

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY  
CORE FRENCH TEACHERS IN NEWFOUNDLAND  
AND LABRADOR: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY CORE FRENCH TEACHERS IN  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR:**

**A NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**BY**

**E. DENISE MEADE, B.A., B. ED**

**INTERNSHIP RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO  
THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
JUNE 1997**



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## **ABSTRACT**

The internship research project focuses on the professional development needs of elementary Core French Teachers currently employed in Newfoundland and Labrador. A needs analysis was conducted in the form of a self-report questionnaire to identify professional development issues which should be investigated and addressed by the Department of Education, school district boards, the professional association and teaching staff.

The primary conclusions realized upon completion of this project are that a need exists for professional development activities for elementary Core French teachers in this province, and that these needs relate both to teacher proficiency in French and to methodological issues.

The recommendations of Chapter Five, which have their foundation in the literature reviewed and in the data collected, attempt to address the principal conclusions of the project. In addition, the recommendations are meant to include all of the partners in education so that they may work together to enhance the practices of the current teaching force with the aim of improving the Core French education of the province's elementary students.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Peter Senge wrote that the journey is the reward. The past three years during which I have undertaken to complete a Master of Education Degree have, indeed, been a rewarding journey, both personally and professionally. My compass has been held steady with the assistance and encouragement of certain individuals.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador come from a wide variety of backgrounds with regard to their professional training and school settings. While some have highly developed second language skills and extensive second language training, others have only limited skills and training in second language teaching. Implementing professional development activities for such a diverse group becomes a somewhat daunting task. Nevertheless, as the current research on school improvement and staff development indicates, there is a need for inservice activities as well as suggestions as to how teachers can conduct their own professional growth opportunities. As Barth ( 1990) stated: "Probably nothing within a school has more impact on students in terms of skills development, self-confidence or classroom behavior than the personal and professional growth of their teachers." (p.49) This internship then, focuses on the professional development needs of the teachers currently employed in this province to teach elementary Core French.

**1.1****BACKGROUND TO THE INTERNSHIP**

The current elementary Core French curriculum in this province, which has been implemented since the late 1980's, will likely be revised within the next few years. Before undertaking such revisions, the Department of Education has decided to conduct a needs analysis to identify issues which should be investigated and addressed in the next curriculum cycle.

The Department of Education indicated that a significant component of the needs analysis would be a self-report teacher questionnaire. This questionnaire would attempt to elicit information of various types from teachers, including, for example, teacher beliefs about second language learning, teacher practices in the French second language classroom, professional development needs, amount of instructional time devoted to Core French, teacher qualifications, and class size.

For the purpose of this internship, the intern, while working at the Department of Education, has focused on the professional needs of the teachers, which would, in turn, impact on the implementation of a revised curriculum. Loveless (1990) states that the delivery of quality second language courses is dependent in large measure on the availability of suitably qualified teachers and that this has been identified both nationally (LeBlanc, 1988) and provincially (Department of Education, 1986) as a major impediment to the implementation



of Core French programs. Therefore, it stands to reason that before any new curriculum reaches the implementation stage an assessment of the professional development needs of the current teaching force would allow the Department of Education to take action to address these needs.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE INTERNSHIP**

The internship, which took place at the provincial Department of Education, Division of Program Development, Language Programs Section, was intended to provide experience working in a complex educational environment in which interdivisional collaboration is critical. Within this setting, the particular task undertaken on behalf of the Division of Program Development focused on the professional development of elementary Core French teachers.

More specifically, this task involved the development and administration of a questionnaire in which a sample of elementary Core French teachers from across Newfoundland and Labrador were asked to share information on their preservice education, teaching experience, prior involvement in professional development, opinions on necessary minimum teacher qualifications to teach Core French, class size, particular teaching assignments, perceptions about Core

French and opinions about current professional needs. The forum for this task was a questionnaire containing multiple choice and open-ended questions as well as rating scales. (Appendix C)

In conclusion, the primary purpose of the activity undertaken during the internship was to develop and administer a self-report questionnaire to ascertain the professional development needs of elementary Core French teachers.

### **1.3 INTERNSHIP OBJECTIVES**

An internship provides an opportunity to apply theory and knowledge in a real life situation. A major objective of the internship at the Department of Education was to gain practical experience working in a complex educational environment on policy related matters. Through construction and analysis of a teacher questionnaire, and through examination of the teacher data which accompanied the criterion-referenced test administered to the province's Grade 6 Core French students in June 1996, the intern worked with professional staff at the Department of Education to identify current professional development needs of the province's elementary Core French teachers.

Professional staff in the Division of Program Development normally have a work plan for the school year. The intern, like other professional staff, was assigned a specific task - namely, the development and administration of a questionnaire to determine professional development needs of elementary Core French teachers. Once that task was completed, the internship took on a more specific objective. Based on the professional development needs identified from the teacher questionnaire, the intern suggested options (a multi-pronged approach) for the implementation of a professional development program for elementary Core French teachers.

#### **1.4                      SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This internship research study enabled the researcher to identify, for the Department of Education, professional development needs of elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. A needs assessment was conducted whose results serve as the rationale for the ensuing suggestions for implementation of professional development activities.

## **1.5**

### **LIMITATIONS**

Reliability refers to the consistency and precision of the data collection procedure. The data collection procedure utilized for this internship research project was a self-report teacher questionnaire, which may be the first limitation of the research. Questionnaires are generally accurate in the sense that each participant receives the same instrument at approximately the same time. However, the number of completed and returned questionnaires may affect the outcome. It is difficult to ensure 100% completion, even with follow-up, which causes delays in data collection along with a possibly incomplete picture of teacher perception and needs, particularly if the response rate is low. Since answers to the questions contained in the questionnaire are of a personal nature, one must consider the individual situations and perceptions of the respondents, not to mention their attitudes towards the instrument and the amount of time they were willing to commit to its completion. The particular characteristics, then, of teachers who complete the questionnaire, particularly in comparison to those who do not, may influence the findings.

The survey included a sample of the elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The findings do not necessarily apply to every individual elementary Core French teacher in the province.

## 1.6

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Core French:** a program of instruction in which students study the various aspects of French language during a regularly scheduled time slot as is done in other subject areas

**Elementary:** refers to grades 4, 5 and 6

**Professional Development:** For the purpose of this project professional development is defined as continuous education which leads to the professional and personal growth of the teacher. It is the result of a multi-faceted planned process which has been delivered to address specific needs on both a formal and an informal basis. It will be abbreviated PD.

**Rural/Urban:** The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador designates any town with a population greater than 5000 as urban.

**Multi-grade:** any class in which two or more grade levels are taught simultaneously



**CHAPTER TWO**  
**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**2.0****INTRODUCTION**

Since education and schools are dynamic, classroom practices must reflect this constant change and dynamism. Much, though not all, of the literature base for professional development comes from the concept of school wide improvement and theories of action research. This chapter will initially examine definitions of professional development (PD) and review research and theory as well as particular studies related to this area. Subsequently there will be a focus on the professional development of Elementary Core French teachers. Proficiency, communicative competence and the communicative approach to language teaching have implications for the qualifications deemed necessary for a Core French teacher. Since these, in turn, have implications for the type of preservice and inservice training offered to the teachers, these concepts will be examined. Of further importance is the Elementary Core French Program in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is crucial to know and understand what the expectations are for teachers and students involved in the program before planning any type of improvement or enhancement program for them.

## **2.1                      PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A quality professional development (PD) program must have its foundations based on theory and research. Since PD is a complex phenomenon, it has been examined from varying perspectives.

### **2.1.1                      A DEFINITION**

Orlich (1989) maintains that an ideal definition of PD should contain the following four elements: orientation of the training, clientele to be served, agency to be affected and financing of the program. Given these criteria, Orlich's definition of in-service, or PD, is as follows:

Inservice education denotes programs or activities that are based on identified needs; that are collaboratively planned and designed for a specific group of individuals in the school district; that have a very specific set of learning objectives and activities; and that are designed to extend, add, or improve immediate job-oriented skills, competencies, or knowledge with the employer paying the cost. (p.5)

Howell (1996) defines professional development as an ongoing process in which activities are

**designed for the professional and personal growth of teachers and which must be purposeful and be the result of a planned process. The strategies and or the approaches involved will result in some identifiable change in the teachers' knowledge, attitude, and/or skills, which will increase school effectiveness. (p.6)**

**Howell, like Fullan (1993) and Stoll and Fink (1996), describes professional development as needing to serve a variety of teachers and administrators at different levels of instruction and stages of development. Programs must provide a wide variety of subject matter which enables teachers to meet the diverse challenges facing them. Such programs can include credit or non-credit courses, conferences, lectures, workshops, reading, travel, discussions, inservicing, mentoring and peer coaching.**

### **2.1.2      GENERAL RESEARCH AND THEORY ON PD**

**As previously mentioned, a wealth of literature exists on research in the field of professional development both generally for any teacher and specifically for the Core French teacher. Initially, this section will focus on the more generalized research.**

**Small (1985) recognized a general lack of initiative towards continuing**

education and renewal among Albertan teachers due to the failings of previous efforts which had the wrong focus, a lack of organizational support and had been alien to teacher culture. To counteract these shortcomings, Small suggests a multifaceted concept for professional development, with responsibility for PD being assumed and addressed by every agency in the educational system. The second facet in Small's concept is the support structure which would allow opportunities for inservice during periods of need. Small discusses a model in which five-year time blocks are designated as intervals for reflection, review and renewal. Essentially, the goal is to establish an ethos of self-renewal. Teachers would be expected to keep a journal or log which would become a PD dossier. At the end of the five years, this dossier would be used as a point of departure to focus PD for the next five years. A PD team would be assigned to each teacher to help in the planning and evaluation process.

Small concludes that PD conducted with this model would give teachers a sense of ownership in their own learning and teaching practices and PD would no longer be considered as a burden imposed upon them to be conducted outside of their regular teaching day. Teachers with this perspective would, in Small's opinion, be benefitting the students since they would be "nurtured by a more vital and responsive teaching force, able to interpret and cope with the ever changing world." (p. 15)

In a similar vein, Valentine (1992) suggests strongly that

every professional educator should be responsive to the continual need for improving professional competence. Not to make a conscious effort to grow as a professional is to lose ground with respect to one's current knowledge and skill in the profession. To choose not to grow is to regress - and that is inexcusable for a professional. (p. 106)

Valentine notes that, while few teachers consciously reject the opportunity to develop professionally, it is the lack of opportunity to pursue growth that presents the problem. He provides a list of recommendations for enrichment and improvement for all teaching staff, including the promotion of the belief that improvement is an important professional responsibility, creation of a climate receptive to new ideas and knowledge is critical, promotion of an intellectual focus on specific objectives is vital, and positive reinforcement and collegial discussions are essential.

Like Small and Valentine, French (1997) speaks to the lack of initiative on the part of the teachers with respect to the pursuit of PD activities. She, too, relates this to limited and ineffective opportunities for professional growth which are offered in most schools. Conditions in which today's teachers find themselves require sophisticated teacher development and continuous learning. Many factors hinder development, and improving or removing these factors will enhance opportunities for continuing education. In French's estimation a better model for PD is needed, one which should allow individual teachers to critically examine



their own classroom performance and discover ways to improve. This model should be flexible and make provision for feedback and self-evaluation.

One such model discussed by French is the portfolio, in which teachers demonstrate their knowledge and level of practice. They would spend about 120 hours to develop a document which includes student work and videotapes of lessons. Collaboration with peers and personal reflection would be encouraged. Others, such as Blake, et al. (1995) provide further support for the portfolio concept, and describe it as a meaningful way to build confidence, commitment, and enthusiasm among teachers.

Duff, Brown and van Scoy (1995) discuss reflection and self-evaluation as keys to professional development. They provide an example of an evaluation instrument that teachers can use to reflect upon and identify priorities for self improvement. It allows teachers to develop a broad view of teaching as a profession, a productive, self empowering approach for professional growth, a recognition of the balance one must have between work and home lives, a process for ongoing evaluation, meaningful discussions and problem-solving, and most importantly a foundation for mutual trust between administration and teachers. Based on their research, the authors have discovered, as others have, that if students are to be provided a truly developmental environment, everyone, including teachers and administrators, must become involved in self-development

and self-improvement for therein lies the key to true professionalism.

Fullan (1993) describes seven components of what he entitles the "new work of teachers" (p.75). Teachers must commit to making a difference in the lives of their students (moral purpose), continually work towards deepening their pedagogical knowledge, recognize the links between moral purpose at the school level and societal level, interact collegially and productively with colleagues and critical friends of the school, learn to work within new structures, develop habits of continuous inquiry and learning and immerse themselves in the complex dynamics of the change process. Essentially, teachers cannot wait for change to occur. Rather, they must become involved in implementing the process so that learning situations can be improved or enhanced.

Tillema and Imants (1995) state that training can further the professional development of teachers "only if it is compatible with and sensitive to the construct and knowledge base of the teacher and only if it is related to the perceived task of the teacher" (p. 136). To further this type of PD, the authors discuss four models of training, namely (i) training for conceptual change or altering teachers' knowledge base and instructional strategies, (ii) undergoing a cognitively guided training and instruction model, (iii) participation in study groups during which teachers work collegially to generate knowledge and suggestions for practice, and (iv) promoting change in teaching over time, focusing first on

existing beliefs and practices and then altering those which are invalid with appropriate support. Similar types of models are proposed by Yalden (1983).

LePailleur (1996) like other educational researchers, such as Howell (1996) and Stoll and Fink (1996), support improving the opportunities for continuing education and growth for teachers. Teachers should be assisted in their growth by more formal opportunities such as school-based inservice, district-based inservice, ministerial-based inservice and university courses or projects. These activities should encompass reflection on practice, sharing of ideas and knowledge, collaboration, flexibility to accept change and a sense of responsibility for professional growth. Peer interaction activities in which teachers can reflect upon teaching practices and learn with and from others while doing so at their own pace and in accordance with their own interests are also important. Activities can include peer coaching, collaborative planning, school visitation and participation in professional committees and conferences. LePailleur suggests that teachers should also be involved in more informal, individual initiatives which are generated from their own teaching experience and environment. A teacher involved in an individual growth plan might read professional journals, view professional videos, conduct classroom research, analyze current resources, engage in reflection about teaching practices or experiment with new strategies.

LePailleur further notes that facilitation, guidance, counseling, supervision

and planning are all necessary for continuing development and education of teachers. It is important to also consider teacher and school needs, priorities, and short and long term goals. The notion of involving various agencies in teacher PD is reinforced by LePailleur, as is the concept of continuous professional development for the benefit of students as well as the teachers themselves.

McLaughlin (1994) presents a discussion of strategic sites for teachers' PD based on three years of field work in diverse settings. His view reflects that of the other researchers, such as Fullan (1993), in that it, too, is focused on the theory of responsibility for PD lying with all accountable agencies in the educational system. McLaughlin discusses these agencies in terms of different professional communities: professional discourse community at the Department level, professional community at the school level, professional community at the district level and teacher networks and collaboratives. He reflects that the most meaningful professional development takes place within the context of these communities and shows that teachers typically belong to multiple professional communities and can gain different areas of growth and learning from each one if they are fully and effectively developed. Lieberman and McLaughlin, cited in Fullan (1993), describe the professional communities as networks and imply that it might be the role of teacher unions to establish these networks and to destroy existing barriers for teachers so that a community of teacher-learners can be built.

Howell (1996) supports this position as he describes the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union as being responsible for inservice and providing financial aid for a variety of initiatives. The school boards have as their responsibility to recognize the PD of teachers as a priority item and to consider innovative ways to ensure the delivery and coordination of PD services despite downsizing and fiscal restraints.

