, why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. In the charts below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

a. To what extent do you feel you can participate effectively in out-of-school situations requiring listening to, reading, writing and speaking French. Add any comments you wish below.

	With confidence	Adequately	With considerable difficulty
LISTENING	_____	_____	_____
SPEAKING	_____	_____	_____
READING	_____	_____	_____
WRITING	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Do you speak French outside the classroom with:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
FRIENDS	_____	_____	_____
TEACHERS	_____	_____	_____
PARENTS	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Do you use French outside the classroom in:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Watching television	_____	_____	_____
Listening to the radio	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

13. How well do you expect you will be able to speak French by the end of Grade VIII? (Circle ONE)

1. Like a native speaker
2. Enough to make myself understood in a conversation
3. Not well at all

14. How does your present level of proficiency in French compare with what you expected when you entered an immersion program? (Circle ONE)

1. I have achieved more than I expected
2. My level is about what I expected
3. I am not as good as I thought I would be

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

15. What other goals did you expect to achieve after completing a late French immersion program at grade VIII?

Goal	Did you achieve this goal?	
1. _____	_____ YES	_____ NO
2. _____	_____ YES	_____ NO
3. _____	_____ YES	_____ NO

16. What do you think you will end up doing after graduating from high school? Circle ONE.

1. go to university
2. go to a community college or other business/technical school
3. get a full time job
4. other (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
5. don't know

17. What are your long range career plans?

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- 18.a) Please circle the highest level of education that your MOTHER has obtained.

1. elementary school
2. some high school
3. high school diploma
4. some community college or business/technical school
5. graduation from community college or business/technical school or nursing school
6. some university
7. university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc.)
8. graduate or professional degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D)

18b. Please circle the highest level of education that your FATHER has obtained.

1. elementary school
2. some high school
3. high school diploma
4. some community college or business/  
technical school
5. graduation from community college or  
business/technical school or nursing school
6. some university
7. university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc.)
8. graduate or professional degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D.,

19. What aspects of the French immersion program you followed were particularly good?

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20. What would you like to see done to improve the French immersion programs in the schools in this area?

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---

---

21. I am satisfied with the amount of French used in the late immersion program.

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO



22. At what grade do you think a student should start a French immersion program? (Circle one)

1. Primary Level (K - 3)
2. Elementary Level (4 - 6)
3. Junior High Level (7 - 9)
4. Senior High Level (10 - 12)

Why do you think so? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Would you recommend a French Immersion program to a younger brother, sister or friend?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO      \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SURE

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

24. What was your average mark in French so far for this year? (Check ONE)

( _____ over 85%)	( _____ 84%-80%)	( _____ 79%-75%)
( _____ 74%-70%)	( _____ 69%-65%)	( _____ 64%-60%)
( _____ 59%-50%)	( _____ below 50%)	

25. What is your approximate overall average in all subjects for this year so far? (Check ONE)

( _____ over 85%)	( _____ 84%-80%)	( _____ 79%-75%)
( _____ 74%-70%)	( _____ 69%-65%)	( _____ 64%-60%)
( _____ 59%-50%)	( _____ below 50%)	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

**APPENDIX C**

x

GRADE 8 STUDENT SURVEY

EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION

1990

**Student Survey for Grade 8 Early French Immersion**

School \_\_\_\_\_  
Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

This survey is part of a research project on French Immersion. Your answers will be very helpful in evaluating French immersion programs in Newfoundland and Labrador from the viewpoint of a student. Please answer all questions as best you can. You may ask the teacher about any questions you are having trouble understanding.

The questions ask about your background, how you feel about your abilities in French, your opinion about French immersion programs, and about your future plans. **THIS IS NOT A TEST.** There are no right or wrong answer to the questions.

Your answers will be strictly confidential. **PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER.**

For the question which asks for information about your parents, "mother" means mother, stepmother, or female guardian; "father" means father, stepfather, or male guardian. (A guardian is someone you live with who has responsibility for you, just like a parent if the parent doesn't live with you.)

Please read the questions carefully. Answer as well as you can but don't spend too much time on one question. You need to answer honestly about your experiences and opinions. You do not need to answer the comment sections if you do not have anything else to say about the answer you have given.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

1. In the chart below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

How much instruction in French did you receive in each of the following grades:

Grade	80 - 100%	60 - 79%	40 - 59%	20 - 39%
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. At what grade did you start reading instruction in English?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you had any opportunities to learn French outside school? (e.g. trip to Montreal)

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

IF YES, please describe them below.

Type of Opportunity	Approximate Time (year and duration)
---------------------	--------------------------------------

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you feel are the most important reasons for you to be in a French immersion program? (Circle as many as apply)

1. Better job opportunities
2. To have something more challenging to do at school
3. To acquire an appreciation and understanding for French culture and people
4. To help improve your native language skills
5. To help you learn another language better (i.e. an appreciation of the nature of language and how it works)
6. To enable you to communicate with French speaking people at home and abroad
7. To please your parents

5. How many of your friends at school are in the French immersion program? Circle the appropriate answer.

1. all
2. most
3. almost half
4. some
5. none

6. Will you take subjects in French next year?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, which subjects will you take?

