

THE MODERN LANGUAGES COUNCIL OF THE
NEWFOUNDLAND TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION:
ITS ORIGINS AND ROLE IN THE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH TEACHERS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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The Modern Languages Council of the Newfoundland
Teachers' Association: Its Origins and
Role in the Professional Development
of French Teachers

by

Patricia Hooper

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

The Modern Languages Council, a special interest council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, was founded in 1966. Since then it has served as the only professional organization for French teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In light of the increased emphasis on professional development and on French teacher retraining, a study was done to present a history of the Modern Languages Council, its role in professional development and possibilities for its future growth. The aim was to chronicle the nature and extent of the support offered by the Council. This was done primarily through a review of all available correspondence, reports, documents and other sources and through a survey of a representative sample of the present French teacher population.

The study identified three distinct chronological periods for the Council. It showed that even though there has been a recent period of very strong growth some of the first problems of the organization remain.

A number of factors were analyzed to discover those important in determining MLC membership. Age, university training in French, years teaching French, and school size were found to be statistically significant.

Teachers were also asked to give information related to the influence of the MLC in their professional lives. While the Council has had a positive impact on those who have been

most actively involved, it has failed to significantly influence the majority of French teachers surveyed. However, this information, if taken with the suggestions for improvement given by teachers, can reform the Council and help it fulfil a more substantive role in the lives of French educators. These recommendations for change and several ideas for further research complete the study.

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Continuing professional development has become a major thrust of teacher education in Newfoundland and Labrador, and indeed across Canada. Graduation from an approved teacher training institute is no longer thought to be sufficient training for a lifetime of teaching. The pedagogical community desires and needs continued instructional and academic stimulation. As summarized by Small and Buski (1983):

The knowledge explosion, the advent of microcomputers, an era of new communications technology..., and a host of other innovations have begun to and will continue to affect all professions. One result of this has been a growing awareness of the need to readdress the area of continuing professional education and of lifelong learning. (p. 3)

Small (1985) further conclude that these changes are particularly significant for those in the teaching profession. Teachers need to stay informed of new developments in technology and curricula.

During the past decade, in Newfoundland and Labrador, this increased interest in professional development has manifested itself in the form of professional days sponsored by district school boards or by the Newfoundland Teachers' Association (NTA), the growth in the number of the Association's special interest councils and the increase in the membership of these agencies, the establishment of professional development awards, and the number of certified

teachers enrolled in university courses and summer institutes. These are indicators that educators realize that they must avail of every opportunity to continue their professional growth. Development of this sort is necessary if they are to be effective leaders in this age of rapid change.

The teachers of French have found themselves in a particularly dynamic situation. The past twenty years have witnessed a barrage of language learning theories and teaching strategies. As outlined by Stern (1986) and others, French teachers have faced methodologies ranging from grammar-translation to audio-lingual, from the reading method to the communicative approach. With federal government legislation such as the Official Languages Act (1969), becoming bilingual in the Canadian context has become a much debated topic in the political arena. Parents have asked for school French programs that graduate pupils fluent in the second language. The implementation of new program options, such as French immersion, has aroused both public praise and criticism.

All of these developments have created a heightened awareness of French as an integral part of the school curriculum. This concern has led to a closer examination of program content and structure, as well as to a demand for teachers who are competent in the language itself, in the techniques needed to impart it to others, and who are also enthusiastic about and committed to the profession. Calvé (1983) concludes that the French teacher must have, among

other characteristics, the necessary linguistic knowledge, methodology, techniques, the ability to evaluate, choose and adapt materials, and an open mind with regard to new research.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Modern Languages Council (MLC) of the NTA is the organization most directly linked with the post-university professional development of French teachers as a specific body. The MLC is one of a number of organizations, known as special interest councils, that have been formed to promote and help teachers with professional development in specific curriculum areas such as social studies, mathematics, and science. All special interest councils are responsible to the parent body, the NTA, which is the provincial professional body and bargaining agent. While other agencies, such as the Department of Education and school boards, provide services to French teachers, the MLC is the only group to have the teaching of French, or other second languages, as its singular purpose.

The Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the origins and history of the Modern Languages Council, French teacher participation in this organization, and to demonstrate its function and potential as a vehicle for the professional development of French teachers. Precedent for this type of study has been set by the publication of numerous articles and theses related to inservice and professional development.

No history of the MLC has been compiled. Champdoizeau's (1976) study of the history of French education in Newfoundland did not include this information. No attempt has been made to chronicle how the events and activities of the Council have fulfilled its professional development objectives as outlined in the original Constitution (1966). Furthermore while the Council's membership has increased in number, an analysis of those who elect to become members and those who do not has never been conducted.

A great deal of information pertaining to the MLC currently exists. Documents held by the NTA and the MLC executive include reports, membership lists, budgets and other financial reports, minutes of executive and general meetings, reports on training sessions and provincial conferences. MLC newsletters and numerous pieces of correspondence involving the MLC, the NTA, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), the provincial Department of Education, and some other groups are also available.

It is appropriate that a study of this material be undertaken at this particular time. Some of the founding members of the Council have already retired from active teaching. Change of residence, age, or illness may lead to the loss of information which is unchronicled. According to MLC correspondence, as early as 1982, consideration was given to the compiling of a history, but the project was not initiated.

In addition, interest in the activities of the special interest councils is increasing. The NTA, through its publication, The Bulletin (1988), is endeavouring to highlight the councils, and a provincial committee has been formed to coordinate council efforts. As well, since 1990 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the NTA, the Association is placing increased emphasis on collecting the histories of its subgroups. It has also established a Presidential Review Committee to, over the next several years, investigate all aspects of the NTA, including its professional development program.

The topic of French teacher training and retraining is receiving much attention. The Report of the Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs (Department of Education, 1986) identifies the NTA as a key player in providing professional development for teachers. However, no specific reference to using the resources of the MLC for these purposes has been made in either NTA or Department of Education correspondence. With professional issues such as this coming to the fore, all agencies should consider how existing structures and organizations may meet these new challenges. This study will highlight the work of the Council and show how teachers believe it can continue to be involved in their professional lives.

Significance of the Study

This study will attempt to show to what extent the Council has been able to provide professional development to French teachers, and will give some indication of perceptions of the Council's value and effectiveness. The analysis will also indicate whether the MLC has the infrastructure and expertise necessary to provide continued professional growth within the Council's framework and mandate. This knowledge is important for the Council itself, the parent NTA body, the Department of Education, and indeed for all groups associated with French education.