Stoll and Fink (1996) invite readers to consider PD, as French (1997) has, as a continuum rather than as a one shot deal. To facilitate this paradigm shift, Stoll and Fnk iterate that teacher learning is crucial to pupil learning and that consideration must be accorded to adult learning theory. Age, gender, career and development stages are all important factors but, equally as important as all of these is the fact that, just as no two individuals are alike, no two teachers are alike. This has important implications for PD activities. Adult learners are self-directed, bring their own experiences, go through transitional phases, learn for specific purposes and are problem centered. Opportunities for PD activities should incorporate and provide for these characteristics.

According to Mullins (1994), in his discussion of preparation of a needs assessment and a staff development program, the most important factor in providing a program is to ensure that it is appropriate to everyone who is expected to be involved. Thus, a needs assessment should be conducted before professional development begins. According to Mullins, the following should be

considered when planning professional activities for teachers:

- ◆ program participants are respected
- ◆ participants are involved as active collaborators
- ◆ program makes good use of prior experience of participants
- ◆ program fosters active participation in the learning processes
- ◆ problem solving is encouraged
- ◆ emphasis is placed on an immediate application of concepts
- ◆ stress is placed on the importance of internal motivation for mastering concepts
- ◆ program responds to needs for professional growth and development

Guskey (1995) proposes to educators several guidelines for providing successful PD:

- ◆ the processes must be relevant to teachers and directly address their needs
- ◆ it must be recognized that change is both individual and organizational
- ◆ change must be approached gradually
- ◆ teamwork helps to maintain support and to share perspectives and responsibilities
- ◆ procedures for effective feedback and continuous follow-up must be included
- ◆ innovations should be integrated to collectively address perceived needs

Similar guidelines can be found emanating from research by Korineck and Schmid (1985) and Miller and Sellers (1985), both cited in Loveless (1990).

Fullan (1993) provides guidelines for teachers, principals and faculties of education with respect to PD. Teachers are advised to locate, listen to and articulate their inner voice, practice reflection, develop a risk-taking mentality, trust, appreciate and commit to working with others, seek variety and avoid balkanization, balance work and life, push and support leaders, commit to



lifelong learning and improvement, and monitor the connection between teacher-student development. Furthermore, principals should understand the culture, value the teachers and promote their growth, extend and express what they value, promote collaboration rather than cooperation, make menus not mandates, use bureaucratic means to facilitate not constrain, and connect with the wider environment.

According to Spiegel (1996) quality inservices result from communication among administrators, educators and presenters and depend upon the knowledge and needs of these groups. Spiegel addresses some common problems such as planning inservice without input from the intended audience, attempting to accomplish complex goals in one session, failing to provide continuous follow-up and guidance, and failing to commit to the ideas or plans discussed. Spiegel offers the following as examples of effective inservice: conference-style inservices in which people can choose from a selection of sessions, round-table discussions, attending or presenting at a professional conference, content-oriented sessions and planning with administrators prior to inservice. The concluding remark is that inservices should be seen as a way of providing knowledge and expertise to teachers and that, if one considers both the benefits and limitations while planning, the inservice will likely be successful.

In their synthesis of research on professional development, Showers, Joyce and Bennett (1987) and Shroyer (1990) conclude that teacher PD must be viewed as a planned, ongoing, developmental process, must have short, medium and long-term goals which support both personal and professional development, must involve participants in all phases of the program, and must have administrative support, including incentives. These writers, as well as others, such as Castetter (1986), suggest that divergent approaches are needed for teacher PD.

### **2.1.3 PD RESEARCH AND THEORY SPECIFIC TO CORE FRENCH**

The ideas and beliefs discussed in the previous section reflect a more general approach to understanding what is necessary for providing effective PD for teachers. These need to be reflected in PD initiatives intended specifically for second language teachers.

The report of the Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs (1986), which was established to advise the Minister of Education on matters relating to teaching French, indicates that one of the major challenges facing school boards in Newfoundland and Labrador is finding appropriately qualified staff at the elementary level to teach Core French. To counteract this problem, the Committee recommended that the Department of Education develop a policy for

the training and retraining of teachers involved in French programs, one which would incorporate knowledge of the language, oral fluency, a period of study in a French milieu, and appropriate training in methodology. Furthermore the report states that consideration should be given to varying the required levels of teacher second language competence according to the grade levels to be taught by the individual teacher. These types of information would be collected through a needs assessment prior to any PD planning.

Legutke and Thomas (1991), in discussing ongoing second language teacher education, outline roles that such teachers fulfill in the PD process. The teacher may serve as a coordinator and facilitator, a manager and an organizer, an instructor and an investigator and researcher. Emphasis should be placed on determining strengths and weaknesses and then to working together with colleagues and trainers to make improvements. According to Legutke and Thomas, teacher education is changing from being a hierarchical transmission of information to becoming a heterarchical relationship in which teachers become self-directing researchers of their own work.

Ullmann and Hainsworth (1991) also discuss both preservice and inservice education for French Second Language (FSL) teachers. In their opinion, teachers need a broad knowledge base as well as specific subject matter expertise. They are of the opinion that effective inservice should deal with current pedagogical

concerns such as mixed grades, streaming by ability and the treatment of individual differences. In addition quality inservice should also upgrade FSL teacher competencies in the areas of language proficiency and cultural awareness. Also suggested is self-directed professional development which, they add, requires long-term inservice support.

Lapkin, Harley and Taylor (1993) identify five essential components of a second language preservice or inservice program emerging in the literature. The components include a general knowledge of pedagogy, development of language skills, knowledge about the French language and culture, pedagogical techniques specific to second language teaching and a knowledge about bilingual education, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. The authors conclude that unprecedented demands are being made on the skills and knowledge of teachers. In conclusion, it is suggested that approaches be found to address methodological issues, convey research information to the teachers and make modifications to the teaching/learning process. Further, the importance of collaboration by all people involved in teacher education is once again highlighted.

Chapter 8 of the National Core French Study: A synthesis (1990) discusses teacher training, including PD. At the completion of the study recommendations are made for both preservice and inservice education of Core French teachers.

- ♦ In the context of preservice training, the French Second Language (FSL) teacher must receive a solid general pedagogical training to acquire basic

principles which will permit him to see connections between changes which will surely occur during his career.

- ◆ The FSL teacher must have a thorough knowledge of French so that he can assume his role as a language model for students.
- ◆ The FSL teacher must have a solid knowledge of the target culture to be able to interpret messages correctly in terms of the social, esthetic and ideological dimensions that underline them. French cannot be reduced to translated English
- ◆ Beyond current knowledge of language the FSL teacher must also be a specialist in content, that is be able to reflect on his knowledge of language, culture, experience and general language education. In other words, he must master his subject.
- ◆ The FSL teacher must have a sufficient understanding of language learning/acquisition processes so as to be able to correctly interpret what is happening in the classroom and make the right choices in teaching.
- ◆ The FSL teacher must know the main learning strategies and the effects of their application.
- ◆ The FSL teacher must have a sound knowledge of the nature of authentic communication and its possibilities in the classroom.
- ◆ The FSL teacher must master techniques and approaches related to experiential and analytical approaches and to "objectivation".
- ◆ The FSL teacher must learn to promote the active participation of the student in all kinds of activities and responsibility on the part of the student for his own learning.
- ◆ The currently employed FSL teacher must have at his disposal at the school board or ministry level, an integrated system of PD which will meet perceived or known needs.
- ◆ Among the means that should be available to the FSL teacher to improve training are a) training sessions led by teacher trainers up-to-date on the new approaches, b) self-directed training sessions with the help of support

materials, c) structured experiences of peer training, d) exchange programs and e) bursary programs for extended stays in francophone environments

- ◆ It should finally be obvious that assistance in professional development necessarily includes availability of relevant and effective classroom materials including reference materials.

(pp. 92-96)

Tremblay, Duplantie and Huot (1990) discuss performance requirements of FSL teachers in terms of classroom management skills, having the ability to act as a resource person for the students, being able to challenge students with the comprehensible input formula:  $\text{Input} + 1$  ( Krashen 1981) and possessing competent teaching skills in accordance with the communicative/experiential syllabus. In order to achieve one's maximum potential as a FSL teacher the authors propose self-directed PD modules that practicing teachers can employ alone, or with a resource person, to help in the transition towards teaching within the communicative/experiential syllabus. These modules would (i) allow teachers to become involved in their own PD to ensure ownership, to take the initiative in pedagogic planning and action, (ii) provide for individual differences and needs, (iii) guide teachers in the processes of critical inquiry and informed practice, (iv) be structured to reflect the nature of experiential learning, (v) offer a series of graded tasks and (vi) finally they would allow teachers to learn from their own errors.

Ullmann (1991) discusses collaborative observation research as a PD

opportunity for Core French teachers. Essentially, this type of activity involves teachers, administrators and researchers who become active partners in promoting professional growth and program improvement. Once the period of observation is completed by a two-person team, the team members compare their evaluation and then invite the teachers to have input. The teacher input is believed to have an empowering effect since the teacher is given opportunities to expand his or her view of current teaching practices, to comment on future trends for developing the program and to share views about Core French in general.

Rehorick and Edwards (1995) support continuing education for FSL teachers, and in particular, self-directed PD. They remind teachers that it is important to take risks towards new paradigms, to talk to colleagues about teaching and learning, to experiment with new techniques, and to develop a personal PD plan. They suggest that reading professional journals is a flexible approach to accomplishing these ends.

Tremblay (1996) puts forth a strong argument for using the Internet as a form of support and guidance for self-directed PD initiatives. Teachers can use the Net to participate in structured PD activities, to collect information about different aspects of teaching and learning or culture, and establish collegial relationships. As well, there are courses available via the Net. In addition, it can serve as a



supplementary support network for distance education courses. This is particularly helpful for those teachers who feel isolated from their peers due to geographical location.

It is apparent that several common threads are woven throughout all the literature on the professional development of teachers in general and of Core French teachers specifically. These need to be reflected in the ongoing professional development activities in which teachers participate. Furthermore, it is imperative that both teachers and educational organizations become involved in continuous growth.

#### **2.1.4      RESEARCH INITIATIVES IN FRENCH TEACHER PD**

Roinsol (1988) conducted a survey of Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador to gauge their pre-service training needs and their professional development needs based on their current qualifications. As a result of the data analysis, strategies are suggested that would enhance or improve qualifications of the province's Core French teachers. The first strategy is to have every teacher possess the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts in French and a Bachelor of Education. Secondly, a suggestion is made to Memorial University to place more emphasis on oral communication in its French language programs

and endeavor to offer more off campus and evening courses in French language. Roinsol feels that the University, the Department of Education and the school boards must collaborate to ensure that the province's teachers receive inservice on the most current methodology and resources. She also suggests that the teachers be trained to facilitate inservice especially in cases of smaller, isolated areas. The maintenance and enhancement of current initiatives such as mini-courses, information sessions, quasi-French immersion, and French immersion are also mentioned.

With regard to individual development Roinsol envisions schools where teachers work on individual professional development plans in conjunction with the District French Coordinator. She suggests that, where possible, Core French be taught by the one teacher with the most qualifications. Further, she is in agreement with the threat of job-loss if one does not attempt to improve one's qualifications to teach French. Alternatively, it is suggested that various educational agencies should collaborate to provide teachers with the necessary funding and leave in order to participate in professional development activities. Roinsol suggests that the Department of Education establish a set of criteria of competence for core French teachers and upon attainment of these criteria the teachers would be issued a certificate of competence.

Day and Shapson (1992) conducted a National survey of French Immersion

teachers' preparation and professional development needs. The authors remind the readers from the beginning that most inservice initiatives in education generally fall short, mainly because they are delivered as one-shot workshops, often based on topics not selected by the teachers for whom they are intended, with follow-up rarely provided. They suggest reversing the factors that have caused inservice efforts in the past to fail. In order to develop an effective approach they advocate drawing upon research in second language learning, practical experience from over 25 years of immersion teaching and the work of the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers and other educators.

One of the more important themes emanating from the research, according to Day and Shapson, is that of interactive professionalism where teachers collaborate with each other, reflect upon their experience, make personal inquiries and draw upon outside resources such as universities, school districts, teacher associations and departments of education. They indicate the value of conceptualizing teacher development as a life long process and viewing inservice education as occurring through a broad and continuous range of activities.

Their study indicates that workshop participation is the most frequent form of professional development. However, the activities rated as most important for professional development in immersion were collaborative planning, working or

teaching in the school, district or province, workshop in the district or at a conference, mini course or intensive immersion course, and implementation of a new curriculum.

In keeping with the belief that all agencies are responsible for the PD of teachers, Hooper (1993) conducted a study of the Modern Languages Council (MLC), a special interest council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA), to record its development and to determine its role in the lives of French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. In terms of its contribution to French teacher professional growth, findings indicate that 50% of respondents believe the MLC to play an important role but that it is an organization which has yet to impact on their professional lives in a major way. Hooper concludes that the MLC is

responsible for bringing together teachers from across the province and special guests from across the country. This has enhanced the quality of French teaching. The MLC has served as a lobby group for the strengthening of French programs in the province's curriculum, and been a source of information on trends and resources. (p. 108)

Hooper comments further that despite these accomplishments, many teachers have not been involved with or feel that they have not benefitted from the efforts of the MLC. It is her recommendation that efforts be made by the MLC to remedy this.

Flewelling (1995) focused on the proficiency of French Second Language

(FLS) teachers in Ontario. Two separate questionnaires were prepared, one for first year teachers and one for teachers with more than one year of experience. In all, 117 experienced teachers and 47 first year teachers were surveyed. The data indicated a concern for the lack of opportunity to maintain proficiency as well as a concern for inadequacies related to inservice courses offered by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Flewelling suggests five possible solutions to this professional development problem. All Ministries of Education should provide an inservice course designed to be completed several times during a FSL teacher's career that would help maintain and improve language skills, cultural awareness and pedagogical qualifications, offer a course specifically designed to train FSL teachers to teach in the immersion program, make a bursary available to teachers wanting to take FSL upgrading courses in their own provinces, and publish an annual report outlining which courses designed to help FSL teachers improve their pedagogical and language skills will be offered each summer and where they will be offered.

Again, the common threads appearing in the research are collaboration, training, strong support structures, initiative, innovations and system wide responsibility.

**2.1.5****CONCLUSION**

The opportunities that teachers require for continuing education and professional growth, according to the research, have not always been forthcoming and many of those which have been conducted have been somewhat ineffective. Recent literature on teacher PD promotes a multi-faceted approach to this critical activity. While FSL teachers require some specific types of emphases with regard to ongoing PD, the qualities of effective PD generally apply to all teachers, including those who teach a second language.

**2.2****SECOND LANGUAGE THEORY AND PEDAGOGY**

As previously indicated, effective teacher PD must incorporate, among other things, the instructional approaches expected of the teacher. Instructional approaches in FSL programs are grounded in the theory on which the programs are designed. Today's teachers are expected to follow a communicative approach in the FSL classroom to promote student proficiency in the target language.

**2.2.1****PROFICIENCY**

One of the primary purposes of teaching Core French is to develop proficiency in the target language. Ellis (1994) states that proficiency has been conceptualized in different ways by different researchers. Some have considered proficiency in terms of the abilities of the language learner, while others have related proficiency to actual performance in the target language.

Clark (1972), (cited in Richards, 1985), suggests that "proficiency is the learner's ability to use language for real-life purposes without regard to the manner in which that competence was acquired." (p. 145) Savignon (1983) simply writes that proficiency is the abilities required to use the language, while Archibald and Libben (1995) consider proficiency in terms of what the learner can do.

Cummins (1983), (cited in Ellis, 1994), suggests that language proficiency can be conceptualized along two interactive continua, one that relates to coping within the different interpersonal communication contexts (use), and the other that concerns the cognitive demand placed upon the interlocutor in order to effectively communicate a message (ability).

According to Stern (1983), proficiency is the actual performance of a learner which he considers as a goal that can be defined in terms of objectives or

standards. For Stern, a language learner has achieved proficiency if evidence exists of

1. the intuitive mastery of the forms of the language,
2. the intuitive mastery of the linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural meanings expressed by the language,
3. the capacity to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form, and
4. the creativity of language use. (p.346)

Proficiency, then, is a critical element for effective communication in a second language.