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7. What are your plans for studying French in senior high school? (Circle ONE)

1. take two or more courses in French per year
2. take one course in French per year
3. take no courses in French

8. In the chart below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

How comfortable would you feel about taking senior high school courses in French in the following areas?

course	not at all comfortable	comfortable	very comfortable
history / geography	_____	_____	_____
mathematics	_____	_____	_____
science	_____	_____	_____
art and music	_____	_____	_____

9. Will your level of French enable you to study in French in future education?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                  \_\_\_\_\_ NO

- 10a Do you plan to look for a part time job before completing school?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                  \_\_\_\_\_ NO

- b Do you think that French will be of help to you in finding such a job?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                  \_\_\_\_\_ NO

11a. Will you be prepared to use French in a job?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_

NO

b. If NO, why not?

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12. In the charts below, mark an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate your answer.

a. To what extent do you feel you can participate effectively in out-of-school situations requiring listening to, reading, writing and speaking French. Add any comments you wish below.

	With confidence	Adequately	With considerable difficulty
LISTENING	_____	_____	_____
SPEAKING	_____	_____	_____
READING	_____	_____	_____
WRITING	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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b. Do you speak French outside the classroom with:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
FRIENDS	_____	_____	_____
TEACHERS	_____	_____	_____
PARENTS	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---



c. Do you use French outside the classroom in:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Watching television	_____	_____	_____
Listening to the radio	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

13. How well do you expect you will be able to speak French by the end of Grade VII? (Circle ONE)

1. Like a native speaker
2. Enough to make myself understood in a conversation
3. Not well at all

14. How does your present level of proficiency in French compare with what you expected when you entered an immersion program? (Circle ONE)

1. I have achieved more than I expected
2. My level is about what I expected
3. I am not as good as I thought I would be

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

15. What other goals did you expect to achieve after completing an early French immersion program at grade VIII?

Goal	Did you achieve this goal?
1. _____	_____ YES _____ NO
2. _____	_____ YES _____ NO
3. _____	_____ YES _____ NO

16. What do you think you will end up doing after graduating from high school? Circle ONE.

1. go to university
2. go to a community college or other business/technical school
3. get a full time job
4. other (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
5. don't know

17. What are your long range career plans?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 18.a) Please circle the highest level of education that your MOTHER has obtained.

1. elementary school
2. some high school
3. high school diploma
4. some community college or business/technical school
5. graduation from community college or business/technical school or nursing school
6. some university
7. university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc.)
8. graduate or professional degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D)

18b. Please circle the highest level of education that your FATHER has obtained.

1. elementary school
2. some high school
3. high school diploma
4. some community college or business/technical school
5. graduation from community college or business/technical school or nursing school
6. some university
7. university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc.)
8. graduate or professional degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D.,

19. What aspects of the French immersion program you followed were particularly good?

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20. What would you like to see done to improve the French immersion programs in the schools in this area?

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21. I am satisfied with the amount of French used in the early immersion program.

\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

22. At what grade do you think a student should start a French immersion program? (Circle one)

1. Primary Level (K - 3)
2. Elementary Level (4 - 6)
3. Junior High Level (7 - 9)
4. Senior High Level (10 - 12)

Why do you think so? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Would you recommend a French immersion program to a younger brother, sister or friend?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO      \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SURE

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

24. What was your average mark in French so far for this year? (Check ONE)

( \_\_\_\_\_ over 85%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 84%-80%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 79%-75%)  
 ( \_\_\_\_\_ 74%-70%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 69%-65%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 64%-60%)  
 ( \_\_\_\_\_ 59%-50%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ below 50%)

25. What is your approximate overall average in all subjects for this year so far? (Check ONE)

( \_\_\_\_\_ over 85%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 84%-80%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 79%-75%)  
 ( \_\_\_\_\_ 74%-70%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 69%-65%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ 64%-60%)  
 ( \_\_\_\_\_ 59%-50%)      ( \_\_\_\_\_ below 50%)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

## **APPENDIX D**

7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1A 1A3  
December 22, 1989

Superintendent  
Avalon North Integrated School Board  
Box 500  
Spaniard's Bay, Nfld.  
A0A 3X0

Dear Dr. Trask:

I am presently a graduate student at Memorial University and am working towards a Master's Degree in Education. In order to fulfil the requirements for this degree, I must complete a study in the area of French as a second language. My advisor for this project is Dr. Glenn Loveless in the Faculty of Education.