After more than twenty years of active work, with much of its early history in danger of being lost and with the growing and continued emphasis on professional development, the study's importance becomes evident. The work should prove valuable to the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and the Modern Languages Council. It would be of interest to those with the Department of Education, school districts, or Faculty of Education, Memorial University, who plan teacher preservice and inservice training.

As with any history, a record of the problems and successes as well as the yearly workings of the group provides direction for future plans and helps it to avoid repetitions of past errors. In particular, the analysis of present French teacher involvement should lead to statements about directions for continued growth in terms of both membership and

programming. Before planning for the future it is necessary to know what has been and what is. This study provides this information.

Limitations of the Study

This study should prove important to the various agencies outlined. However, there are certain limitations:

1. Findings are applicable for the Modern Languages Council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. While of interest to the other special interest councils, it is not known to what extent the results could be applied to any or all of these groups.
2. Data is limited to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, but may be useful to French teacher organizations in other provinces.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

French teacher - any certified teacher who is teaching French for any part of the school day.

Newfoundland Teachers' Association (NTA) - the professional association and bargaining agent for teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Special Interest Council (SIC) - any of a number of teacher organizations formed under the auspices of the NTA, which promote professional and curriculum development for specific subject or interest areas, for example, Social Studies SIC, Religious Education SIC.

Modern Languages Council (MLC), and often referred to herein as the Council - the special interest council for teachers of modern languages, mainly French; originally known as the Modern and Classical Languages Specialist Council (MCLC).

Rural/urban - defined according to criteria followed by the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland. Generally, any town with a population greater than five thousand is designated as urban.

Second Language - any language that is not the mother tongue of the person involved.

Strong/weak French background - following results of a Department of Education study (1985) any teacher having four or fewer academic French credits was deemed to have a weak French background.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN LANGUAGES COUNCIL

The history of the Modern Languages Council may be explored through the study of several key strands or themes that are common to all periods of the Council and, when taken together, provide a picture of the Council and its work in Newfoundland and Labrador over the past two and a half decades. These themes include: problems of communication; limited membership that started with the first Council and continue to the present; the importance of the elected executive, and, in particular, the role of certain key individuals; the influence of external factors, such as the political support for French education; and finally, often interwoven with the others, certain major initiatives that have helped the Council develop its influence.

The Early Years, 1966-1971

The MLC was established as a Special Interest Council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association in 1966. According to Sister Eileen Sesk, founding member and later president of the Council, the idea for the organization came from Brother McHugh, a teacher with the Roman Catholic School Board of St. John's. Brother McHugh and others were impressed by the work being done by the music teachers special interest council, started the previous year. He hoped that French and other

language teachers could form a similar organization. Through discussion and informal meetings with some French teachers in the Roman Catholic system, particularly Roger Ozon, Maurice Champdoizeau, Brother Hepditch, and Sister Sesk, it was agreed that such a group should be formally established. On November 16, 1966, in a letter to Brother McHugh, the NTA approved a Constitution prepared by this first group of members. It granted the Modern and Classical Languages Specialist Council, as it was then called, permission to operate as a special interest council.

The ambitions of this early group are recorded in reports from the first eighteen months of operation. They hoped to form an organization for teachers of French and other languages, as well as for faculty members from Memorial University and officials from the Department of Education. The aims, stated in the Constitution (November 1966), were:

...to improve instruction in the modern and classical languages by:

- (a) increasing members' knowledge and understanding of the languages
- (b) seeking to improve teaching techniques and curriculum
- (c) acting as a clearing house for ideas and as a source of trends and new developments

- (d) furnishing recommendations and advice to the provincial executive and other committees of the NTA on matters affecting modern and classical languages in the schools.

The events of the first two years and the extent to which the group was guided by these objectives are detailed in the annual reports. The Report of 1967-68, filed by the President, Maurice Champdoizeau, indicated that there were four regular meetings and "...four other meetings which involved demonstrations in the teaching of French by teachers". At the year-end meeting there was a buffet supper and entertainment by students of Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School, under the direction of Sister Eileen Sesk, vice-president of the Council. Other than the account in the Annual Report there appear to be no records which might give an evaluation of the success of the presentations or their contribution to the professional development of those who attended.

The Annual Report of 1967-68 also highlighted several difficulties which the young organization had encountered. One problem was the very low interest in the Council which had been shown by Latin teachers. Latin was already declining as a part of the school curriculum, and the Council's activities were really geared to French, as may be seen by the composition of the executive. In any case, there were very

few references to Latin teaching or teachers. However, despite this low interest, a motion to shorten the name of the group, Modern and Classical Languages Specialist Council, to simply Modern Languages Council was defeated. Another problem was the lack of response to a request for all St. John's schools to "pool ideas" about teaching French; only one school board had submitted items. The executive was concerned about this reaction, which seemed to denote a lack of interest. It had also hoped to use this increased school contact to address what it described as "...serious French curriculum deficiencies" (Annual Report 1967-68). While complete minutes of each meeting were not kept, there must have been some discussion of both teacher qualifications and curriculum materials. Champdoizeau wrote in his Annual Report (1967-68) that the group had adopted the informal motto, "to do the best with what we have", a statement which suggests that the status quo was unsatisfactory, at least to the members of the fledgling organization.

Champdoizeau continued as President in 1968-69, supported by the executive members: Sister Sesk, Mr. Kielley, Brother Hepditch, Ms. Collins, and Ms. Gellately. In the Annual Report for that year Champdoizeau identified other problems the organization was encountering but gave no suggestions as to how they might be solved. Two items were seen as major hurdles: the lack of teachers with French degrees, and the difficulty of attracting members from areas of the province

other than the Avalon Peninsula. The Report also noted that oral French, in particular, needed improvement, but did not at this time suggest how this might be done.

Despite these difficulties the executive continued with its efforts to meet the objectives of the Constitution. One important development, in keeping with its mandate to improve teaching techniques and curriculum, was to focus on the collection of materials and information on French teaching that could be used by teachers. According to the Report of 1968-69, it was hoped that more members would be attracted by this service. Materials would include tapes, maps, books and records--in short, anything that would realize the goal of "...helping the French teachers at the elementary and high school levels" (Annual Report 1968-69). Success in this venture might have done much to establish the Council outside St. John's. Unfortunately the project had to be curtailed due to lack of money. The only income for the year was a \$125 flat grant from the NTA and revenue from membership fees which were set at two dollars.

At the end of the 1968-69 school year, the executive was clearly discouraged by what it viewed as lack of progress. In the Annual Report, Champdoizeau wrote of the small attendance at the regular Modern and Classical Languages Council.

The MCLC is not a vital organization. We feel this is the case because there are so few French specialists. ...those who teach French are many

times doing so of necessity rather than choice. Their interest in our council is as a result not all that we had hoped it might be.