### **2.2.2 COMMUNICATION**

Canale (1983), cited in Richards and Schmidt (1983), defines communication as the

exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual modes, and production and comprehension processes. (p.4)

Richards and Schmidt (1983) cite Morrow (1977), Widdowson (1978) and Breen and Candlin (1980) who attribute to communication a number of characteristics. For them, communication

♦ is a form of social interaction



- ♦ involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message
- ♦ takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts is conducted under limiting psychological and environmental conditions always has a purpose involves authentic language
- ♦ is judged in terms of success on the basis of actual outcomes.

### **2.2.3 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

The expression communicative competence, introduced by Hymes (1972), was founded in social theory and ethnographic practice. It took issue with Chomsky's (cited in Germain, 1991) earlier theory of linguistic competence which involved the comprehension and production of the target language in linguistic, or grammatical, terms only. Chomsky (1965), (cited in Ellis, 1994), declares that

competence consists of the mental representations of linguistic rules that constitute the speaker-learner's internal grammar. This grammar is implicit rather than explicit and is evident in the intuitions which the speaker-learner has about the grammaticality of sentences. Performance consists of the use of this grammar in the comprehension and production of language. (p. 12-13)

Hymes, however, views communicative competence as "the intuitive mastery that the native speaker possesses to use and interpret language appropriately in the process of interaction and in relation to social context." (Stern, 1983, p.229) Richards (1985) interprets Hymes' term communicative competence as referring

to knowledge of both rules of grammar, vocabulary and semantics, and rules of speaking. However, Richards (1985) is satisfied with neither the Chomskyan paradigm of competence nor the Hymes paradigm. Rather, he iterates that a psycholinguistic, or performance-oriented, perspective is necessary.

Widdowson (cited in Germain, 1991) states that to know a language is not just to have acquired the skills of comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in that language. It must include knowing how to use the language appropriately in a communicative situation.

Savignon (1983) defines communicative competence as

functional language proficiency; the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons... or between one person and a written or an oral text. (p.303)

Savignon further characterizes communicative competence as follows:

1. It is a dynamic concept which depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons.
2. It applies to both written and spoken language.
3. It is context specific and requires making appropriate choices of register and style in terms of the situation and participants.
4. Competence is knowledge and performance is action. Since only performance is observable, it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated.
5. It is relative and depends on the cooperation of all participants. (p. 8-9)

According to Ellis (1994) communicative competence "consists of the knowledge that users of a language have internalized to enable them to

understand and produce messages in the language." (p. 696)

The communicative competence construct described by Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980) includes four main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence includes knowledge of lexical items, morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology. Sociolinguistic competence incorporates contextual factors (topic, setting, role of participants) and appropriate register. Discourse competence involves cohesion and coherence of utterances. Strategic competence refers to the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used to compensate for breakdown in communications ,e.g., gestures and paraphrasing.

According to Bachman (1990), communicative competence has three main components each containing different aspects of proficiency, namely:

1. *Language Competence* (organizational competence, grammatical competence, textual competence, and pragmatic competence);
2. *Strategic Competence* (paraphrase, borrowing, appeal to authority, mime, and avoidance); and
3. *Psychophysica/ Mechanisms* (neurological abilities, auditory abilities, and articulatory abilities).

Archibald and Libben (1995) add two more components to Bachman's (1990) model, namely rules of conversation and nonverbal communication.

Finally, a number of researchers have distinguished the notions of communicative competence and performance. Campbell and Wales (1970),

Hymes (1972) (cited in Canale and Swain. 1980), and Ellis (1994) distinguish between communicative competence and communicative performance stating that competence includes linguistic and pragmatic knowledge whereas performance is the actual use of these two constructs.

#### **2.2.4                    THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH**

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (1985) document *l'Approche communicative: a teaching guide for French as a Second Language* outlines nine principles, enunciated earlier by writers such as Stern (1983), Germain and LeBlanc (1982), Savignon (1983), and Kramsch (1984), that teachers should incorporate into the teaching of Core French.

- ◆ Language learning is regarded as more effective when students use the language for a purpose.
- ◆ In communicative activities the focus is on the use of language for communication rather than on the study of rules and structures.
- ◆ A communicative approach takes into account the learner's language needs, abilities and interests. Communication must be realistic and meaningful to the student.
- ◆ Student comprehension is a primary consideration in communicative activities; it precedes production and exceeds it as well.
- ◆ Students must initiate as well as respond in communicative activities. Communicative activities are centered on a theme.
- ◆ Students must be provided with sufficient vocabulary to cope with each activity.
- ◆ In communicative activities the focus is on the messages given and received rather than on the linguistic forms.
- ◆ In communicative activities the direct correction of speech errors is not

effective and can be harmful to student progress.

These principles provide the basis for the current elementary Core French curriculum in this province.

### **2.3**

### **CONCLUSION**

The literature reviewed over the course of this internship has not only provided insightful information related to professional development theory and research, but has allowed an in-depth study of qualifications and characteristics of a professional educator as well. Obviously, professional development and continuing education are essential components of this professionalism. In addition, fundamental theories of second language teaching and pedagogy have allowed reflection about the knowledge base required in order to be an effective Core French teacher.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

The current elementary Core French Program is nearing the end of its cycle. Soon, the Department of Education will endeavor to revise this curriculum to better meet the needs of students and teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Loveless (1990) indicates that a number of teachers of elementary Core French in this province lack the requisite linguistic and methodological training to teach the French Second Language (FLS) program. While many FSL teachers have a minimal linguistic and pedagogical background to teach Core French, others have strong backgrounds. Consequently, the province employs a highly variable teaching force with a variety of professional development needs.

In preparation for the next curriculum cycle for Core French, the Department of Education felt it was necessary to administer a questionnaire to be completed by a sample of the province's elementary Core French teachers to determine the specific needs of the teachers so that effective strategies for professional development could be developed.

The specific project assigned by the Department of Education to the intern was the design, administration and analysis of a self-report questionnaire which was to be complemented by an analysis of data already in existence, namely the results of the Grade 6 Core French CRT. This chapter describes the procedures

and processes used to plan, develop, administer and analyze the questionnaire.

### **3.1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

To identify the current professional development needs of the elementary Core French teachers in this province, a self-report questionnaire was administered to teachers in one third of the elementary schools in the province which offer Core French to their students. Each teacher selected to participate in the study was informed of the purpose of the study and then invited to voluntarily complete the questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided within the time frame indicated. (Appendices C and D) It was anticipated that on the average it would take an individual approximately thirty minutes to complete the entire questionnaire. Upon the return of the completed questionnaires the results were analyzed and suggestions for PD activities which could meet the identified needs were proposed. A letter of thanks was subsequently mailed directly to each respondent. (Appendix E)

### **3.2 INSTRUMENTATION**

The first task of the internship was to prepare the needs assessment



instrument. Orlich (1989) suggests various methods, along with advantages and disadvantages of each, by which to assess needs. From his list the questionnaire/survey method was chosen. Among the advantages of this method that were carefully considered for this project is the fact that many individuals can be contacted simultaneously, questionnaires are less expensive to administer than conducting personal interviews, each respondent receives the same questions and can answer without fear of ridicule or embarrassment, responses are generally easy to tabulate and uniform data are gathered. Another of Orlich's (1989) considerations was the timing since the months of September, December, January, May and June have proven to be very poor times to send questionnaires.

Orlich notes that for every advantage of a particular research instrument (e.g., a questionnaire) there is a disadvantage, and consideration was given to these. When employing a questionnaire the investigator is prevented from discovering the respondents' individual motivation for answering the questions, respondents may be limited in their expression of opinions owing to design, it is unusual that all questionnaires are completed and returned, and the sample may not be representative of the whole population which, in turn, can contribute to biased results.

The professional staff of consultants and analysts in the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning provided assistance in suggesting a format for

the questionnaire and procedures for its construction. Different types of questions such as multiple choice, Likert scales and open-ended questions were considered. In addition, it was suggested that a format using a machine-scoreable answer sheet might be appropriate. However, subsequently it was decided to continue in a more qualitative nature and employ DATABASE IV software to compile and analyze the data.

Much assistance was obtained from the Manager and Program Development Specialists in the Language Programs Section in preparing the questions which appeared in the questionnaire. Many meetings and impromptu conversations provided the researcher with much direction and, based on their knowledge and prior experience, the Program Development Specialists were able to contribute information and ideas which facilitated the preparation of the questionnaire.

Other aids to the preparation of the questionnaire included instruments previously developed for Core French studies and research literature on teacher PD and Core French in general.

The development of the questionnaire to be used in the needs assessment of the elementary Core French teachers took approximately five weeks. As previously mentioned, literature and other questionnaires were reviewed and interviews with the Manager and Program Specialists of the Language Programs

Section of the Department of Education were conducted to determine content. Questions were developed and revised to ensure that the answers would provide the information required by the Department of Education. Due to time constraints of the internship period, there was to be no piloting of the questionnaire so its validity was crucial from the onset. The Program Development Specialists and Manager reviewed the syntax and logistics as well as the suggested answers to the multiple choice section to ensure clarity and brevity and identify any possible problems.

The needs assessment questionnaire (Appendix D) was designed to be administered by mail, contained several types of questions, including multiple choice answers and Likert-style rating scales, and was divided into four sections. The first contained questions pertaining to the backgrounds of the individual teachers such as their teaching experience, level of certification, focus of university education, language proficiency, class groupings and size, type of school, and time and teacher allotments for Core French. Section B inquired about the prior PD experiences of the teachers and asked them to assess their future needs. In addition, teachers were asked their opinions about the minimum qualifications necessary to teach Core French, to provide the names of any professional organizations in which they might be involved and to state their preference for the type of role they prefer to play during a PD activity. The third

section solicited information about teacher beliefs on second language learning, the Core French Program and the communicative approach to FSL teaching while Section D asked them to reflect upon their practices in relation to their beliefs. In total, the questionnaire contained 43 items.

### **3.3 THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Once the questionnaire was finalized and approved, the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning was again contacted to help determine the sample size to be surveyed. The population of interest is every teacher of elementary Core French in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Because, as Mansfield (1986) iterates, a more precise estimate can often be obtained from a sample of a given size if stratified random sampling is used rather than simple random sampling, the population was subdivided into two strata: *rural* schools and *urban* schools. From these two strata two subsets were created: *single grade* and *multi-grade* schools. It is important that the different characteristics of the province's schools be represented so that the results obtained reflect the entire population and can be generalized. Since each school in the province falls into these strata and subsets, every school had an equal opportunity

to be selected from the random sampling procedure conducted within the stratification.

From the database collected annually by the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning, the current educational statistics, appropriate to this study, were made available to the researcher. From the database relevant information was collected.

- ◆ Of the 310 elementary schools in the province, including all-grade schools,
- ◆ 272 offer Core French to their students.
- ◆ 68 percent of the province's schools are rural while urban schools make up the remaining 32 percent.
- ◆ Of the 186 rural schools, 120 offer single grade classes while 66 have multi-grade classes.
- ◆ Of the 86 urban schools only 8 fall into the multi-grade category.

To identify a multi-grade school, the assumption was made that if a school offers a higher number of grades than there are teachers in the school, multi-grading has to occur.

From discussions with the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning, it was decided to sample one third of the total school population, i.e., 90 schools. The teacher population itself was difficult to sample from the information contained in the database since not all indicated French in their responsibilities and some records were incomplete. In cases where a school was selected and a

FSL teacher's name did not automatically accompany the school name, the questionnaire was mailed to the school directly. The principal was then asked to provide it to the appropriate teacher.

The allocation of schools to each of the strata was made proportionally in that the sample size in each stratum and subset was proportional to the total number of schools contained in the stratum and subset. From the rural/single category, 40 schools were randomly selected and from the rural/multi category 21 schools were selected. Three schools were selected from the urban/multi category while 26 came from the urban/single category.

The names of the teachers and their school addresses were identified and permission was sought and received from the ten school districts to allow their teachers to participate in the project should they agree to do so. (Appendix B) Receiving consent forms from the school districts took a little longer than anticipated because during the same time period the districts were undergoing major reorganization. However, all school districts gave permission to have the questionnaire administered in their schools.

### **3.4                    CORE FRENCH CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST**

The results of the Core French CRT of June 1996 were also analyzed and, along with the report from the teacher questionnaire portion of the CRT, were used to complement the data retrieved from the questionnaire administered for this study in an attempt to determine whether the areas identified by teachers as needing PD matched the areas of teaching needing improvement as determined by the CRT.

### **3.5                    DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE**

As the completed questionnaires were returned the data was entered into a Database file. Each variable from the questionnaire was coded with a name using eight characters which were used as field names. Each response to the closed-ended items was entered numerically into a character field. Open-ended questions were entered into a memo field.

Upon completion of the data entry of the 60 questionnaires, analysis of the closed-ended questions was performed, using a Database program written by the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning, which printed the frequency on

each of the variables in relation to the 60 respondents, as well as its percentage in relation to the total response out of 100 percent. All written comments to the open-ended questions were content - analyzed and summarized accordingly. The data is reported and analyzed according to the sections A, B, C and D which originated from the questionnaire.

### **3.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the problem identified above, more specifically that there are a variety of professional development needs to be addressed, answers to the questions which follow were sought through analysis of the responses to the teacher questionnaire developed specifically for this study along with an analysis of responses to the teacher questionnaire which accompanied the Grade 6 Core French CRT.

- ◆ What type of background do Elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador possess?
- ◆ What professional development experiences have the teachers acquired?
- ◆ What professional development experience would the teachers like to acquire? What are teachers' beliefs about the various aspects of the Core



**French program?**

- **What are teachers' practices in relation to these beliefs?**
- ◆ **What did teachers report on the Core French CRT teacher questionnaire as areas of strength and weakness in the program and how might this impact upon the type of PD requested by them?**

**The findings were used to propose professional development strategies to better prepare elementary Core French teachers for the teaching of FSL.**

### **3.7 SUMMARY OF THE INTERNSHIP AND RESEARCH STUDY**

**There is an abundance of experience and knowledge at the Department of Education which facilitated the process and product of this research project. While, organizationally, the Department of Education has a number of Divisions and Sections with distinct responsibilities, this project, like similar projects headed by the Department, required interdivisional cooperation, particularly between the Division of Evaluation, Research and Planning and the Division of Program Development, Language Programs Section. Even though the Department has distinct divisions, experts from each Division/Section depend upon each other for various perspectives and knowledge when undertaking complex tasks. This type**

of interdivisional collaboration was an essential component of the internship experience.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

## 4.0

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the data provided by the sixty completed self-report teacher questionnaires. The data is presented and analyzed section by section, thereby leading to answers to each research question.

## 4.1

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA: SECTION "A"**

### 4.1.1

### Section "A" Data

**SECTION "A" of the elementary Core French teachers' needs assessment questionnaire provides data related to the first research question which asked teachers to supply their background information.**

The overall response rate to the questionnaire was 66%. In the rural/single grade category 67.5% of the teachers responded and in the rural/multi-grade category 71.4% returned their questionnaires. One out of the sample of three in

the urban/multi-grade category returned a questionnaire while 61.5% of the teachers selected in the urban/single grade category responded. All but one school district was represented by the returned questionnaires. Of the sixty respondents, there were forty-one females and nineteen males. In the original stratified sample, two thirds of the sample population were female.

Item three asked teachers to indicate their years of teaching experience. The responses are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Years of Teaching Experience		
NUMBER OF YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
less than 7 years	16	26.7
7-15 years	15	25.0
16-23 years	13	21.7
23 or more years	16	26.7

As Table 1 indicates, the teachers included in this sample varied considerably in their teaching experience. In addition, the number of teachers represented in each age category is similar.