My thesis proposal is entitled "A Comparison of Early and Late Immersion Students' Attitudes Towards Their Program at the Grade Eight Level". For this research project I would like to use all grade eight immersion students in the province. This would involve the administration of a survey questionnaire to all students in this population by the home room teachers before the Easter break. This questionnaire will take approximately thirty minutes to administer. Student responses will be confidential as it will not be required for the student's name to appear on the questionnaire.

Very little research has been done in this area in the province. Studies have been done in the area of student achievement, but there is not a lot of information on how early and late French Immersion students view their respective programs. Research in this area will provide students' opinions as to how they perceive these programs in meeting their needs and expectations. Results from this study should be beneficial in pointing to strengths in the programs, as well as identifying areas which students feel may need some changes.

Should you be willing to grant your permission for the grade eight immersion students in your board to be involved in this survey, please complete the enclosed form at your convenience and return it to the undersigned in the enclosed self addressed envelope.

Yours truly,

Gwen Bannister

## **APPENDIX E**



# The Avalon Consolidated School Board

P.O. BOX 1980, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND A1C 5R5  
TELEPHONE (709) 754-0710 FAX (709) 754-0122

March 14, 1990

Mrs. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, NF  
A1A 1A3

Dear Mrs. Bannister:

I wish to reply to your letter requesting permission to administer a questionnaire to students at the Grade 8 level both in late and early French Immersion.

I have perused the questionnaires which you propose to use and find nothing in them to which I would object. (Please reword question # 6). I have further conversed with Mr. G. Mayo, principal of Macpherson Junior High School and Mr. R. Hillier, principal of MacDonald Drive Junior High and they have no problems administering the questionnaires at a time which would be convenient to you and the classes selected at the school.

Please be advised, however, that parent permission forms must be signed and returned to the school before any questionnaires are administered.

On behalf of the Board as per the conditions attached, permission is granted.

Yours truly,

F.H. Tulk,  
Assistant Superintendent.

FHT/rt

c.c. Mr. G. Mayo  
Mr. R. Hillier



Labrador West Integrated School Board  
~~Box 264~~ 669 TAMARACK DR  
~~CORNER Brook, Nfld.~~ LABRADOR CITY, N.F.  
~~Box 500~~ A2V 2V2  
January 14, 1989

Ms. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1A 1A3

Dear Ms. Bannister:

I hereby confirm that permission is granted you to administer a student questionnaire to the grade eight early and late French immersion students of this school district in your research involving a survey of student attitudes toward their program.

I understand that this study is part of the requirements of your Master's Degree program.

Yours truly,

Mr. Robert Martin  
District Superintendent

NOTE: Our only school with Gr 8 Fr Im (Late)  
is the Hanikuk Integrated High School.

Labrador Roman Catholic School Board  
Box 1300  
Wabush, Labrador  
AOR 1B0  
January , 1989

Ms. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1A 1A3

Dear Ms. Bannister:

I hereby confirm that permission is granted you to administer a student questionnaire to the grade eight early and late French immersion students of this school district in your research involving a survey of student attitudes toward their program.

I understand that this study is part of the requirements of your Master's Degree program.

Yours truly,

Mr. Patrick Furlong  
District Superintendent

*Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's*

BELVEDERE  
BONAVENTURE AVENUE  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND  
A1C 3Z4

1990 01 09

Ms. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, Nfld  
A1A 1A3

Dear Ms. Bannister,

Permission is granted for you to administer a student questionnaire to the grade eight early and late French immersion students of this school district in your research involving a survey of student attitudes toward their program.

I understand that this study is part of the requirements of your Master's Degree program.

Please send me a copy of the questionnaire.

Yours truly,

Geraldine Roe  
Associate Superintendent  
Curriculum/Instruction

GR:msc

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD — HUMBER ST. BARBE

P.O. BOX 368, CORNER BROOK, NEWFOUNDLAND A2H 6G9  
TEL. (709) 634-9652

16 January 1990

Ms. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1A 1A3

Dear Ms. Bannister:

Re: Your survey request

At present, our French Immersion Program is up only to Grade 7.  
As such, we will not be able to participate in your Grade 8 study.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Leo P. Whelan  
ST SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

LPW/bc

# **TERRA NOVA CAPE FREELS INTEGRATED SCHOOL BOARD**

**Head Office:** 203 Elizabeth Drive, Gander, NF A1V 1H6  
Phone 709-256-2547/4324 Fax 709-651-3044  
**Badger's Quay Office:** Box 9, Badger's Quay, NF A1G 1B0  
Phone 709-336-2422/3250 Fax 709-536-2397

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January 9, 1990

Ms. Gwen Bannister  
7 East Middle Battery Road  
St. John's, NF  
A1A 1A3

Dear Ms. Bannister:

I hereby confirm that permission is granted you to administer a student questionnaire to the grade eight and late French Immersion students of this school district in your research involving a survey of student attitudes toward their program.

I understand that this study is part of the requirements of your Master's Degree program.

Yours truly,

Jack Wayne  
District Superintendent

JW/fg