Although this [attendance] is discouraging we intend to make every effort to vitalize the organization. The response to our province-wide request for memberships was likewise poor.

The records indicate that during the 1968-69 academic year, the Council held several meetings, but few teachers attended regularly.

The difficulties of these early years in the life of the organization may be attributed to several factors. While ostensibly a provincial body, the group met in the evenings in St. John's, usually at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School. For the most part, the group was composed of members who were either directly or indirectly associated with one school board in St. John's. As well, the Council was strongly linked with Memorial University. Three of the members of the early organization were, or soon became, members of the Department of Romance Languages at Memorial. In fact neither the executive, small general membership or guest speakers were representative of the actual population of French teachers of the time. The "average" teacher of French might have been intimidated by an organization in which the founding members were all highly trained in the academic study of the French language. In addition, many teachers could well have received

instruction in French from those who were in the Faculty at Memorial, since French was a compulsory university subject at that time. They might have been hesitant to join an organization where they would now be expected to interact, probably in French, with their former professors. The composition of the founding group, their strong French background, and interest in improving oral French, may have contributed to this hesitancy. At this time there were only a few schools where French was taught orally and many teachers had very little experience speaking French.

Given this situation, the aspirations of the Council in its early years were perhaps somewhat unrealistic. The group hoped to appeal to French "specialists"--those who had an academic major in French, but in gearing their activities to fit such a clientele, automatically excluded the majority of second language teachers, who, as Champdoizeau remarked, had only very limited French training. It is noteworthy that although the Council talked of appealing to French "specialists", no such designation was in use by the Department of Education. Consequently in theory and practice the clientele sought by the Council existed only in very limited numbers at that time.

The Council wished to exert some influence on the preparation of teachers for French. However, although the training of teachers had been the responsibility of the Faculty of Education since the early 1960's, there was no

Faculty member responsible for French teacher training. The Council was also interested in cooperation with the Department of Education. However, again, at this point, there was no one at the Department level with a particular responsibility for French education. The Council lobbied these agencies to improve French education but unfortunately, the other bodies did not have the infrastructure and personnel to develop the ideas of the Council.

The creation of the Modern Languages Councils was the result of the work of a handful of highly trained French educators based in St. John's. Without this group it is unlikely the Council would have started in the 1960s or perhaps even 1970s. However, the composition and location spawned two problems: the difficulty of attracting future members from an available population considerably less specialized than the founding group, and the added difficulty of attempting to establish what was intended to be a provincial group, while membership was, particularly at the executive level, limited to the St. John's area. The organization did not seem to be fully aware of the dichotomy between its aspirations and the realities of the status of French education and educators in the province. The only initiative in these early years which ignited the spark of interest from teachers outside St. John's was the offer of a teaching materials library, a project which would at first be

pursued, but subsequently be discontinued due to lack of funding.

Despite Champdoizeau's obvious concern about the possible demise of the Council at the end of the 1968-69 school year, the Council did continue in 1969-70. The Annual Report of 1969-70 indicates that five general meetings and two others were held, with an average attendance of twenty. Mrs. Morgan, a local teacher, had given a demonstration of Le Francais Partout teaching materials, while Mr. F. Park, of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), presented the Mauger series being used at the university.

The objectives of the Constitution were once more brought to the fore. In the 1969-70 Annual Registration form two special projects were indicated as the goals for the year:

- (1) Set up a center where French teachers may
find materials to help them with their
teaching (oral).
- (2) Really become province-wide.

In order to achieve this latter goal, letters were sent to forty-one schools across the provinces. In addition, telephone calls were made to fifty-three schools in the St. John's vicinity to identify the French teacher in the school. Personal letters were then sent to each individual French teacher identified.

This initiative met with some success since membership records indicated that, amongst a paid membership of twenty to

thirty, approximately half were teachers from communities across the province -- Daniel's Harbour, Trout River, Carbonear, Baie Verte, Port au Choix and Stephenville (Annual Report, 1969-70). This result led Champdoizeau to conclude in his Annual Report that, "...the interest shown by teachers from outside St. John's appears to be greater than that shown by teachers in the city" (Annual Report, 1969-70).

The success of this membership drive, particularly with teachers outside St. John's, might be attributed in part to the decision to set up a library for teachers. Materials were ordered in January, February and March, and a complete list appeared in the NTA Bulletin of April, 1969. The collection included filmstrips, records, books, tapes, and magazines.

During the same time period the Council also entered into discussions with the Faculty of Education to promote the use of a specific oral French program to upgrade the oral language skills of prospective French teachers. During the summer of 1970 Champdoizeau met with Dr. G.A. Hickman, Dean of the Faculty of Education, on at least one occasion to further comment on what was seen by at least some executive members of the Council as a lack of well-qualified French teachers. More specifically, as outlined in a letter to Dean Hickman, quoted in the 1969-70 Annual Report, Council asked the Faculty of Education to help prospective teachers who would be using the text Le Francais Partout, and requested that the Faculty of Education adopt the program Voix et Images de France, for

those students whose "fluency needed to be upgraded". However, since the teaching of French language skills was the responsibility of the Department of Romance Languages rather than that of the Faculty of Education, the latter did not assume this task. None the less the program was later used in the Summer Institute for French teachers, an in-service program developed by the Department of Education and the Faculty of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Romance Languages, to assist practising teachers to upgrade their oral skills and develop appropriate teaching techniques for the new audio-lingual programs adopted for use in the province.

Improving the quality of French instruction by improving the French language competence of teachers is a theme that was also very evident in correspondence with the provincial Department of Education and with the NTA. On June 12, 1970, Champdoizeau wrote to the Minister of Education, F.W. Rowe, expressing the Council's views on a number of items, including the fact that the numbers of French teachers in some elementary schools appeared to be decreasing. In his reply, Rowe clearly abrogated responsibility for increasing the status of French. He wrote:

In reply to your letter of June 12 expressing MLC's disappointment at a proposed loss of French teachers in the elementary grades, the Department of Education ... has not taken any action which

would reduce the allocation of French teachers to elementary schools. Any changes of this kind ... are made at the board level as a result of local decisions.

...it is unlikely that the Department will attempt to control the type of specialists which the school board may wish to hire.

It appears likely that the improvement of French language instruction in the province may be influenced by the work of groups such as the Modern Language Council to convince school boards, and the public in general, of its importance.

A letter dated June 19, 1970, and attached to the 1969-70 Annual Report is a reply from Shelburne McCurdy, Executive Secretary of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. McCurdy wrote to Champdoizeau:

Thank you for your letter containing the recommendation of the Modern Languages Council of the NTA that the NTA approach school boards with a view to stressing the importance of a second language in our schools. I will place this letter before our Table officers at their next meeting for their consideration.