Teachers were also asked to indicate their current teaching certificate level. The responses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Level of Certification		
CERTIFICATE LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>below certificate 5</i>	2	3.3
<i>certificate 5</i>	25	41.7
<i>certificate 6</i>	22	36.7
<i>certificate 7</i>	11	18.3

From Table 2, we see that the respondents have generally high academic qualifications, with all except two having at least a Teaching Certificate Five.

Item five asked teachers to indicate whether they were trained as primary, elementary, or secondary teachers. Table 3 indicates the number of teachers who were trained at each of the three levels.

Table 3 Focus of Education Methods Courses		
LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>primary</i>	6	10.0
<i>elementary</i>	30	50.0
<i>secondary</i>	20	33.3
<i>other</i>	4	6.7

From Table 3 it is apparent that fifty percent of respondents teaching elementary Core French have been educated in elementary methods. In the *other* category, the methods courses were listed as college, Special Education, Music (P/E/S) and

### Bachelor of Physical Education.

Respondents were also asked how many semester courses in the French language they had completed from the French Department of a university. The results are summarized in Table 4.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Semester Courses in French Language</b>		
<b>NUMBER OF COURSES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
0 courses	0	0.0
1-3 courses	5	8.3
4-6 courses	17	28.3
7-9 courses	11	18.3
9 or more courses	27	45.0

The results indicate that all of the elementary Core French teachers included in the sample have studied some French courses; the vast majority (91.6%) have studied more than three.

The questionnaire also asked teachers to indicate the amount of time they had spent studying, or living, in a French milieu, with the results as shown in Table 5.



Table 5 Total Time Spent in A French Milieu		
PERIODS OF TIME	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
none	4	6.7
1-3 weeks	2	3.3
3-6 weeks	13	21.7
several months	26	43.3
one year	5	8.3
more than one year	10	16.7

As Table 5 indicates, the vast majority of respondents report having spent some time in a French milieu. A majority, 68.3 percent, indicated that their period of stay ranged from several months to more than a year.

When respondents were asked to report the most recent year in which they had completed a French course or had lived in a French milieu, the years indicated as the most recent by twelve of the twenty teachers who responded were 1995 and 1996. The years 1994, 1993, 1991 and 1988 each had one participant from this sample, while two participants reported 1985 and two others 1984.

The questionnaire also asked teachers to report the number of university semester courses in French education that they had completed. The responses are shown in Table 6.



Table 6 French Education Methods Courses		
NUMBER OF COURSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
0 courses	22	36.7
1 course	13	21.7
2 courses	10	16.7
3 or more courses	15	25.0

Despite the fact that many teachers indicated having acquired French language skills, through courses or immersion, a high number indicate that they have never completed a course in methodology of second language teaching. However, one quarter of the respondents reportedly have completed three or more methodology courses.

Of the respondents who have completed French education methods courses, Table 7 indicates how long ago they had been completed.

Table 7 Length of Time Since French Methods Courses Were Completed		
NUMBER OF YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
less than 3 years ago	10	16.7
3-6 years ago	7	11.7
7-10 years ago	9	15.0
more than 10 years ago	11	18.3
not applicable	23	38.3

As Table 7 indicates, of the 37 respondents who had completed courses in the teaching of Core French, 17 had completed their courses within the last six years while 20 had completed their courses seven or more years ago.

When respondents were asked to report the number of years that they have been teaching elementary Core French, they provided the responses shown in Table 8.

<b>Table 8</b> <b>Years Teaching Elementary Core French</b>		
<b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>1-5 years</b>	22	36.7
<b>6-10 years</b>	16	26.7
<b>11-15 years</b>	7	11.7
<b>15 or more years</b>	15	25.0

From Table 8 it can be observed that 36.7% of the respondents had only one to five years of experience in teaching Core French. However, in general, teachers have considerable experience in this subject area.

The questionnaire also asked teachers to report the grade levels at which they had previously taught Core French. Table 9 indicates their experience.

Table 9 Prior Core French Teaching Experience		
GRADE LEVELS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
grades 4-6	23	38.3
grades 4-6 and any of grades 7-9	16	26.7
grades 4-12	15	25.0
other	6	10.0

From Table 9 we observe that not only have the teachers in this sample had considerable experience in teaching Core French, but they have also had a variety of experience teaching that subject at the various grade levels. The six respondents who answered *other* indicated that they had taught at the primary level from Kindergarten to Grade Three in addition to the grades indicated above.

In addition, teachers reported their current teaching assignments for elementary Core French, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Current Teaching Assignments For Core French		
GRADE LEVELS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Grade 4	11	18.3
Grade 5	2	3.3
Grade 6	4	6.7
a combination of the above grade levels	43	71.7



A large majority of teachers, 71.7%, teach Core French in more than one grade. When asked to describe the type of class groupings in which they teach Core French, the teachers provided the information included in Table 11.

Table 11 Core French Class Groupings		
GROUPS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>single class</i>	43	71.7
<i>multi-class 4 and 5</i>	2	3.3
<i>multi-class 5 and 6</i>	1	1.7
<i>other</i>	13	21.7

The data noted in Table 11 indicates that the total number of single grade classes for this sample far surpasses the number of multi-grade classes. For the *other* grouping category multi-class combinations were noted as Grades 2, 3 and 4; Grades 3 and 4; Grades 4, 5 and 6; and Grades 6 and 7.

Teachers were also asked to indicate any other teaching assignments they might have in addition to Core French. Of the sixty respondents, thirteen reported

teaching Core French only. The others have a variety of assignments. Thirty-one indicated that they were regular classroom teachers from Grades 1 - 6, including multi-grades. Sixteen of the teachers in this sample teach several subjects in primary, elementary, intermediate and/or secondary levels. Three individuals reported that they are Special Education or Challenging Needs teachers in addition to their Core French assignment while two indicated that they are also Vice Principals.

When asked to describe the assignment of teachers to Core French in their schools, respondents provided the data contained in Table 12.

Table 12 Assignment of Teachers to Core French		
DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>one teacher does all French</i>	34	56.7
<i>teachers with most training and experience in French teach French</i>	17	28.3
<i>all teachers responsible for teaching French in their individual classes</i>	2	3.3
<i>other</i>	7	11.7

As noted, in a significant number of schools in the sample elementary Core French is taught by one teacher, or by the teachers in the individual schools with

the most experience and training in French language or methodology.

Information about the type of schools in which the teachers are employed was also provided, with the results shown in Table 13.

Table 13 Type of School		
TYPES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
K-6	31	51.7
K-9	5	8.3
K-12	16	26.7
other	8	13.3

The eight respondents who stated *other* types indicated that these were K-7 and K-8 schools.

When asked how many students in each school study Core French, the vast majority indicated that all, or most, students participate in this subject. (See Table 14.)

Table 14 Core French Student Population		
STUDENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>all students study Core French</i>	34	56.7
<i>all students except those with diagnosed special needs study Core French</i>	21	35.0
<i>other</i>	5	8.3

From Table 14 we observe that most elementary students in the schools sampled study Core French. Those respondents who indicated other did not specify the distinction.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 15 below, most teachers in the sample teach Core French to class sizes of 11-20 or 21-30 students.

Table 15 Average Class Size		
SIZE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>1-10 students</i>	4	6.7
<i>11-20 students</i>	22	36.7
<i>21-30 students</i>	28	46.7
<i>30 or more students</i>	5	8.3

The questionnaire sought information about the cycles on which the schools operate and the amount of time allotted to Core French per cycle. According to



Table 16, the predominant cycles are 6-day and 14-day cycles.

Table 16 School Cycles		
CYCLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
5 day cycle	3	5.0
6 day cycle	44	73.3
14 day cycle	9	15.0
other	4	6.7

Approximately 88 % of teachers in the sample teach in schools which operate on either a 6-day or 14-day cycle. The other cycle reported was the seven day cycle.

With respect to instructional time allotments, the majority of respondents indicated that they teach Core French for 90 -120, or more than 120, minutes per 6-day cycle. Tables 17 a, 17 b provide the information particular to both the 6-day and the 14-day cycles.

Table 17 a Minutes Per 6 Day Cycle Allotted to Core French		
MINUTES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
less than 60 minutes	3	7
60-90 minutes	3	7
90-120 minutes	8	18
more than 120 minutes	28	64
unspecified	2	5

As seen in Table 17a, of the 43 respondents who teach on a six-day cycle, 28



(64%) report teaching Core French for more than 120 minutes per cycle.

Table 17 b Minutes Per 14 Day Cycle Allotted to Core French		
MINUTES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>less than 60 minutes</i>	0	0
<i>60-90 minutes</i>	0	0
<i>90-120 minutes</i>	1	11
<i>more than 120 minutes</i>	5	56
<i>unspecified</i>	3	33

Table 17b indicates that five of eight respondents (56%) who use a fourteen-day cycle teach Core French for 120 minutes or more. Those who responded that there are more than 120 minutes per cycle allotted to Core French indicated a mean time of 188 minutes per cycle. The Department of Education recommends an instructional time allotment of ten percent of a cycle to the teaching of Core French. Most, though not all, students seem to be receiving the recommended amount of instruction.

#### 4.1.2

#### ANALYSIS OF SECTION "A" DATA

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador 272 schools offer elementary Core French to their students. From the 60 teacher questionnaires

that were returned, of the sample of 90, it was determined that a majority, 51.7%, of the schools in which these 60 teachers are employed house students from Kindergarten to Grade Six and 26.7% from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The majority of the teachers, 73.3%, reported teaching in a six-day cycle. Sixty-four percent of the province's students receive more than 120 minutes of Core French instruction in a 6-day cycle. The class sizes average from 21 to 30 students with only 26.7% of these being multi-grade classrooms.

Currently, a majority, 71.7%, of the teachers teach Core French at more than one grade level. Some 21.7% of the respondents teach only Core French, although it was reported that in 56.7% of the schools only one teacher does all the teaching of Core French. The remainder have multiple teaching assignments ranging from regular classroom teaching to Special Education to administration and sometimes combinations of these.

Of the respondents, equal numbers of elementary Core French teachers have seven, or fewer, years of teaching experience,( 26.7%) and 23 or more years of experience (26.7%). This means that fewer than half of the respondents are in the middle stages of their careers. Since teachers may have variable needs at the different stages of their careers, this information may be important when planning PD strategies.

The vast majority, 96.7%, of teachers surveyed possess teaching certificates

at levels five, six or seven and 50% are trained to teach at the elementary level. The responses indicate that 45% of the teachers have completed nine or more semester courses in French language from a university, while 63.3% have completed one or more French education methods courses, but 36.7% no methods courses. Some 68.3% report having spent several months to a year or more living or studying in a French milieu. One third of the respondents reported participating in immersion programs in a French milieu over the last twelve years.

Previously, it was determined that there were equally as many elementary Core French teachers with little teaching experience as there were those nearing the final stages of their careers. However, a majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 63.4%, indicated that they have been teaching elementary Core French for a period of one to ten years.

It appears that the elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador have variable characteristics. Even though in a majority of schools the teacher(s) with the most experience or education in French do(es) teach this subject, the fact remains that several respondents report not having completed any methods courses nor having spent any periods of time in a French milieu. Some students are reportedly receiving less than 60 minutes of French instruction per 6-day cycle while others are receiving up to 160 minutes per 6-day cycle. However, at the same time, a majority of teachers in the sample who are

teaching Core French in the elementary schools do possess the minimum qualifications for teaching this subject as outlined by the Department of Education's Program of Studies for 1996-97, namely, a primary or elementary Education Degree, eight semester courses and at least six weeks in a French milieu, one French education methods course, and a minimum of two years teaching experience.

## **4.2                    NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA: SECTION "B"**

### **4.2.1                    Section "B" Data**

**SECTION "B"** of the teachers' questionnaire allowed respondents to report their experiences in and opinions about professional development for elementary Core French teachers.

To begin this section teachers were asked their opinion about the minimum amount of professional training which should be required to teach elementary Core French. While several respondents suggested that two to four courses in methodology and language would suffice, others suggested that six to ten language courses are necessary, while thirty of the fifty teachers who responded

to this question suggested that a minor or major in French, which includes spending at least six weeks in a French milieu is the minimum amount of language training required to teach elementary Core French.

When teachers were asked to describe the inservice provided to them specifically for the elementary Core French Program, the most common response to this question was that in recent years, with the exception of preparation for the Grade 6 Criterion-Referenced Test for Core French, inservices have been a rarity. Teachers remarked that when the new program for elementary Core French was introduced, in the late 1980's, inservice sessions were provided for one day or a half day. Some boards were credited with offering methodology courses during the summer and/or evenings, while another was credited with offering a one day district grade-level meeting in which the Core French teachers gathered to discuss issues and do some collaborative planning. Yet another board was reported to have set aside a half day each month for a period of three years during which time the Core French teachers met to discuss and share ideas; however, this was reduced to occasional fifteen to twenty minute visits by the French Coordinator and recently there has been virtually no contact with a district "French Person". Some teachers, and these tended to be those with the least amount of teaching experience, reported not having received any inservice at all for the elementary Core French Program.

Respondents also provided information on their participation in continuing education opportunities, of five days or more duration, offered in the area of Core French. The results are found in Table 18 below.

Table 18 Completion of Continuing Education Opportunities		
ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>pd program in St. Pierre</i>	18	30.0
<i>summer language program</i>	31	51.7
<i>pd program in NF and LAB</i>	20	33.3
<i>other</i>	12	20.0

Forty-seven of the sixty respondents reported having participated in these professional development or language training activities, with twenty-two of these indicating multiple participation. The earliest reported participation is 1967. This same person completed one other activity in 1986. The most frequent *other* activity occurred in Memramcook, NB, while others indicated longer periods of immersion in Quebec universities.

The questionnaire asked teachers to rate on a scale of 1 (most influential) to 5 (least influential) the suggested factors which could influence their participation in professional development pursuits in the area of Core French.

Table 19 shows how teachers rated the influence of various factors on their PD participation. The column headed with a zero indicates the number of respondents who chose not to answer that particular item.

Table 19 Ranking of Factors Which Influence PD Pursuits						
FACTORS	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>distance</i>	5	13	15	13	7	7
<i>time</i>	6	14	16	13	8	3
<i>commitments to PD in other areas</i>	5	8	7	7	12	21
<i>finances</i>	4	16	16	16	3	6

As Table 19 indicates the respondents tended to rate finances as the major influence on their participation in PD activities, followed by time and then distance. Respondents were also asked to specify any other factors which they felt might influence their participation in PD. Of those that replied to question, the following factors were indicated: provision of leave (4 respondents), family obligations (4 respondents), availability (2 respondents), the topic (1 respondent), job security(1 respondent), and limited number of participants and selection process ( 1 respondent).

Item five of the questionnaire requested that teachers identify any



professional development activities in which they participate with their peers on an informal basis in the area of Core French. Table 20 summarizes teacher responses.

Table 20 Teacher Participation in Informal/Peer PD Activities	
ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY
<i>collaborative planning</i>	16
<i>discussions about effective teaching</i>	26
<i>peer coaching</i>	3
<i>sharing resources</i>	42
<i>share professional reading materials</i>	15
<i>visits to classrooms</i>	4

As Table 20 indicates, the most frequent activity is sharing resources, followed by discussions about effective teaching, collaborative planning and sharing professional reading materials.

When teachers were asked to identify any formal professional development activities in which they had participated within the last five years in the area of Core French, they provided the responses shown in Table 21 below.



Table 21 Teacher Participation in Formal PD Activities	
ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY
<i>Teacher Fellowship Program</i>	3
<i>Teacher Bursary Program</i>	14
<i>district French Institute</i>	14
<i>teacher paid educational leave</i>	4
<i>Department of Education sponsored summer Institute</i>	17

As Table 21 indicates there is a low participation rate in activities such as the Teacher Fellowship Program or teacher paid educational leave which require teachers to be out of the classroom or away from their communities during an entire university semester or for the entire school year. However, the participation rate for activities which occur during the summer months has been significantly higher. Information provided by the Language Programs Section indicates that the demand for Teacher Bursaries and Teacher Fellowship programs has decreased in recent years.