During the 1969-70 school year the Council contributed to a French teachers' workshop held at Curling on the province's west coast. It also began to develop communication with

organizations outside the province. In October, 1969, Daphne Collins, an executive member, attended a meeting of the French Language Commission of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Two developments highlighted the 1970-71 school year. The first was a major conference/workshop sponsored by MLC, the Department of Romance Languages, Faculty of Education (Curriculum and Instruction) and the provincial Department of Education. The workshop was held in the G.A. Hickman Building at Memorial University, St. John's, with one hundred and ten teachers present. Although the majority were from the Avalon Peninsula, there were others representing all areas of the province. The workshop was organized through the Faculty of Education, which had by this time appointed a faculty member responsible for French teacher training. Professor Joan Netten, assisted by Maurice Champdoizeau of MLC, contacted all school districts to encourage them to send a representative. This was the first provincial conference for French teachers. In order to place French teaching in a national context, and to assist participants in developing a plan for Newfoundland, Dr. H.H. Stern, Director of the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and a world-renowned second-language educator, was invited to be the main speaker.

A survey administered at the end of the conference by the Faculty of Education provides a portrait of participants. Of the eighty-seven who completed the questionnaire, 60 percent

were teaching two or more other subjects in addition to French. More than half had not studied French beyond the second year level at MUN and eighty-six percent had no methodology courses (Faculty of Education Survey, October 24, 1970).

A second highlight was the presence of an MLC executive member at a major conference outside the province. The Annual Report of 1970-71 indicates that Chesley Warren, vice-president, attended the 2nd International Conference of the Ontario Modern Languages Teachers' Association and the New York Schools Association of Foreign Language Teachers. The invitation to attend this conference had been extended to Professor Joan Netten, who had been asked to work with the MLC since her appointment to the Faculty of Education. She felt that it would be more helpful to have instead a Newfoundland teacher attend. After the presentation of this idea at a meeting of MLC, Chesley Warren was chosen to attend the conference in Toronto.

According to the Annual Report (1970-71) Champdoizeau was still president. Warren was vice-president (although he assumed the office of President later in the year), Barbara Bown of Bell Island was secretary, and Margaret Stobie, St. John's, treasurer. There were forty-five paid members, twenty-five from St. John's. Meetings were held monthly at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School.

The 1971-72 school year saw the consolidation and continuation of some earlier initiatives. Ches Warren served as president, and the new executive consisted of Elizabeth Greene, Sister Sesk, Helen Hannan, M. Cotter as Communications officer (a first for the Council), and Champdoizeau as past-president. The MLC helped host the second provincial workshop which was held at Queen's College, St. John's, on March 24 and 25. This conference, organized primarily by Boyd Pelley, the first French consultant at the Department of Education, was sponsored by the Department of Education, the Faculty of Education, and the MLC. Two hundred teachers participated, with representatives from all school districts in the province present. The main purpose of the conference was to provide inservice training for teachers related to the teaching of two new sets of curriculum materials--Le Francais Partout and Cours moyen. Speakers from outside the province were invited to demonstrate the new materials. There were also scheduled social events, including entertainment by local French students (Annual Report 1971-72). President Warren in his Annual Report deemed the conference to have been, "...very successful, though the agenda seemed crowded".

Although membership levels were still not as high as the executive would have liked, they were increasing. In 1971-72 there were fifty paid members, with the fee again set at two dollars. Thirty of these were from St. John's. Despite the considerable participation of teachers at the conferences,

this interest did not, at this time, translate into MLC membership. This result may be due, at least in part, to the fact that the conferences were not yet associated with just the MCLC. The Council was only one of several agencies involved in the organizational aspects of the conferences that had been held.

In 1971-72 the site of the monthly meetings changed from Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School to the library of the provincial NTA building. As well, the NTA provided regular space for 'The French Corner' in The Bulletin (Annual Report 1971-72). Warren's Annual Report for 1971-72 indicated that progress had been made in furthering all aims of the Constitution, although reference to these aims was not explicit. He reported:

...materials added to resource centre at the NTA library ... worked with provincial curriculum committee and urged MUN and the Department to provide more French language and methodology courses ... need a credit course with emphasis on aural/oral...

Warren also noted that the Department of Education had, partly due to lobbying by MLC, sponsored a short immersion-like teacher inservice in the summer of 1971. The Annual Report (1971-72) indicated that MLC had become a member of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, with Sister Eileen Sesk as representative.

In an attempt to expand its membership and broaden its represented languages, the Council invited teachers of German at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School and Bishop's College to join, with "...the hope that they become a permanent and large part of the Council" (Annual Report, 1971-72). This statement seems to indicate that the Council may have been somewhat naive in its understanding of the province's curriculum, as the teaching of German was never widespread in the province, nor was it specifically encouraged by the Department of Education.

The themes of the beginning years continued to dominate. In the 1971-72 Annual Report, future plans included more province-wide membership, a newsletter, adding to the resource centre and continued lobbying of MUN to provide credit courses for aural/oral skills.

While the immediate response by agencies such as the NTA, the Department of Education, and MUN might not have been all that the executives hoped, the actions of these first years were nonetheless important. Teachers participated in major provincial workshops. It was through this participation that they began to be aware of national trends in second language teaching. In turn this activity gave executive members experience in planning further professional development initiatives at home. The staging of a provincial conference, with local and national speakers, would later become a key function of the Council. The sense of community felt by

teachers who attended these conferences would be vital in the forging of an identity for the organization.

One of the most noteworthy developments in this period mentioned in the Annual Registration but not in the Annual Report, was the start of several regional Councils. In the 1971-72 Annual Registration, Labrador, and the East Coast (St. John's) were listed as having regional councils, while "...three others are to be formed". However, no documentation gives details of these operations.

The Council's entrance unto the national scene during this period was also significant. The trips by executive members to various conferences and the membership of the Council in CASLT mark the beginning of long term communication and involvement at the national level with other teachers of French.

Finally, despite the still small membership and the executive's concern with this problem, some progress was made in moving the Council and its services away from its St. John's orientation. While the provincial workshops and the establishment of regional councils were probably the most important factors in this development, the resource centre, involvement of more teachers at the executive level, loosening of ties with the Department of Romance Languages, and increased communications were also contributing factors.

The Difficult Years, 1972-1978

The period from 1972-78 was a relatively inactive time for the Modern and Classical Languages Council. Despite the sense of optimism permeating the Annual Report of 1971-72, the next six years were marked by few new developments, and in fact a decline in some already begun - to the extent that the Council was almost defunct by 1978. Most of the documents available from this time relate to financial and administrative matters. There is little information on the French resource project, professional inservice, or interaction with MUN and the Department of Education. It is reasonable to assume that there was little activity of this type initiated by the Council.

In 1972-73 there were forty-five paid members. According to correspondence between N. Ray Wight, secretary-treasurer of the NTA and Helen Hannon, treasurer of MCLC, the Council received \$310 from the NTA, a \$200 basic grant, and \$110 based on membership. They were also entitled to a conference grant of \$200 but there is no indication that this money was applied for, and, in fact, no conference was held. During 1972-73 Sister Eileen Sesk, an executive member attended the conference of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers at Regina and was subsequently elected secretary-treasurer of that organization. (Sister Sesk would go on to become the first female President of CASLT.)

The most significant development of this period was the growth of regional councils. In 1973-74, two regional Councils outside St. John's were active. One was based in Grand Falls and the other in Labrador City. The Regional Special Interest Council for Central Newfoundland was led by the president, C.L. Buffett, with other executive members being Grace Gill, Beverley Butler, Brother Brian English, and Sheila Redmond. Its meetings were held at Grand Falls Academy, and it listed its potential membership as thirty. No indications of actual membership are given. The second group, the Carol Lake French Language Council, was led by president Wilson Horwood, with Elizabeth Sowka, J. Wyatt, and Ray O'Brien, as members of the executive. Both groups, according to the Regional Special Interest Councils' Annual Registration Forms for 1973-74, applied for and received a \$200 grant from the NTA, even though the Central Newfoundland group established its official start-up date as September of 1974.

At the provincial level Sister Eileen Sesk was President with Hubert Hillier, Arlene McCann, Sister V. Aucoin and Allan Goodridge holding the other executive positions. The Annual Registration form gave the total provincial membership for 1973-74 at fifty.

The next three years were characterized by membership loss, communication difficulties and financial problems. It was definitely a period of decline for the organization. By 1974-75, the Annual Registration reported a membership of only

twenty-five, down fifty percent from the previous year. In both 1974-75 and 1975-76 income for the Council, from all sources, was approximately \$1000 per year. Three regionals were listed in the Registration of 1974-75: St. John's, Labrador City, and Grand Falls but in the space reserved for their activities, nothing was recorded.

Money granted to the MLC in 1975-76 was substantially less than the amounts requested by the Council. The executive had requested \$1975 for the 1976-77 year. In responding to this request, Merle Vokey of the NTA wrote to Allan Goodridge on June 15, 1976:

...the Special Interest Council Coordinating Committee felt that it was unlikely that it would be able to accede to your request of \$1975.00 for the coming year. ...your Council should have the first opportunity to make some suggestive cutbacks.

While asking direction from the MCLC, Vokey went on to describe two possible cuts: send an observer from the St. John's area (as opposed to another part of the province) to the NTA annual general meeting to be held in St. John's, and secondly, reduce the cost of executive meetings. This had been listed as a major budgetary item.

By 1976-77 membership levels were at their lowest and initiatives and activities were at a virtual standstill. The provincial executive for the year - Alan Goodridge, President, along with Elizabeth Sowka, Brenda Keough, Sister Sesk and

Elizabeth Murphy, were all, with the exception of Sowka, from the St. John's area and yet no executive meetings were reported for the year. According to the Annual Registration there were thirty-five members. However, in fact the membership fee, which had by now been raised to \$3.50, had been collected from only nine people. There were, according to the same report, no executive meetings or in-service activities. The Council spent \$955 to send two executive members to out-of-province conferences, that of the Ontario Modern Languages Teachers Association and CASLT. Only two regionals were listed: St. John's and Labrador City, but again no reports were filed by these branches. Since there were only nine paid members the conclusion must be drawn that there were few members other than those serving in executive positions. In answer to the question "Does your Council meet on a regular basis?", the executive had responded "no" (Annual Registration 1976-77).

Despite these obviously serious difficulties, executive plans for 1977-78 were ambitious. They requested \$3000 for a workshop, another \$3000 to send four people to a Canadian and an American conference, and a further \$1382 for other expenses. The NTA's response to this request came from George Williams, Executive Assistant, Professional Development. Writing to Allan Goodridge, Williams reduced the out-of-province items to \$600 and asked for further details with respect to the proposed St. John's workshop. This information

was sent to the NTA. Williams, in the Fall of 1977-78, acknowledged receipt of the conference information and granted the Council an additional \$2200 for the conference.

At this point some pressure was being exerted on the MLC to become more active. There was a need to undertake some type of provincial professional development activities in order to maintain the existence of the Council. In fact, it may be suggested that the increase in membership in the Council in 1973; and the creation of the first regional councils were the results of the success of the first two provincial workshops in which members of the MLC had participated. The subsequent decline in membership and the number of regional councils was undoubtedly related to the lack of high profile activity (such as that associated with a provincial conference) on the part of the provincial council.

One of the difficulties facing the Council was related to the membership of the executive groups. The provincial executive was primarily composed of teachers in the St. John's area, and the distinction between the provincial executive and that of the St. John's Regional Council often became confused. This problem later led to some administrative misunderstandings and financial difficulties.

However, perhaps the more serious problem was a lack of experience in professional development amongst the executive members. Although definitely interested in the Council, and committed to French education no substantial training in adult

organizational leadership had been provided. In spite of many meetings and discussions, no definite activities materialized.

In 1976-77, it became apparent to the executive that a third provincial workshop should be undertaken. In the spring of 1977, the President, Alan Goodridge, approached Professor Netten at Memorial University to ask for assistance in organizing an annual conference. Netten prepared an outline for workshop organization, lists of necessary committees, and duties for each committee. The Council accepted this information, proceeded to establish committees and organize a provincial in-service. This conference was really the first one which was organized and carried out by the MLC. It proved successful in establishing the Council as a truly professional group which could manage its own affairs and effectively deliver professional development training to its membership.

At this conference, annual elections were held. A new executive was chosen, and a new era in the life of the Council began.

The Years of Growth, 1978-1989

The year 1978-79 was truly a watershed year for the Modern Languages Council. For the first time the president and almost all executive members were from off the Avalon Peninsula. Being centred in a different area seemed to mark a new beginning. The executive recaptured many of the

professional development initiatives that executives had planned in the first several years of the Council's existence. The executive of 1978-79 did a great deal to return the Council to its original aims and to re-establish a growth pattern.