For item seven of the questionnaire teachers identified the individual professional development activities in which they have participated in order to enhance their teaching of Core French. (See Table 22.)

Table 22 Teacher Participation in Individual Activities Which Enhance Teaching	
ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY
<i>analyze recommended learning resources</i>	35
<i>analyze and introduce supplementary learning resources</i>	37
<i>re-read the Department of Education Curriculum Guide for Grades 4-6</i>	44
<i>professional reading</i>	29
<i>view professional development videos</i>	2
<i>reflect upon your teaching practice</i>	54
<i>prepare an individual professional development plan</i>	13
<i>experiment with new techniques and strategies</i>	48

As Table 22 indicates, most respondents reported having participated in activities intended to enhance their teaching of Core French. Of the 60 responses, however, only two reported making use of PD videos to enhance their teaching. Nevertheless, 54 respondents reported participating in activities requiring them to reflect on their teaching practices, while 48 reported experimenting with new techniques and strategies, activities which require reflection, analysis and application. As Fullan (1993) and Duff, et. al (1995) state, these are elements of an effective PD program.

Teachers were asked to list any professional development activities of two

or more days duration in which they had participated during the past five years related to Core French methodology. Responses were not limited to elementary Core French, since other activities, such as Modern Language Council Conferences, the Intermediate Core French Professional Development Project, completion of university courses and Master's Degrees, the Cooperative Learning Institute, Francoforum and summer immersion programs were mentioned by a number of respondents. Specifically related to Core French methodology were a one week course at Memramcook, NB referred to by three teachers, and institutes in the district sponsored by the district office of five teachers.

When asked to indicate their memberships in professional organizations, 22 reported having membership in the Modern Language Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Other organizations noted were Regional Modern Language Council (2), Canadian Parents For French ( 1 ), Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (1) and Canadian Association of Principals (1).

**SECTION "B"** also asked teachers to rate the type of professional development activities in which they would like to participate in the future. Responses are noted in Table 23.

Table 23 Teacher Priorities For Future PD Activities					
THEMES	1	2	3	4	5
<i>integrating French culture</i>	15	16	17	7	1
<i>teaching in multi-grade classrooms</i>	10	16	17	5	17
<i>instructional planning</i>	17	21	13	3	4
<i>student evaluation</i>	14	25	10	4	2
<i>using supplementary learning resources</i>	12	22	17	7	0
<i>accommodating special needs learners</i>	10	18	17	7	4
<i>motivational activities</i>	34	15	7	1	1
<i>developing students' oral skills</i>	38	14	2	2	2
<i>teaching reading comprehension</i>	15	17	18	5	1
<i>teaching the writing process</i>	13	14	17	9	3
<i>cooperative learning strategies</i>	12	21	16	5	1
<i>enhancing or improving teacher proficiency</i>	24	19	6	5	2

As Table 23 indicates, Core French teachers report a strong desire to participate in a variety of PD activities. However, the activities with the highest ratings are developing students' oral skills and motivational activities, while those with the lowest ratings are teaching in multi-grade classrooms, probably because few teachers in the sample teach Core French in a multi-grade situation, and teaching the writing process, which probably reflects the low emphasis on writing in general in the Core French program for Grades 4-6.



Upon being asked to identify the type of role they prefer to take during a PD activity (facilitator, participant, or observer), a majority of teachers replied that they prefer to take on the role of participant since this allows them to interact with the facilitators and others attending the activity. A number of teachers responded that the role of observer was more comfortable for them due to low confidence levels and varying degrees of shyness and because there is less pressure to perform in front of peers. Several indicated that either of the roles would suit them, specifying that this would depend on the activity and their degree of comfort with the topic.

In item twelve teachers were asked to rank their preference for each of the nine activities within each of the three formats of PD activities (informal/individual, peer interaction, and formal) with number one being their top priority activity and number nine being the activity of the least priority. Tables 24 to 26 show the responses of the sixty respondents.

Table 24 Teacher Ranking of Preference for Informal Individual Activities									
ACTIVITIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>professional reading</i>	1	2	3	2	12	9	5	11	3
<i>professional development videos</i>	3	2	6	6	3	7	8	5	10
<i>teacher as researcher in the classroom</i>	0	1	2	5	2	6	13	12	5
<i>preparation of individual development plan</i>	5	2	0	10	7	10	3	9	2
<i>teacher exchange program</i>	7	2	0	5	5	5	5	7	13
<i>analysis of learning resources</i>	6	13	6	6	6	3	5	3	0
<i>reflection about your teaching</i>	1	16	15	5	6	6	2	0	0
<i>experimenting with new techniques and strategies</i>	16	9	13	8	2	1	3	0	0
<i>study of the Department's Curriculum Guide for Grades 4-6</i>	14	6	8	4	5	0	2	0	12

As Table 24 indicates, respondents generally rated experimenting with new techniques and strategies, reflection about teaching, and analysis of learning resources as being of great importance. Activities receiving the lowest rating in terms of importance tended to be classroom research and professional reading. Yet, researchers such as Stenhouse ( 1984), Fullan ( 1993) and Rehorick and Edwards ( 1995) identify these activity types as being important components for

PD programs. Respondents expressed little preference for viewing professional development videos or teacher exchange programs.

When teachers were asked to indicate their preferences with respect to peer interaction activities, they provided the responses shown in Table 25.

Table 25 Teacher Preferences for Peer Interaction Activities									
PROJECTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
peer coaching	4	1	4	6	5	9	7	5	5
visits to schools and other teachers	10	10	6	7	6	2	3	1	2
collaborative planning	8	5	9	11	4	4	3	3	1
participation in professional committees	0	3	2	2	2	3	8	15	9
participation in professional conferences	7	2	4	4	5	4	11	5	5
consultation with a resource person	0	2	1	2	4	5	4	9	18
discussions via the Internet	0	2	1	2	4	5	4	9	18
discussions in person	6	7	10	5	5	7	2	3	1
sharing resources	8	12	5	6	8	4	2	0	2

Table 25 indicates that the activities preferred by many respondents in the peer interaction category of activities were visits to schools and other teachers, consultation with a resource person, collaborative planning, sharing resources and in-person discussions. The activity preferred the least by many of the respondents was the use of the Internet to generate discussions about teaching



and sharing of ideas. This finding may reflect teachers' comfort level with the use of technology, as most would have received little formal training in this area.

As Table 26 below indicates, in the category of formal projects, teachers indicated the greatest preference for activities which involve summer study in a French milieu, or the summer institutes offered by the school boards and the Department of Education. There was also considerable support for school-based and district-based inservice focused on curriculum issues. Worthy of note are the activities for which little preference was expressed, such as on-campus and distance education courses offered by a university.

Table 26 Teacher Preference for Participation in Formal Activities									
PROJECTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>distance education university courses</i>	1	0	3	3	5	4	6	11	10
<i>on-campus university courses</i>	1	2	0	3	1	8	5	16	8
<i>school-based inservice (curriculum issues)</i>	8	6	7	4	3	7	6	3	4
<i>district-based inservice (curriculum issues)</i>	5	12	3	9	6	5	5	1	3
<i>year long study in a French milieu</i>	8	2	4	1	5	4	5	3	13
<i>summer study in a French milieu</i>	6	14	7	6	7	2	2	2	14
<i>district French Institute</i>	5	5	15	7	9	2	2	1	1
<i>teacher paid educational leave</i>	7	4	4	5	4	6	8	4	3
<i>Department of Education sponsored summer institute</i>	10	5	5	8	5	6	3	2	1



Teachers also indicated on a scale of 1 [most suitable] to 5 (least suitable) their preference for the different locations in which professional development might be offered. Table 27 lists the locations and shows how teachers ranked them for suitability.

Table 27 Teachers' Preference of Location for PD					
LOCATION	1	2	3	4	5
<i>your school</i>	20	7	14	2	10
<i>a school in your district</i>	22	15	17	0	1
<i>district office</i>	16	17	16	4	2
<i>your community</i>	22	10	11	4	8
<i>within the province</i>	17	11	14	8	4
<i>elsewhere (other provinces, countries)</i>	10	6	8	11	17
<i>university setting</i>	7	6	25	6	7
<i>teleconference setting</i>	7	7	14	13	11
<i>via the Internet</i>	6	2	19	11	12

As Table 27 indicates, teachers in the sample generally prefer not to leave their community or their school district in order to participate in PD activities. Yet the use of technological advances such as the Internet or teleconferencing, tools which could facilitate the delivery of PD in one's local area, were rated very low in terms of teachers' preference.

The questionnaire also asked teachers to indicate their preference for the time periods during which professional development could take place, using a rating scale of 1 (most suitable) to 5 (least suitable). Table 28 shows how teachers rated the suitability of the suggested time periods.

Table 28 Teacher Preferences for PD Time Periods					
TIME PERIODS	1	2	3	4	5
<i>maximum one school day</i>	10	10	7	9	4
<i>two or three consecutive school days</i>	27	16	9	4	1
<i>at the completion of the school day</i>	2	1	9	7	33
<i>evenings</i>	1	6	10	10	28
<i>weekends</i>	1	5	9	7	32
<i>in the summer months</i>	16	10	11	3	15

Some 37 respondents indicated that either a one-day or a two to three consecutive school day session is the most suitable time period for PD activities while 16 suggested that the summer months is an appropriate time to conduct PD. In the evenings, on weekends and at the completion of the school day were noted as the least suitable times. Several of the respondents commented that at the end of the school day they are too tired to concentrate on, or participate in, a PD activity.

When asked who they felt should assume the primary responsibility for the

cost of PD for the province's teachers ( teachers, employer, professional association, or Department of Education), thirty-one of the sixty respondents replied that the Department of Education should assume the primary responsibility. The idea of shared cost, with teachers paying the least, was supported by twenty-one respondents. Only four teachers suggested any responsibility for the professional association, while the remainder indicated that responsibility should be assumed by anyone but teachers.

The final item in **Section "B"** provided an opportunity to write any additional comments the respondents might have had about professional development for elementary Core French teachers. Of the sixty respondents, twenty chose to complete this item. The following comments are representative of the ideas portrayed by these twenty respondents.

...I would certainly love to see more inservice. It was refreshing to be inserviced in oral testing last year. I learned a lot, and continue to use the methods this year. We seem to be a forgotten group.

...Do not isolate groups as Elementary/Intermediate/High School all the time. Teachers should know where their students are coming from and going to, and could benefit from conversing and sharing with one another. Perhaps a district approach of collaboration at all levels is needed.

...Professional development is very expensive for people living in rural areas. I will

be doing a French program or course at a university this summer and it will be very costly. Plus it is difficult going away from home with young children. Then day care is needed for the children which is very costly.

...I think that there should be an established base-line criteria before being allowed to teach Core French, or if there is one it should be enforced.

...Remediation of students in Core French is very poor. Students with learning difficulties (some language learning difficulties) are expected to take the second language. I believe this is their right if they have the basics in their first language. However, teachers are left wondering how to provide for these students in their classrooms with no resources available to them. Personnel (fluent in both languages) should be made available to help students who are language learning disabled. As a result, PD should be given to clarify /create a policy on remediation for Core French students.

...As the only French, teacher in my school, it is easy to feel isolated therefore I contact other teachers that I have met through conferences ( and just over the years) to compare notes. I feel it is imperative that the Department provide a resource person who will regularly provide teachers of Core French with relevant material -cultural, games, strategies- so that YEARS do not pass by without inservice or organized contact.

...There has to be some district-based inservice. In most cases, I've been given texts (new) and told to use that ...later on we'll have an inservice. There is seldom any follow-up.

...PD should never be during summer holidays or weekends.

...My biggest concern is the large gap in the present program **Aventures 2** and **Aventures 3**. Another concern is the changing attitudes toward French as a second language. Students need positive experiences.

#### **4.2.2**

#### **ANALYSIS OF SECTION "B" DATA**

Upon analysis of the responses to the items contained in **Section "B"** the conclusion can be reached that elementary Core French teachers share the opinion that there has been insufficient inservice or PD opportunity in recent years, with the exception of programs sponsored through the Department of Education, e.g., Summer Bursary Program for teachers, and degree and certificate programs offered at Memorial University. While many teachers have profited from participation in continuing education opportunities offered through the Department of Education, the other agencies, such as school district offices and the professional association, are perceived as having not been as active in their provision of PD for the elementary Core French teachers of this province.

When questioned about the factors which could influence their choice for PD pursuits in the area of Core French, teachers rated finances as the most influential factor followed by time and then distance. Finances in relation to PD

include more than registration costs and the like according to the respondents. Several indicated that family obligations influence their pursuit of PD in large part due to the costs of day care and other necessary arrangements for their children. With respect to the time issue, a number of teachers reportedly experience difficulty in acquiring sufficient leave to attend PD activities or refuse to participate during the selected time, e.g., during the summer.

Despite the decline in formal PD opportunities, teachers reported participation individually, and with peers, in more informal types of professional growth activities. The two most common activities in which teachers participate with their peers are sharing resources and engaging in discussions about effective teaching. Individually, teachers are reportedly active in reflection about their teaching practices, experimenting with new techniques and strategies and re-reading the Department of Education's Curriculum Guide for Grades 4-6, **Learning French as a Second Language**. Teacher isolation and lack of district PD support for elementary Core French may account, to some extent, for the more individualistic approach that teachers are taking towards developing professionally. While the comment has been made that there has been, in recent years, insufficient inservice, a number of elementary Core French teachers are reportedly looking for other PD opportunities. Completion of Master's Degrees, participation in MLC conferences and in other professional organizations, and learning new strategies such as cooperative learning are all indicative of an emerging mindset that PD is not limited to district-directed inservices.

The second theme dealt with in **Section "B"** refers to the types of PD activities in which teachers would like to participate in the future.

In reference to the themes suggested in the questionnaire for enhancing teaching in elementary Core French, many teachers chose developing students' oral skills, motivational activities, enhancing or improving teacher proficiency, student evaluation and instructional planning as the five themes with the highest priority.

The data seem to suggest that when planning PD activities for teachers it will be important to ensure an interactive environment for the majority of teachers who prefer to take an active, participatory role. However, consideration should also be accorded to the teachers with lower levels of proficiency in the second language since they indicated preference for the role of observer.

Teachers in the sample were provided with three types of formats for PD activities ( informal/individual, peer-interaction, formal) and were asked to indicate the order of their preference for each of the activities within each format. Previously, teachers had indicated that informal, individual projects were those in which they had participated most frequently. There was a direct correlation between the informal, individual PD activities most frequently practiced and the activities selected by the respondents for future PD pursuits. Experimenting with new techniques and strategies, reflection about teaching, study of the Department of Education's Curriculum Guide for Grades 4-6 and analysis of the current learning resources for elementary Core French are reportedly activities in which

teachers presently participate and would prefer to continue as further PD activities.

The four peer interaction projects preferred most by the sample of elementary Core French teachers are visits to schools and other teachers, sharing resources, consultation with a resource person and discussions, in person, with colleagues. Previously, only four of the 60 respondents indicated having participated in visits to schools and other teachers; however, 26 respondents indicated that for future PD it ranked in the top three peer interaction activities.

From the list of proposed formal projects in which teachers could engage in the future, the three most preferred by the respondents are summer study in a French milieu, district-sponsored French institutes, and school-based inservice on curriculum issues.

In reference to location and time periods during which PD could occur, teachers rated locations within their districts during the school day as the most suitable. The majority of teachers were opposed to attending any PD activity at the end of the school day, during weekends and in the evening. Despite complaints of isolation, financial and time constraints, only a small number of respondents indicated a preference for using a teleconference setting or the Internet in order to pursue PD opportunities.

When teachers in the sample were asked to consider which agency should assume the primary responsibility for PD costs, 51.6% indicated the Department of Education, while 35% proposed sharing the costs among all agencies with



teachers contributing the least amount of the total cost.