The Regional Council of Labrador City, the Carol Lake French Language Council, was quite important in the revitalization of the provincial MLC. The President for 1978-79 was Elizabeth Sowka, a high school teacher in Labrador City. Other executive members were Past President, Alan Goodridge, Mount Pearl, Ray O'Brien, then at Marystown, but previously of Labrador City, and Sister Joyce Murray, Raymond Condon, and Betty Tobin, all of Labrador City. Wayne Russell, present executive director with the NTA, says that it is not surprising that Labrador City would have been a growth centre for the Council. The area's proximity to Québec, its pool of bilingual people, and the growing emphasis on French education in Labrador West were contributing factors. Added to this was the favourable financial state of the school district, its emphasis on professional development and its active recruitment of people who would likely be interested and involved in professional activities.

Some of the executives main concerns were similar to those noted in Warren's Annual Report of 1971-72. One of these was the problem of low membership. According to an MCLC update written by Sowka in January of 1979, a major thrust for

the year would be to establish two-way contact with all those involved with language teaching. Sowka expressed dismay that out of the possible 700 to 800 French teachers eligible for membership, very few were members of the Council. Another goal mentioned in this same update was "to establish a system of clear and detailed records so the transition to new executives can be done smoothly". This reaction was in response to the difficulties the Labrador City based executive had in establishing itself and getting access to records of the previous executive.

During the winter of 1978-79 several pieces of correspondence involving present and past executives as well as the NTA, indicated some problem with the transfer of power to Labrador. On January 19, 1979 Sowka wrote to Merle Vokey, NTA, stating that the Labrador City executive was having problems receiving documentation, materials and monies from the outgoing executive. The situation had not been fully resolved by the executive meeting of February 10, 1979. The minutes note that:

Concern was expressed about the St. John's branch using the same account as previously used by the provincial council and over its tendency thus far to function somewhat as a provincial. It was agreed that A. Goodridge would take up these issues with the St. John's executive.

A key development in 1978-79 was the work and growth of additional regional councils. The Annual Registration listed three regionals; St. John's, Labrador West, and the Burin Peninsula, while two others were being formed or reestablished, one in Central Newfoundland and the other in the Port-au-Port area.

Financial matters were becoming increasingly complex. The year's budget exceeded \$10,000, with money being used to fund a conference, for delegate travel to out-of-province conferences, and for executive meetings. The Annual Registration for 1978-79 stated that the Department of Education had provided \$6000 for teachers to attend a conference in 1977-78; however, in a note in early spring of 1979 to school district French program coordinator, Ray Condon, secretary-treasurer of the Council, wrote that it was highly unlikely there would be any funding to assist with transportation in 1978-79.

In other matters, the 1978-79 executive, in conjunction with a by-law revision committee, added the position of past president to the executive, and combined the positions of secretary and treasurer. At an executive meeting on February 10, 1979, it was suggested that future provincial executives should meet a minimum of three times per year. The first meeting of each executive's term of office would include representatives from each regional council. It was also suggested that copies of annual reports be distributed to any

new and existing regional councils. At the same meeting other by-law revisions were proposed. First, that the name of the Council, officially Modern and Classical Languages Specialist Council, be changed to Modern Languages Council/Conseil des Langues Modernes. A second revision was proposed to allow for two categories of membership - active and associate. At the same meeting the executive discussed creating a logo, undertaking a membership drive, and expressed concern that a large portion of the budget was spent on travel. The minutes indicate that MLC felt the NTA should study this latter issue.

During 1978-79 the Council, particularly the executive, was involved in several issues and projects that helped foster the aims of the organization. The Council started to become more knowledgeable about French immersion programs. Ray Condon attended and reported on the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers. Immersion sessions were also included in the schedule for the MLC conference. Early in the year Sowka sent a brief on the role of French in post-secondary education to Merle Vokey, Director of Professional Development with the NTA. The executive encouraged participation by French teachers in "Teachers Talking to Teachers" (T4) a professional development program of the NTA. For the first time, a newsletter was produced. From April 26-28, MLC held a provincial conference at St. John's. Plans for the workshop began early in the year. Topics addressed included oral testing, motivation, careers

using French, compulsory or optional secondary French, and French immersion. One hundred and twenty-seven teachers attended the conference, which was held on the campus of Memorial University.

In her Annual Report at the end of the school year, Sowka called 1978-79 "...a reorganizational year for the Council". The work of the Council supported that statement. Through its newsletter and participation in the T4 program, as well as through the provincial conference, the Council acted as a clearing house for ideas and a source of new developments. It sought to improve teaching techniques, and gave advice to the NTA and the Department of Education on matters related to French education. With this commitment and carefully planned program, the executive had no difficulty building its membership. By the end of 1978-79, there were one hundred and fifty-two paid members.

In many ways the successes of 1978-79 were a reflection of the increasing emphasis on French education at the provincial and national levels. There was a federal political commitment to French, as demonstrated by monies made available to the provinces through a variety of programs: teacher bursaries for study in French areas, travel subsidies to conferences, conference grants, and a special grant for the funding of French program coordinators for school districts. It was a time of new curriculum and methodologies, the expansion of core French and the beginning of French

immersion. By this time many teachers had experienced the Summer Institutes and were more competent and confident. All of these factors, combined with the energies of an enthusiastic, experienced executive contributed to the successes of 1978-79, and formed the basis for continued expansion into the 1980s.

The high level of activity of 1978-79 continued the following year under the direction of President Glenn Loveless, French program coordinator with the Pentecostal Assemblies School Board. A new slate of officers representing several geographical areas and denominations was chosen: Peter Heffernan, Cynthia Haynes, Cecelia Bungay, with Elizabeth Sowka as past president. The total revenue for the year as reported in the December, 1980, newsletter was \$17,736.80, a significant proportion coming from federal funding made available through the provincial Department of Education. Membership again increased, with the newsletter reporting one hundred and ninety members.

Funding was not a serious problem for the MLC at this time. Starting March 1, 1974, a formal agreement between the provinces and the federal government had been implemented. Through this arrangement, coordinated by the Office of the Secretary of State, monies were given to provincial governments to create or subsidize initiatives related to bilingualism in education. In the beginning funds from this plan were used for teacher travel. This use was short lived.

However, funding was consistently made available to help with other costs related to provincial conferences. During the 1979-80 executive's term of office, MLC lobbied to make certain that these federal grants went directly into bilingual education instead of being diverted into general revenue. On April 29, 1980, a petition signed by 130 French teachers requesting that the funds be used for the purpose intended by the federal government was presented to Education Minister Lynn Verge. The government agreed with the MLC and on June 9, 1980, Loveless, on behalf of the Council wrote to Verge congratulating her on this positive step.

At the beginning of 1979-80, the executive helped in the preparation and organization of a number of briefs reacting to the Task Force on the Reorganization of the Senior High School program. At a general provincial Task Force Meeting of October 19-20, 1979, delegates "...expressed great concern over the low profile given to the Religious Education, French...components".