Only one third of the respondents chose to comment further about PD. The general themes emanating from these comments were that elementary Core French teachers need more inservice in order to continue to improve in their language competence and methodology; that more financial support should be made available to teachers to pursue a PD program; that there should be an establishment of and adherence to base-line qualifications for teaching Core French; that collegial collaboration should be facilitated; that communications should increase between teachers and agencies instrumental to their professional growth; that a district resource person should be hired for Core French; that district-based inservice should be increased; and that the current learning resources should be reviewed.

Essentially, the data obtained for **Section "B"** indicate that the province's elementary Core French teachers are open for increased availability of PD opportunities. While many respondents indicate that they are not all willing to donate their "vacation" time, to fully finance their PD activities, or to travel great distances to participate in them, a majority of these teachers are active in the pursuit of PD through informal activities which, performed individually or with peers, can lead to enhanced teaching practices. The teachers are reportedly interested in improving the quality of Core French education for their students, especially in terms of oral proficiency and motivation. Furthermore, they see value in collegial collaboration and self-reflection for improvement of professional

practices.

### **4.3                    NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA: SECTION "C"**

#### **4.3.1                    Section "C" Data**

**SECTION "C"** of the teacher questionnaire investigated the elementary Core French teachers' beliefs about second language learning, the Communicative Approach, and the Core French Program. Teachers indicated their level of agreement with the statements provided using a rating scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Table 29 demonstrates teacher responses to the statements regarding the theories of second language learning which were derived from information contained in the curriculum guide for elementary Core French, Grades 4-6 entitled **Learning French as a Second Language**.

Table 29 Ranking of Teacher Beliefs About Second Language Learning					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Second language learning helps students develop reasoning and inferencing skills.</i>	24	19	13	1	0
<i>A supportive classroom is essential.</i>	48	9	0	0	0
<i>Students should hear vocab from authentic sources.</i>	23	21	9	2	0
<i>Students should listen before attempting to speak</i>	28	21	7	1	0
<i>Teachers should build on prior knowledge and experience</i>	38	16	2	1	0

As Table 29 indicates, respondents tended to agree with the belief statements about second language learning since few respondents rated any statement above three on the scale from one to five. The belief statement which received the strongest support concerns the importance of maintaining a supportive classroom climate. The weakest support comes from the statement that learning a second language can help students develop reasoning and inferencing skills.

In addition to the theories of second language learning, the respondents ranked belief statements, (see Table 30), related to the communicative approach to second language teaching.

Table 30 Ranking of Teacher Beliefs About The Communicative Approach					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Language is learned through meaningful use.</i>	40	15	2	0	0
<i>It is more important to encourage effective communication than perfect use.</i>	39	16	2	0	0
<i>Students should be encouraged to take risks.</i>	53	4	0	0	0
<i>Vocab is best taught in context not through translation.</i>	46	8	3	0	0
<i>French should be the language of communication.</i>	32	13	9	2	0
<i>Students should receive appropriate feedback.</i>	37	14	6	0	0
<i>A student-centered classroom is effective.</i>	39	14	3	1	0
<i>Opportunities should be provided for comprehension before production is required.</i>	36	16	4	1	0
<i>A variety of activities should be provided.</i>	43	14	0	0	0
<i>Student interaction should be maximized.</i>	35	21	1	0	0
<i>Evaluation should focus on overall ability.</i>	32	17	6	2	0
<i>Evaluation should include attitudes.</i>	27	13	15	2	0
<i>Activities and instruction should reflect students' needs, interests, and experiences.</i>	28	23	5	0	0

As Table 30 illustrates, generally strong support is indicated for the communicative approach to second language teaching on which the belief statements contained in this item are based. In particular, teachers in the sample



ranked student risk-taking, teaching in context, encouraging students to communicate, maximizing student interaction, incorporating a variety of activities, and meaningful use of the language as the aspects of the communicative approach for which they held the strongest belief.

A third category of belief statements was contained in this section, namely, teacher beliefs about the Core French program currently in use at the elementary level. Table 31 summarizes the ranking of these statements.

Table 31 Ranking of Teacher Beliefs About the Core French Program					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
<i>...concentrates mainly on listening and speaking</i>	23	24	9	1	0
<i>...is spiral in approach</i>	27	24	6	0	0
<i>French culture is an important aspect...</i>	17	19	15	5	1
<i>...provides for a gradual increase in knowledge and skills</i>	25	20	10	1	1
<i>...presents vocabulary and structures thematically</i>	35	20	2	0	0
<i>...relates to students' experience</i>	17	21	15	1	1

According to Table 31, the respondents tended to agree quite strongly with all of the belief statements about the Core French program. A large number of respondents, 55, ranked the program's thematic approach as the aspect with which they agreed the most. The aspect which they feel is supported the least by the current Core French resources appears to be the cultural component.

**4.3.2****ANALYSIS OF SECTION 'C' DATA**

The statements in Table 29 which deal with second language learning met with strong agreement by most teachers. Support was particularly strong for the view that a supportive classroom is essential for effective second language learning. Most teachers in the sample also feel that the use of authentic documents and language are important; that students should listen to new vocabulary items before attempting to vocalize them; and that teachers should build on prior knowledge and experience when introducing new concepts.

From Table 30 it appears that a majority of elementary Core French teachers are familiar with the communiative approach to language teaching and firmly support its underlying principles.

Table 31 focuses on the Core French program as it exists presently in Newfoundland and Labrador. The majority of teachers ranked each statement in the one and two range, indicating that they agree with these statements to a large degree. However, two statements, namely, *French culture is an important aspect of the Core French program*, and, *the program relates to students' experiences* had more responses in the lower rankings, indicating that a number of teachers believe that the present program does not fully support these two statements.

#### 4.4 **NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA: SECTION "D"**

##### 4.4.1 **Section "D" Data**

**SECTION "D"** of the questionnaire asked teachers to reflect upon their practices in relation to their beliefs. The tables below indicate the reported degree of practice, using a rating scale of 1 (always) to 5 (never), for each of the statements listed in the three categories *Second Language Learning*, *The Communicative Approach*, and *The Core French Program*.

With respect to second language learning, teachers were asked to consider the daily practices of encouraging reasoning and inferencing, of creating a supportive atmosphere so that students learn to take risks in the language, of allowing students to listen to new vocabulary before speaking, and of considering prior knowledge and experience of the students in planning and the presentation of lessons. (See Table 32.)

Table 32 Ranking of Teacher Practice in Second Language Learning					
STATEMENTS OF PRACTICE	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I encourage reasoning and inference skills.</i>	18	33	7	0	0
<i>I create a supportive atmosphere.</i>	35	20	3	0	0
<i>My students listen before vocalizing.</i>	46	9	2	0	0
<i>I consider prior knowledge and experience.</i>	32	16	6	1	0

**Table 32 demonstrates that respondents tend to feel that their beliefs about second language learning are reflected in their their practices. This is particularly true if the ratings of one and two are combined.**

**Teachers were also asked to indicate to what extent their beliefs about the communicative approach to second language teaching are reflected in their classroom practices. Table 33 contains the statements of practice pertaining to the elements of the communicative approach to second language teaching. When, once again, the ratings of one and two are combined, there is reportedly a high level of congruity between teacher beliefs and classroom practices.**



Table 33 Ranking of Teacher Practice of the Communicative Approach					
STATEMENTS OF PRACTICE	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I personalize material for my students.</i>	22	26	6	1	1
<i>I encourage effective communication rather than perfect use of the language.</i>	34	18	4	0	0
<i>I encourage risk-taking.</i>	40	14	2	0	0
<i>I use contextual and visual cues rather than translation.</i>	27	23	5	1	0
<i>I use French exclusively.</i>	4	25	19	7	1
<i>My students receive appropriate feedback.</i>	12	38	6	0	0
<i>My classroom is student-centered.</i>	18	30	7	1	1
<i>I ensure understanding before requiring performance.</i>	38	18	1	0	0
<i>I incorporate a variety of activities into lessons.</i>	32	19	5	1	0
<i>Student interaction is maximized.</i>	18	28	9	2	0
<i>I focus on overall ability for evaluation.</i>	22	25	9	1	0
<i>I include attitudes in evaluation.</i>	10	17	19	4	7
<i>My instruction and activities reflect students' needs, interests and experiences</i>	14	30	11	1	0

The results shown in Table 33 indicate that most of the principles of the communicative approach are reportedly being practiced by teachers. The principles which are apparently employed on a more infrequent basis are reflecting students' needs, interests and experiences in instruction, including attitudes in evaluation and using French exclusively as the main language of communication.

Finally, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which their classroom

practices reflect the principles on which the current Core French program is based. Teacher ratings are found in Table 34.

Table 34 Ranking of Teacher Practice of the Core French Program					
STATEMENTS OF PRACTICE	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The main focus is placed on listening and speaking.</i>	24	27	5	0	0
<i>I try to enrich my lessons with cultural content.</i>	11	14	24	6	2
<i>I follow the thematic approach.</i>	34	17	5	1	0
<i>I introduce new concepts gradually and connect them to previous experiences.</i>	30	20	7	0	0

According to Table 34, the teachers generally indicate a high level of congruity between the beliefs underlying the elementary Core French program and their classroom practices. The data seems to indicate, however, that many teachers in the sample do not regularly enrich their lessons with cultural content.

#### 4.4.1 ANALYSIS OF SECTION "D" DATA

An analysis of the responses to Sections "C" and "D" indicate that teachers feel there is a high level of correspondence between their beliefs about various aspects of second language pedagogy and their classroom practices. Many of the teachers' beliefs about second language learning, principles of the communicative approach to second language teaching and the principles on which the current Core French program has its foundations are reportedly present

in many Core French classrooms in the sample.

As Table 35 indicates, most respondents reportedly always, or nearly always, implement classroom practices which are consistent with their stated beliefs about aspects of second language teaching and learning, including the Core French program in this province.

**Table 35**  
**Teacher Responses to Statements of Practice and Beliefs**

<b>THEORETICAL STATEMENT</b>	<i>always or nearly always exhibit this practice</i>	<i>very strongly or strongly believe this statement</i>
a)...Learning French develops reasoning and inferencing skills	51	43
...creation of a supportive classroom is essential	55	57
...important to listen before vocalizing	55	49
...consider prior knowledge and experience	48	54
b)...Language is learned through meaningful use	48	55
...encourage effective communication rather than perfect use	52	55
...encouragement of risk taking is important	54	57
...use contextual and visual cues rather than translation	50	57
...use of French as the language of communication	29	45
...students receive appropriate feedback	50	51
...student-centered classroom is effective	48	53
...opportunities are provided for comprehension before production is required	56	52
...variety of activities should be incorporated	51	57
...student interaction is maximized	46	56
...focus on overall ability for evaluation	47	39
...attitudes are included in evaluation	27	40
...instruction and activities reflect students' needs, interests and experiences	44	51
c)...main focus is placed on listening and speaking	51	47
...lessons are enriched with cultural content	25	56
...vocabulary and structures are presented thematically	51	55
...new concepts are introduced gradually and are connected to previous experiences	59	45



From Table 35 it would seem that the area of greatest discrepancy between beliefs and practice occurs in using French as the main language of communication in the Core French classroom. While 45 out of 60 respondents indicated that they very strongly or strongly believed this to be an essential component of the Core French program and of the communicative approach which should be used, less than one half indicated that they regularly use French as the primary language of communication in their elementary classrooms. This finding might be related to the responses submitted in Section "A" in which the teachers reported their French language experience and French education methodology courses. More than 50% of the respondents indicated having completed less than 9 semester courses in French language. In addition, more than one third of the teachers in the sample indicated that they had not completed any French education methods courses. Furthermore, when teachers were asked, in Section "B" to comment about the qualifications necessary to teach Core French, approximately 60% of the respondents indicated that an elementary Core French teacher should be required to have a minor or a major in French which would incorporate a minimum of six weeks immersion in a French milieu. It is possible that the teachers feel that their qualifications are inadequate to meet the standards they, themselves, recommend.

The other areas in which a noticeable number of teachers reported a discrepancy between practices and beliefs are including student attitudes in evaluation, enriching lessons with cultural content, and maximizing student

interaction. Forty of the respondents indicated a strong belief that student attitudes should be included in evaluation but only 27 indicated that they regularly exhibit this in classroom practice.

In Section "B" Table 23 demonstrates that integrating French culture was one of the themes for which the respondents indicated a lower ranking as a possible theme for future PD activities. In Section "D" 56 of the respondents believed that integrating culture into their lessons was important. However, a mere 25 indicated that they practice this belief.

With respect to the idea that student interaction should be maximized in a Core French classroom, there was a discrepancy which may be related to the fact that, as 46.7 % of teachers indicated in Table 15, the average class size is 21-30 students and teachers have not acquired skills in cooperative learning or grouping, which might increase opportunities for interaction. Some teachers may be uncomfortable with interaction in this type of setting or may not have the physical requirements, i.e., space to allow it.

In general, the teachers who participated in this project appear to have grasped the communicative paradigm in theory, but some seem to lack the requisite knowledge and skill in certain aspects to put the theory into everyday practice. Any professional development activity offered these teachers will need to address these concerns.

#### **4.5                    COMPARISON OF FINDINGS WITH CRT DATA**

All Grade 6 Core French teachers whose students completed the Grade 6 Core French CRT were required to complete the questionnaire which dealt with themes similar to those discussed in this report. The data from that source was used in an attempt to complement the data already gleaned from the elementary Core French teacher questionnaire developed specifically for this internship project. In reference to professional development, the Grade 6 teachers were asked how often support was available to them from various sources, such as district level French coordinator, board organized institutes, opportunities to attend the MLC conference or other professional development sessions, and summer bursary for French study. To this question the majority of teachers answered *sometimes* support is available from all of the above sources, with the exception of two (French coordinator, if one existed, and the summer bursary program) to which they responded *usually*. The responses to questions pertaining to teacher background, allocated instructional time, and class groupings were similar to the findings of this project.

The provincial averages of the different sections of the CRT show that Grade 6 Core French students performed best in listening skills and worst in oral production skills.

The CRT results and accompanying teacher questionnaire responses reflect

the responses of the sample population used in this research in two areas, namely, that teachers sometimes receive support but, that generally, the support is reported as being inadequate to meet the needs of the teachers. According to the analysis of this project's questionnaire, teachers need, among other things, assistance in developing the requisite skills for using the communicative approach to language teaching and desire professional development activities based on such themes as developing student's oral proficiency. This stated need is consistent with the published results of the CRT which indicate that students performed the weakest in the area of oral proficiency.



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **5.0**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The data collected as a result of this internship research project has been generated from the information supplied by 60 elementary Core French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador who were selected through stratified random sampling. The project was assigned to the intern by the Department of Education, Division of Program Development, Language Programs Section for the purpose of identifying the professional development needs of the province's elementary Core French teachers. A questionnaire was designed, administered and analyzed during the 14 weeks that comprised the internship period. The information provided by the needs assessment questionnaire provided answers to the six research questions and, based on this data, recommendations are proposed for future professional development activities involving elementary Core French teachers.

## **5.1**

### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

The primary conclusions realized at the completion of this project are that a need exists for professional development activities for elementary Core French

teachers in this province, and that these needs relate both to teacher proficiency in French and to methodological issues.

The first research question inquired about the type of educational background from which the teachers enter the Core French classrooms as well as the conditions under which they are expected to attain the goals and objectives of the Core French program. The majority, 55%, of the teachers surveyed have advanced beyond the current entry level of Certificate 5. As well, 50% have been trained in elementary methods, 63% have completed seven or more courses in French language, and 68.3% have spent several months, or more, in a French milieu. However, approximately one third of the teachers surveyed rated using French as the language of communication in their classrooms at one or two on a scale of one to five, with one indicating ALWAYS and five NEVER. It is possible that levels of communicative competence and proficiency of the teachers are a deterrent to their consistent usage of the second language in the Core French classroom. Alternatively, the problem may be related to the fact that 36.7% of the teachers surveyed have not completed any French education methods courses.

With reference to the conditions under which teachers work it was determined that in 56.7% of the schools one teacher is responsible for teaching French, while in another 28.3% of the schools French is taught by the teachers

who have the most education or experience in French. About 71.7% of teachers indicated that they teach in single grade classrooms, 56.7% teach French to all students, including those with special needs, and 46.7% have an average class size of 21-30 students. More than 60% of the students taught by responding teachers receive more than 120 minutes of instruction per cycle in Core French. The remainder of the students receive between 60 and 120 minutes.

The second question provided insight into the types of professional development activities in which the teachers had previously participated. In general, their participation has been limited to the professional growth opportunities provided by the Department of Education and school districts during the summer months and have focused primarily on improving their oral proficiency in French. Many teachers noted that inservice sessions provided by the school districts during school time were a rarity, especially in recent years. However, they did indicate that there have been a great deal of informal, individual attempts at pursuing professional growth, e.g., peer discussions about effective teaching, completion of university courses and Master's Degrees, and sharing of resources.

Determining the perceived professional development needs of teachers was the focus of question three. The teachers who participated in this project indicated that the most important themes to be treated through PD were

strategies which are both pedagogical (e.g., to help teachers become more effective in developing student's oral skills, providing motivational activities for students, evaluating students, and planning for instruction) and linguistic (i.e., enhancing or improving teacher proficiency in French). **Section "A"** demonstrated that a number of teachers, while having acquired experience in a French milieu or several French language courses, have not completed any French education methods courses. This could explain, at least partially, the discrepancy between beliefs and practices discussed previously and indicate that teachers should receive appropriate instruction in second language pedagogy. In particular, reference should be made to the fact that, of the 60 respondents, less than half indicated that they always or nearly always use French as the language of communication in their Core French classroom. It was also noted earlier that not all teachers in this sample have high levels of proficiency in the French language and this could account for the low rating of this practice.

Teachers prefer to participate in PD activities during regularly scheduled school time; however, almost one third indicated that they would participate during the summer months. In reference to location, several factors affect participation. Consistent with the findings of Showers, Joyce and Bennett (1987), most teachers prefer not to travel outside their own district because of finances and family obligations. Participants indicated that they prefer PD

activities which allow interaction and active participation; however, it is important to be sensitive to teachers and allow them to be less active in activities in which they are uncomfortable. Teachers indicated that they want information and skills that will allow them to return to their classrooms and immediately be able to apply what they have learned, since experimenting with new techniques and strategies is an activity favored by many of the respondents. They want to receive ideas and strategies to enhance their practices of self-reflection and increase the amount of peer collaboration and support networks which, as they indicate, they have already developed to a certain extent and for which they desire an increase.

The questionnaire also generated data about the teachers' beliefs about second language learning, the communicative approach and the current Core French program, and their practices in relation to these beliefs. Essentially, teachers appear to be very well informed in these areas; however, there seems to be a discrepancy, in certain areas, between what the teachers believe and their actual practice. Many factors could contribute to this phenomenon. For example, one teacher wrote that it is difficult to promote high levels of student interaction and a student-centered classroom in classes with large numbers of students. It is possible, for example, that the use of translation rather than contextual cues is related to low levels of teacher proficiency or confidence to use the language. Even though a low number of teachers incorporate student

attitudes into evaluation, a high number of teachers indicated that they believe that it should occur.

In this project, the intern was asked to examine the results of the Grade 6 Elementary Core French Criterion-Referenced Test to see if it might shed some light on the results of the needs assessment questionnaire completed for this project. A point of interest is that teachers indicated that their number one priority for a professional development activity is the acquisition of strategies for the development of students' oral proficiency and this was the area in which the student's performed the poorest on the CRT.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The recommendations which follow have their foundation in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this document and in the data collected from the elementary Core French teacher needs assessment questionnaire. These recommendations attempt to address the principal conclusions discussed earlier in Section 5.1.

Writers such as Fullan (1982), Leithwood (1986), Smylie and Conyers (1991) and Hixson (1991), Howell (1996), and Stoll and Fink (1996), view

professional development as a planned , ongoing, developmental process, not a single event. Furthermore, researchers such as Showers, Joyce and Bennett (1987) and Shroyer (1990) support the need for a plan, with short, medium and long-term goals, which support both personal and organizational development. This is also reflected in the work of Tillema and Imants (1995)

One of the purposes for undertaking this study was to provide the Department of Education with data on which to plan, probably in collaboration with various stakeholders in education, a professional development program for teachers who may be involved in the implementation of the next Core French curriculum. According to Fullan and Park (1981), when planning a PD program it is essential to consider the proposed innovation and its effect(s) on both the organization and the individuals within the organization. Writers such as Park (1981) and Fullan (1982) express the position that teachers need to be involved in the planning and delivery of a PD program, and that such a program should build on teachers' strengths, i.e., be competency based rather than deficiency based. Shroyer (1990) notes that an added advantage of involving all participants in every phase of a PD program is the development of a process that will more likely meet both the organizational and individual needs.

The data gleaned from this project would suggest that divergent approaches are needed for teacher PD, a view supported by Castetter (1986) and



Shroyer (1990). Furthermore, as suggested by Shroyer (1990), for PD to be successful it requires administrative support, including incentives.

Stoll and Fink (1996) convey the idea that teacher learning is crucial to pupil learning. Given this position, the following recommendations are meant to include all of the partners in education so that the partners work together towards enhancing the practices of the current teaching force to improve the education of the province's students.

The Department of Education, Division of Program Development, in collaboration with stakeholders, such as the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and the NLTA, has been given a mandate to provide leadership in the provision of teacher PD in this province. Furthermore, the Department of Education has provided a Program Implementation Specialist for French to each district office, one of whose responsibilities is to facilitate the provision of teacher PD. These ten positions should be an instrumental component for ensuring quality PD for elementary Core French teachers and vital to the implementation of the specific recommendations which follow.

1. Any PD initiatives for elementary Core French teachers offered in the near future should incorporate the methodology issues identified in this report, e.g., strategies for improving the students' oral proficiency and strategies which

enhance student motivation.

2. PD initiatives should ensure an interactive environment; allow time for personal reflection and collegial sharing; and provide adequate and appropriate feedback and follow-up, which are among the essential elements of successful PD activities.

3. The Department of Education, through the Official Languages in Education program, and school districts should continue to provide support for the enhancement of teacher proficiency in the French language through (i) the provision of summer bursaries for immersion in a French milieu and (ii) the offering of summer institutes which may include language acquisition and pedagogical components.

4. Consideration should also be given to offering these institutes during the regular school year (possibly through a combination of school days and weekends, or other non-teaching time) and to arranging a credit system so that teachers can use these for career advancement or for recognition for hiring purposes.

5. The Department of Education should consider the provision of an elementary Core French professional development program, similar to that provided recently to the intermediate Core French teachers, so that teachers can acquire additional methodological knowledge and skills and become

knowledgeable in how to actively pursue individual PD initiatives such as reflection, identifying problem areas, developing a plan of action to remedy the problem and self-evaluation.

This type of endeavor could be financed jointly by all of the partners in education and administered regionally by each of the school districts. Facilitation could be provided by a group of lead teachers from each district, in conjunction with the Program Specialist for Core French, who would be trained by the Department of Education, Language Programs Section prior to commencement of the program. Teachers could be expected to donate some of their time with equal amounts of time provided by the other partners, e.g., Department of Education and school districts.

6. The NLTA and its Special Interest Council for Modern Languages (MLC) should continue to provide an annual conference for all French teachers which includes methodology sessions. The MLC should continue to produce its journal on a more frequent basis and encourage more contributions to it from the teachers so that it may be used as a springboard of ideas for new techniques and strategies. In addition, the MLC should encourage the establishment of additional regional or local MLCs which could promote the networking concept of Howell (1996) and others.

7. With appropriate support and instruction, teachers could become more

receptive to using technological resources such as the Internet and teleconferencing to alleviate feelings of isolation, financial constraints, and to improve communication, collaboration and interaction among colleagues. In addition, more formal PD projects could be initiated and executed through use of the Internet and its website availability. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the delivery of short courses in the French language or second language pedagogy via distance education. As Loveless (1990) notes teacher-student and student-student interaction is a crucial element of such initiatives.

8. Teachers should continue to take responsibility for their professional development and become even more active in the individual and peer interaction activities discussed by LePailleur (1996), and others, which include reading professional journals, viewing PD videos, creating a PD portfolio, practicing self reflection and evaluation, peer coaching and collaborative planning as well as the collegial study groups recommended by Tillema and Imants (1995). These activities could be facilitated by the Program Specialists for French.

9. Teachers will need continuous administrative support and feedback in order to effectively participate in the above activities. Therefore:

- a) the school districts, with their French Programs Specialists, would be responsible for establishing collegial networks and collaborative planning

in the district and schools; supplying a constant source of information on methodology concerns; supplying feedback; helping with subscriptions to professional journals through financing and location of journals appropriate for Core French ; providing inservice support to initiate the teachers in the processes of activities such as the portfolio concept, peer coaching and collaborative planning.

- b) the school principals and staff leaders should create, as Valentine (1992) suggests, a climate which is receptive to new ideas and knowledge by demonstrating or modeling the characteristics of lifelong learners, which include Small's (1985) model of self-reflection, review, and renewal.

10. Mullins (1994) and Tillema and Imants (1995) should be given due consideration for their insistence that a needs assessment be conducted prior to any future PD activities since these will only contribute to furthering teacher growth if they are compatible with the teachers' experiences and current needs. While this survey constitutes a component of a provincial needs assessment, the districts, schools and individual teachers, possibly through the school improvement/school assessment process, need to develop professional growth plans to meet both organizational and individual needs.

**5.3****CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Realizing what is necessary for the educational growth of students, and teachers themselves, is the first step towards creating an action plan for professional development. The formal activities provided by the Department of Education, the NLTA, and the school districts, as well as credit and non-credit courses offered by the university, e.g., the Faculty of Education, are essential to teacher growth and, in turn, student growth, but these administrative agencies are not uniquely responsible for teacher professional development. Teachers need the support system that is available from these organizers of formal professional development activities, but teachers must be as accountable for stating their needs and requesting more initiatives as the agencies must be in assessing these needs and providing appropriate support. In addition, since a professional growth program has both organizational and personal benefits, it would not seem unreasonable for teachers to assume a level of responsibility for their own professional development. When formal activities are not available, or even when they are available, teachers can, and should, become involved with their peers or work individually to solve problems and enhance their second language teaching ability. As writers such as Shroyer (1990) note, however, teachers will require support if they are to participate in a quality, ongoing, developmental PD

program.

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## APPENDICES

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## **APPENDIX A: ETHICS COMMITTEE LETTER**



# Memorial

University of Newfoundland

Faculty of Education

January 24, 1997

Dear Denise,

After reviewing your submission, the Ethics Review Committee would like to request the following minor changes in order to meet the guidelines of the University:

- include a phone number where you can be contacted
- include the phone number of your supervisor
- include the name and phone number of a third party contact person (typically Pat Canning)
- a statement to the effect that the research has been approved by the Faculty Ethics Review Committee
- a statement that participation is voluntary
- a statement that responses are confidential and anonymous
- reword the second last sentence -- the superintendent has granted approval for the study to be conducted within the district, but the superintendent cannot approve the participation of teachers (the issue here is free consent -- the superintendent cannot require the teachers to participate in a University study).
- length and duration of participation

We wish you all the best with your research.

Sincerely,

T. Seifert  
Ethics Review Committee

## **APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY**

Apt. 205  
122 Terra Nova Rd.  
St. John's, NF  
A1B 1G2

January 10, 1997

Assistant Director of Personnel  
School District NO. 4  
P.O. Box 970  
Port-aux-Basques, NF  
A0M 1C0

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The current elementary Core French curriculum has been implemented since the late 1980's. The year 2000 has been targeted for revision of this curriculum. Before such revisions are undertaken, the Department of Education plans to consult with the province's teachers to determine their perception of shortcomings in the present curriculum. These shortcomings can then be prioritized and addressed during the development of the new program or curriculum and through professional development initiatives.

I propose to complete a research project which will invite the province's teachers to share their background and opinions about Core French and about professional development. From the questionnaire, which form the basis of this project, I will compile the responses and then compare them with the results of the Grade 6 Criterion-Referenced Test administered by the Department of Education in June 1996.

My objectives are to assess the professional needs which should be addressed by the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers'

**Association, the School District Boards and individual teachers and then to suggest effective strategies for the implementation of this professional development.**

**This internship research project is a final requirement for the completion of a Master of Education Degree in Teaching and Learning at Memorial University of Newfoundland. My supervisor is Dr. Glenn Loveless of the Department of Education, Director of Program Development.**

**Your permission is requested to conduct this study within your school district. Before granting your consent I wish to inform you that participation of elementary Core French teachers is strictly voluntary and that participants have the right to refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. Also the questionnaire will have met all ethical guidelines set by the university. Further, the confidentiality and anonymity of your school board, schools and teachers will be strictly kept.**

**Should you have any questions or concerns with regards to this study, you may address them to Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs at 737-8587, at to Dr. Glenn Loveless at 729-3004, or to me at 729-4988. Please sign the attached form and return it in the enclosed envelope. Thank-you in advance for your consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Denise Meade  
Master's Degree Student Intern**

## **Consent Form**

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant permission to Denise Meade to conduct in this school district a study which investigates the areas in need of professional development with the discipline of elementary Core French. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I or any teacher can withdraw permission at any time. I also understand that neither my school district nor any school or teacher participating in the completion of this questionnaire will be identified.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## **APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR TEACHER PARTICIPATION**

St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 1G2  
(709) 7294988  
Fax: (709) 729-4845

January 17, 1997

Dear Colleague:

The current Elementary Core French curriculum has been implemented since the late 1980's. The year 2000 has been targeted for revision of this curriculum. Before such revisions are undertaken the Department of Education plans to consult with the province's teachers to determine their perception of shortcomings in the present curriculum. These shortcomings can then be prioritized and addressed during the development of the new program or curriculum and through professional development initiatives.

I propose to complete a research project which invites you to share your background and opinions about Core French and about professional development. My objectives are to assess the professional needs which should be addressed by the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the School District Boards and individual teachers and then to suggest effective strategies for the implementation of this professional development.

I, too, am a core French teacher and I have been responsible for teaching French to grades 3 through to Level III for the past five years at LeGallais Memorial All-Grade School in the community of Isle aux Morts. My most recent interest as a teacher is the implementation of professional development which will be necessary for these changing times. It is my intent that the results of my research will be forwarded to the above agencies for their consideration.