Submissions were made by the Burin, St. John's, Carol Lake and Western Regionals, as well as the provincial executive. MLC also received copies of reactions formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee of French Coordinators and several individual coordinators. Among the problems noted by these groups was the overall status of French, the lack of reference to French at the primary and elementary grades and the low profile given French at the senior high school level.

A mid-year update for the 1979-80 Council listed the accomplishments of the MLC from September to December, 1980. Briefs had been prepared to react to the Task Force as well as to the Sub-Committee on Curriculum Reorganization. There was a membership drive and a published newsletter. Plans were being made to revitalize the central regional, and a representative, Elizabeth Sowka, had been sent to the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers Conference. Preliminary plans for a provincial conference were underway. This activity was expected to occupy the executive during the remainder of the year. The executive was also considering preparing a brief history of the Council, but this project did not materialize.

The provincial conference was held at St. John's from April 30 - May 2, 1980. One hundred and eighty teachers gathered to participate in a selection of fifteen small group sessions and to listen to key note speaker, Roger Tremblay of the University of Shebrooke, Québec. The event also saw the first major formal banquet hosted by MLC at a provincial meeting.

That 1979-80 was another year of growth and development for the MLC is evidenced by the expanding range of Council activities, the increase in membership and the size of the annual conference. According to two other executive members much of this success was due to the leadership provided by

President Glenn Loveless. Peter Heffernan wrote to Loveless on May 7, 1980:

...I want you to know that my collaboration with you during one year on the MLC executive has been a most pleasant experience for me. Your cooperative leadership qualities...must be a boon to your district.

This was echoed in a separate letter from Elizabeth Sowka expressing, "...sincere appreciation for our year's collaboration where I always felt the truthful interest [to be] for the Modern Languages Council".

The development of the regional councils was a major characteristic of this period. The Carol Lake Regional Council, for example, had about twenty members. They were involved in regular meetings, school French Clubs, professional representation at provincial and national conferences, as well as local workshops and social events. Similar activities were undertaken by other branches, such as the Burin and Western. In addition, the Central Newfoundland Council Regional, this time based in Lewisporte, was reactivated in January, 1980.

On December 6, 1980, the Western Regional, with approximately twenty-five paid members, held "une journée d'immersion" at Dhoon Lodge on the Port-au-Port Peninsula. Under the presidency of Sister Gladys Bozec, French program co-ordinator for the Port-au-Port Roman Catholic School Board,

this regional Council also became the first to produce a regional newsletter, sent to its members on December 3, 1980.

For 1980-81, the provincial executive moved to the Clarendville area, with Roger Down, French program coordinator with the Bonavista-Trinity-Placentia Integrated Board, serving as President. This was a time of continued expansion for the Council. It strove to fulfill its objectives of increasing members' knowledge, improving methodology, serving as a source of trends and ideas, and advising other agencies on matters related to modern languages, specifically French.

According to the Annual Report for the year, the main issues addressed were the formation of the NTA's policy on language rights, the status of French in the reorganized high school program, the lack of recognition given to French-Newfoundlanders in the senior high course Newfoundland Culture 1200, a compulsory Social Studies course; lobbying for a 'centre pédagogique' (a centre for French language teaching, resources meetings and social gatherings to be located at Memorial University), and preparing for the provincial conference.

In 1980-81, the NTA looked to the MLC for help in writing a policy statement on minority language education. However, while some members supported MLC's involvement with the project, others did not. In a letter to President Down, Felicity Webster expressed concern, stating that the MLC's priority should be second language education, and that it

would be more appropriate for a francophone association to advise the NTA on this matter. However, despite at least some internal disagreement, the preparation of the policy was listed as one of the major successes of the year.

The status of French in the proposed reorganized high school program continued to be perceived as a problem. Correspondence from several district program coordinators for French, the Department of French and Spanish at Memorial University, and the MLC, all directed to the Department of Education were unanimous in their view that the status of French was being significantly lowered by the optional nature of the courses and their categorization.

Another important matter, according to the Annual Report, was discussion with the Department of Education of the need for a "centre pédagogique". Federal funds had been used for research centres in some other provinces, and the possibility of developing such a centre had been debated at Memorial University. Although the idea was around for some years, and a proposal was eventually submitted by the Department of French and Spanish, the project did not receive federal approval.

The provincial conference and annual general meeting was the main professional development session for the year. The conference, held at Gander in April of 1981, saw a record attendance of two hundred and thirty-eight teachers. The total budget was \$4,431. Apparently special funding was

available for teacher travel to Gander. On April 7, 1981, Marie Christine Halliday, French Consultant with the Department of Education, wrote to Roger Down that, "...funding will definitely be available for the travel expenses of teachers who attend the conference". Current trends in second language methodology was the focus of the conference with twelve to sixteen special speakers providing a variety of small group sessions.

In other professional development matters, Cynthia Haynes, an executive member, designed a questionnaire to explore difficulties associated with the teaching of Passeport Francais, the program materials for grades 7 to 11. Haynes cited in her opening that the work was justified because, "One of the functions of the Modern Languages Council is to work toward the improvement of instruction". Related to the senior high school program, the MLC was still concerned about the lack of information on the "French fact" in Newfoundland, information that it thought should be included in the Newfoundland Culture 1200 course.

The growth of this period continued into the next several years. The Annual Registration for 1981-82 reported that the budget for that year exceeded \$10,000 and that there were two hundred and sixty-six members from many different areas of the province; St. John's, Fogo Island, Port-au-Port, Labrador.

Mike Brazil, who had been hired as French Program Co-ordinator by the Roman Catholic School Board of St. John's,

previously from Labrador, was provincial president, with R. Down (Clareville), G. Pack (later deceased in a motorcycle accident), F. Webster (Labrador), and D. Winsor (Labrador) being the other executive members. As is evident, provincial executive was again strongly weighted by participation from Labrador.

In response to earlier concerns about the treatment of the "French fact" in the Newfoundland Culture course, this executive volunteered to develop a presentation on the influence of francophones on Newfoundland history and culture. This information would be available for NTA branch professional days. MLC also continued to make representation to the Department of Education on matters relating to French education and had a member appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Bilingualism in Education.

Regional councils in Labrador, Burin, and on the West Coast were particularly active although Labrador was experiencing some problems with access to monies. On December 8, 1981, Elizabeth Sowka expressed the dissatisfaction of the Regional Council in a letter to provincial president Mike Brazil:

...I cannot but remind you that we have gone through four months without any financial support from the Provincial Modern Languages Council.