Presently, I am completing a graduate internship at the Department of Education, Division of Program Development, Language Programs Section under the supervision of Dr. Glenn Loveless. The internship ends on April 23, at which time I wish to submit this project which is a final requirement for the completion of a



**Master of Education Degree in Teaching and Learning at Memorial University of Newfoundland.**

**The Assistant Director of Personnel has granted approval for this study to be conducted within your district. I wish to inform you that the questionnaire has met all ethical guidelines set by the University and that your participation is voluntary and your responses will be confidential and anonymous. Your input is crucial and I invite you to reply to the questionnaire at your earliest convenience and look forward to your insights. Should you no longer be a teacher of elementary core French, would you please direct this letter to the appropriate person on your staff. Should you have any questions or concerns with regard to this study, you may address them to Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs and Research at 737-8587 or to Dr. Glenn Loveless at 729-3004 or to me at 729-4988. Thank-you for your time and effort.**

**Sincerely,**

**Denise Meade  
Master's Degree Student Intern**

## **APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Professional Development:**

**From the literature that has been reviewed for this project professional development can be defined as continuous education which leads to the professional and personal growth of the teacher. It is the result of multi-faceted planned process which has been delivered to address specific needs on both a formal and an informal basis.**

**Dear Teacher,**

**For each of the items contained in the questionnaire please circle the response which best reflects your experience or provide the information as requested.**

**Please remember that all responses will be kept in the strictest confidence.**

**Would you please endeavor to return the completed questionnaire by February 28, 1997.**

**Thank-you for your valuable contribution.**

**Denise**

## ELEMENTARY CORE FRENCH TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

**SECTION A:** *This section will provide background information about the Elementary Core French teachers.*

1. Please indicate your school district number\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2.. Are you: male\_\_\_\_\_ or female\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
  - A. Less than 7
  - B. 7-15
  - C. 16-23
  - D. 23 or more
4. What teaching certificate do you hold?
  - A. Below certificate 5
  - B. Certificate 5
  - C. Certificate 6
  - D. Certificate 7
5. What was the focus of the education methods courses in your undergraduate program?
  - A. Primary
  - B. Elementary
  - C. Secondary
  - D. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
6. How many semester courses in French language have you completed from the French Department of a university?
  - A. 0
  - B. 1-3
  - C. 4-6
  - D. 7-9
  - E. 9 or more

7. Which best describes your total time spent living / studying in a French milieu?  
A. None  
B. 1-3 weeks  
C. 3-6 weeks  
D. Several months  
E. 1 year  
F. More than 1 year
8. In what year did you last complete a French course or live in a French milieu? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many university semester methods courses in French Education have you completed?  
A. 0  
B. 1  
C. 2  
D. 3 or more
10. Approximately how long ago did you complete these methods courses?  
A. Less than 3 years ago  
B. 3-6 years ago  
C. 7-10 years ago  
D. More than 10 years ago  
E. Not applicable
11. How many years have you been teaching Elementary Core French?  
A. 1-5  
B. 6-10  
C. 11-15  
D. 15 or more
12. At which grade levels have you taught Core French?  
A. Grades 4-6  
B. Grades 4-6 and any of Grades 7-9  
C. Grades 4-12  
D. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your current teaching assignment for Elementary Core French?
- A. Grade 4
  - B. Grade 5
  - C. Grade 6
  - D. A combination of the above (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

14. Which grouping best describes the classes in which you teach French?
- A. Single class
  - B. Multi-class 4 and 5
  - C. Multi-class 5 and 6
  - D. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

15. Please list any other teaching assignments you may have in addition to Core French.

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16. Describe the assignment of teachers to Core French in your school.
- A. One teacher does all French (4-6)
  - B. The teachers with the most training and experience in French teach Core French in all classes.
  - C. All teachers are responsible for teaching Core French in their individual classes.
  - D. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

17. In what type of school do you teach?
- A. K-6
  - B. K-9
  - C. K-12
  - D. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

18. Describe the population of students who study Core French in your school.
- A. All students study Core French.
  - B. All students except those with diagnosed special needs study Core French.
  - C. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
19. What is the average size of your classes?
- A. 1-10
  - B. 11-20
  - C. 21-30
  - D. 30 or more
20. On which cycle does your school operate?
- A. 5 day cycle
  - B. 6 day cycle
  - C. 14 day cycle
  - D. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
21. How many minutes per cycle are allotted to the teaching of Core French in your particular assignment?
- A. Less than 60 minutes
  - B. 60-90 minutes
  - C. 90-120 minutes
  - D. More than 120 minutes (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B:** *This section will allow respondents to report their experiences in and opinions about professional development for Elementary Core French teachers.*

1. In your estimation, what should be the minimum amount of professional training required to teach Elementary Core French?
2. Please describe the inservice provided to you for the Elementary Core French Program. (approximate date, length, theme, format, sponsor, )

3. Of the continuing education opportunities offered in the area of Core French, indicate which of the following you have completed.

A. Professional Development Program (5 days or more) in Saint-Pierre

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Summer Language Program at a French Language institution

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Professional Development Program (5 days or more) in Newfoundland and Labrador? Date: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

E. None

4. Please rate the following factors which influence your choice for professional development pursuits in the area of Core French.

most influential

1

2

3

4

least influential

5

Distance required to travel in order to participate

1 2 3 4 5

Time

1 2 3 4 5

Commitments to professional development in other areas

1 2 3 4 5

Financial concerns

1 2 3 4 5

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5



For items 5, 6 and 7 please put a check mark in the appropriate spaces.

5. Please identify any professional development activities in which you participate with your peers on an informal basis in the area of Core French.

Collaborative planning \_\_\_\_\_  
Discussions about effective teaching \_\_\_\_\_  
Peer coaching \_\_\_\_\_  
Sharing resources \_\_\_\_\_  
Share professional reading materials \_\_\_\_\_  
Visits to classrooms \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please identify any formal professional development activities in which you have participated within the last 5 years in the area of Core French.

Teacher Fellowship Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Bursary Program \_\_\_\_\_  
District French Institute \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher paid educational leave \_\_\_\_\_  
Department of Education-sponsored Summer Institute \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please identify any individual professional development activities in which you participate in order to enhance your teaching of Core French.

Analyze recommended learning resources \_\_\_\_\_  
Analyze and introduce supplementary learning resources \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-read the Department of Education Curriculum Guide  
for Grades 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional reading \_\_\_\_\_  
View professional development videos \_\_\_\_\_  
Reflect upon your teaching practice \_\_\_\_\_  
Prepare an individual professional development plan \_\_\_\_\_  
Experiment with new techniques and strategies \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please list any professional development activities of 2 or more days duration in which you have participated during the past 5 years for Core French methodology.

9. Please list any memberships you have in professional organizations or committees.

10. Rate the following as to their importance for your professional development.

	most important					least important
	1	2	3	4	5	
Integration of French Culture	1	2	3	4	5	
Teaching in Multi-Grade Classrooms	1	2	3	4	5	
Instructional Planning	1	2	3	4	5	
Student Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of Supplementary Learning Resources	1	2	3	4	5	
Accommodating Special Needs Learners in Core French	1	2	3	4	5	
Motivational Activities	1	2	3	4	5	
Developing Students' Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking)	1	2	3	4	5	
Teaching Reading Comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	
Teaching the Writing Process	1	2	3	4	5	
Cooperative Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	
Maintenance or enhancement of teacher proficiency	1	2	3	4	5	
Other (please Specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	

11. When participating in a professional development activity which role do you prefer to take? ( expert, facilitator, participant, observer) Explain.

12. From the list of professional development formats for Core French below please indicate the order of your preference in each category. (Number one would be your first priority.)

***Informal individual projects:***

professional reading	_____
professional development videos	_____
teacher as researcher in the classroom	_____
preparation of individual development plan	_____
teacher-exchange programs	_____
analysis of learning resources	_____
reflection about your teaching	_____
experimenting with new techniques and strategies	_____
study of the Department of Education's Curriculum Guide for Grades 4-6:	
Learning French as a Second Language	_____

***Peer-interaction projects:***

peer coaching	_____
visits to schools and other teachers	_____
collaborative planning	_____
participation in professional committees	_____
participation in professional conferences	_____
consultation with a resource person	_____
discussions via the Internet	_____
discussions in person	_____
sharing resources	_____

***Formal projects:***

distance education university courses	_____
on-campus university courses	_____
school-based inservice (curriculum issues)	_____
district-based inservice (curriculum issues)	_____
year long study in a French milieu	_____
Summer study in a French milieu	_____
District French Institute	_____
teacher paid educational leave	_____
Department of Education-sponsored	
Summer Institute	_____

13. Indicate your preference for the following locations in which professional development might be offered.

	most suitable 1	2	3	4	least suitable 5
Your School	1	2	3	4	5
A School in Your District	1	2	3	4	5
District Office	1	2	3	4	5
Your Community	1	2	3	4	5
Within The Province	1	2	3	4	5
Elsewhere (other provinces, countries)	1	2	3	4	5
University Setting	1	2	3	4	5
Teleconference Setting	1	2	3	4	5
Via the Internet	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5

14. Indicate your preference for the following time periods that professional development might be offered.

	most suitable 1	2	3	4	least suitable 5
Maximum One School Day	1	2	3	4	5
Two to Three Consecutive School Days	1	2	3	4	5
At the Completion of the School Day	1	2	3	4	5
Evenings	1	2	3	4	5
Weekends	1	2	3	4	5
In The Summer Months	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5

- 15. In your opinion, who should assume the primary responsibility for teacher professional development in terms of cost? (Teachers, Employer, Professional Association, Department of Education)**
- 16. Please feel free to write any additional comments you might have about professional development or suggestions for activities in the area of Core French.**

**SECTION C: This section will investigate the Elementary Core French teacher's beliefs about Second Language Learning, the Communicative Approach and the Core French Program.**

Indicate your agreement with the following statements.

strongly agree

1

2

3

4

strongly disagree

5

***Second Language Learning***

Learning French will help students develop reasoning and inferencing skills.

\_\_\_\_\_

A supportive classroom atmosphere is essential to language learning.

\_\_\_\_\_

Students should hear new vocabulary items from authentic sources.

\_\_\_\_\_

Students should listen to new words and expressions before attempting to say them.

\_\_\_\_\_

Teachers should build on their students' prior knowledge and experience when introducing something new.

\_\_\_\_\_

***The Communicative Approach***

Language is learned through use in meaningful situations.

It is more important to encourage effective communication than perfect use of the language.

Students should be encouraged to take language risks in the classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

Vocabulary is best taught in context and with visuals rather than through translation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Students should receive appropriate and continuous feedback about their progress.** \_\_\_\_\_

**A student-centered classroom is an effective Core French classroom.** \_\_\_\_\_

**A classroom which uses a communicative approach should provide opportunities for comprehension before production is required of the student.** \_\_\_\_\_

**A classroom which uses a communicative approach should provide a variety of activities.** \_\_\_\_\_

**A classroom which uses a communicative approach provides opportunities maximizing student interaction.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation should be focused on students' overall abilities to communicate in French.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation should include students' attitudes towards learning the language.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities and instruction should reflect the students' communication needs, interests and experiences.** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Core French Program***

**The Core French program concentrates mainly on listening and speaking.** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Core French program is spiral in approach in that students continually build on their prior knowledge and experience.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Learning about French culture is an important aspect of the Core French program.** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Core French program provides for a gradual increase in knowledge and skills.** \_\_\_\_\_

The Core French program presents vocabulary and structures thematically.

\_\_\_\_\_

The Core French program relates to students' experience as much as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION D:** *This section asks teachers to reflect upon their practices in relation to their beliefs.*

Rate the following examples of teacher practice according to your use.

always

1

2

occasionally

3

4

never

5

### ***Second Language Learning***

I encourage the use of reasoning and inferencing when students encounter difficulty.

\_\_\_\_\_

I create a supportive classroom atmosphere.

\_\_\_\_\_

My students listen to new vocabulary items before I ask them to vocalize.

\_\_\_\_\_

I consider students' prior knowledge and experience when planning to introduce new material.

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Communicative Approach***

I attempt to personalize the material for my students.

\_\_\_\_\_

I encourage effective communication rather than perfect use of the language.

\_\_\_\_\_



**I encourage my students to take risks in communicating.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**When I introduce new vocabulary I use contextual and visual cues rather than translation.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**I use French exclusively for instruction and presentation of material.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**My students receive continuous and appropriate feedback about their progress.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**My Core French classroom is student-centered.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**I ensure that my students understand what is necessary before asking them to perform a given task.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**I incorporate a variety of activities into each lesson.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Student interaction is maximized in my classes.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**When evaluating students I focus on their overall abilities to communicate.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**When evaluating students I include a component on their attitudes towards learning the language.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**My instruction and activities reflect the students' communication needs, interests and experiences.**

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Core French Program***

**The main focus of my classes is placed on listening and speaking.**

---

**I try to enrich my lessons with cultural content.**

---

**I follow the recommended thematic approach to teaching Core French.**

---

**I introduce new concepts gradually and connect them to previous experiences.**

---

## **APPENDIX E: LETTER OF THANKS**

P.O. Box 366  
Port-aux-Basques, NF  
A0M1C0

April 9, 1997

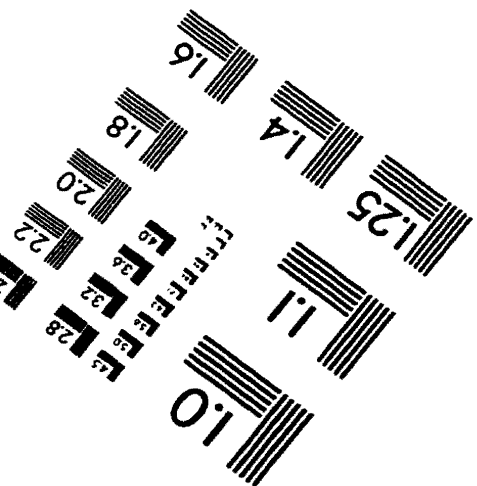
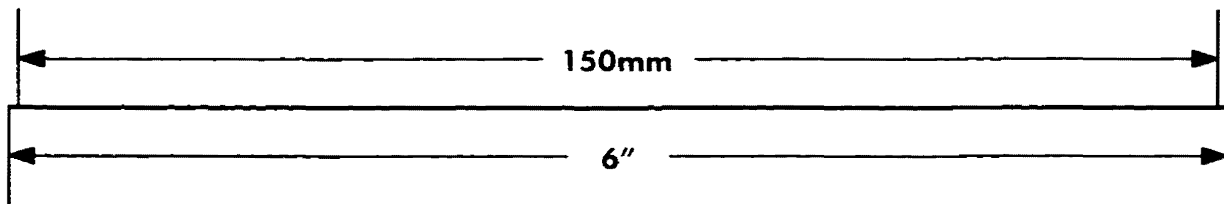
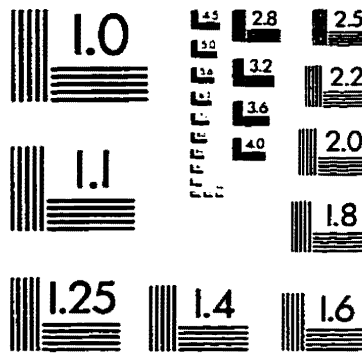
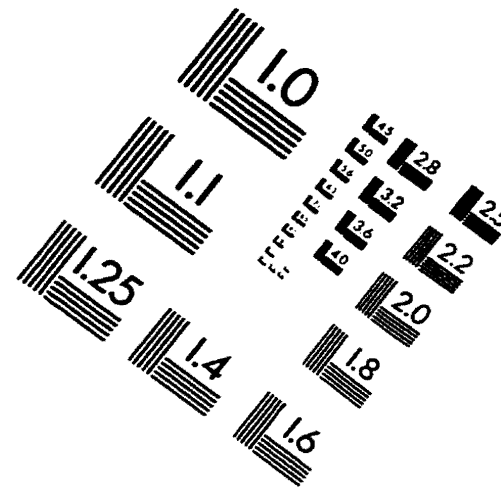
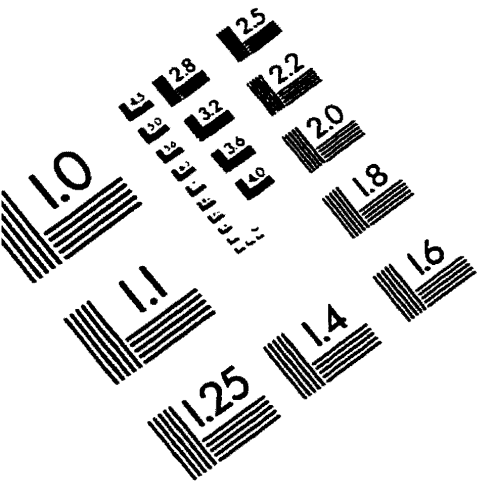
Dear colleague:

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation for your recent participation in the Elementary Core French Professional Development Needs Assessment project undertaken on behalf of the Department of Education, Language Programs Section and as completion requirements for my Master's Degree program. Your input was indeed valuable. Thank-you for your contribution and best wishes for the remainder of the school year.

Sincerely,

Denise Meade  
Master's Degree Student Intern

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.  
1653 East Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14609 USA  
Phone: 716/482-0300  
Fax: 716/288-5989

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