...We have [tried] to keep awake the interest of the twenty-two members of the Carol Lake French

Club but we have not been able to realize our Christmas visitation to the schools of Fermont, nor the exchange with the French Students of Labrador City Collegiate. I ask you not to delay any further our planned activities.

In addition to highlighting an administrative difficulty, Sowka's letter gave an indication of the activities of the Regional Council. Similar activities were taking place on the West Coast, and in Burin where, according to its Annual Report, the events sponsored by the Regional Council included meetings, games, class activities, special meals, newsletters, and the initiation of a scholarship.

The Annual General Meeting and Conference was held in Gander in April of 1982. Records do not indicate the number of sessions or delegates. However, a letter to Mike Brazil from Joan Netten, professor at the Faculty of Education praised the conference. On May 5, 1982, Netten wrote a note of congratulations to the MLC with regard to its successful meeting, noting the friendly atmosphere and the social and academic community that MLC was beginning to create.

Brazil continued as president in 1982-83 with Dyane Winsor, by then French Co-ordinator in Corner Brook, Paul Russell, Raymond Dérouet, a francophone with the Avalon Consolidated School Board, and Roger Down (Clareville) filling other positions. Even though the Council had experienced considerable growth over the past several years,

the executive still felt that there was a great deal of room for improvement. At an executive meeting of October 2, 1982 this concern was recorded:

It was thought by all present that of the approximately 900 teachers in the province teaching French, [that] more than 280 should be Council members. An all out membership drive should be launched...

At the same meeting the executive discussed primary French, teacher working conditions, the possibility of developing both test and supplementary resource packages, as well as the possible provincial reorganization of the junior high school. Later in the year there was some discussion of the impact of French immersion on other teachers. In a letter to Merle Vokey, NTA, Brazil suggested that all the effects and implications of French immersion programs had not yet been explored.

Many of these issues would provide the focus for MLC's work for the next several years; the expansion of French programs such as primary French and French immersion, the use of supplementary resources (aided by core French supplementary materials grants to school districts), student evaluation, and the accommodation of the needs of such a diverse group as "French teachers", who might range from a person with very limited French and methodology background to a native speaker trained for French immersion. During this four year period

from 1978 to 1982 it may be seen that the MLC had become a viable organization involved in a host of complex issues related to the professional development of an increasing number of teachers of French throughout the province.

The records for the next several years show that both the growth pattern and types of initiatives established in the early 1980s continued. Mike Brazil remained as president until a new executive was elected for 1983-84. This executive, which would serve for two years, saw Sister Gladys Bozec become president, with other members being Herb Pack, Joe Dicks, and Ed Smith. Mike Brazil and Paul Russell were also executive members, occupying the positions of Past-President and Past Secretary-Treasurer respectively. Major projects for the year again included plans for a Fall 1984 conference. (The planned Spring conference scheduled for 1982-83 was cancelled due to a labour dispute between the NTA and the provincial government.) There were regular, lengthy executive meetings during this time with frequent discussions of newsletter articles, federal funding for various initiatives, conference planning, and the provincial Ministry's plan to reorganize the junior high school curriculum. Some regionals were active, specifically Burin, Western, and Labrador West. Executive members attended various out-of-province conferences and used this experience to plan provincial workshops. According to the minutes of the May 26, 1984 executive meeting, for example, two executive

members, Sister Bozec, and Herb Pack, gave reports of their attendance at the annual CASLT conference held in Winnipeg. Sessions had focused on communicative language, oral evaluation, learning centers, using "la chanson québécoise", and French immersion. The executive, in turn, used these topics to provide focus for the provincial conference scheduled for Stephenville.

During 1983-84, a MLC representative served on a Ministerial Advisory Committee studying French programs in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the same year the Council was asked, and agreed to support a bilingual resources center for Memorial University. According to the minutes of the May 26, 1984 executive meeting, this facility, as described by the Department of French and Spanish at Memorial, could:

...supplement the library and resource facilities already on campus. Access could be provided to francophones and French language teachers across the island, with the possibility of satellite centers.... The center would also contain rooms for French evening classes and possible headquarters for the summer immersion program held in St. John's.

However, the center, like the proposed "centre pédagogique" discussed several years earlier, did not materialize, and the idea was dropped.

In the 1984-85 school year, the same executive continued to pursue its goals, particularly in the drive to increase membership. In the Fall of 1984, Sister Bozec wrote to all districts in the province asking for a complete list of French teachers. In their reports several coordinators indicated satisfaction with the executive's direction. Pierce Power of the Roman Catholic School Board for Exploits-White Bay wrote to the President on January 23, 1985:

There is no doubt that the Modern Language Council is one of the more active of the Special Interest Councils of the N.T.A. You are to be congratulated, Sister, for your good work as President of the Council.

Another major conference was held in Corner Brook in October 1985 with Pierre Calvé as keynote speaker and a choice of approximately fifteen small group sessions.

In addition to these projects, during its two years in office this executive submitted a report to the NTA's Junior High Sub-Committee. It continued to be represented on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Bilingual Programs. The Council also volunteered to host the 1986 CASLT conference, since 1986 would mark the twentieth anniversary of the Modern Languages organization. However, this request was not granted.

The Council continued to deal with many of these same issues in 1985-86. A St. John's based executive, with Ches

Warren, program coordinator with the Avalon Consolidated School Board, as president, planned another provincial conference. Teachers gathered in St. John's to listen to keynote speaker, Dr. H.H. Stern, and to participate in a number of small group workshops for core and immersion programs.

The activities of 1986-87 were summarized in the President's Report given at the Annual General Meeting, October 17, 1987. President Bruce Sheppard reported that the scope of the executive's work was curtailed due to the amount of time spent planning the annual conference. He suggested that the Council consider establishing a separate conference committee to alleviate this strain on the executive. At the same meeting concerns were raised by some members about the lack of parallel programming for French immersion and, on another matter--the low level of involvement with the Council by MUN's Department of French and Spanish. A third major topic was the release of the Department of Education's Policy Advisory Committee Report on French Programs. An election of officers for 1987-88 was conducted with Bruce Sheppard returned as President supported by executive members: Janette Planchat, Paula Quigley, Pat Greene, Joyce Fewer, and Ches Warren (past president).

Executive minutes show 1987-88 to have been a busy year for the Council. The executive was involved in planning a conference for the following year, preparing a submission for

the NTA's Teacher Education Review Committee, a membership newsletter, reacting to the NTA French Education Policy, and committee work on French Immersion Programs. In addition, the Council helped fund executive travel to various national conferences. By 1988 the total operating budget exceeded \$20,000.

However, even with this obvious success, some comments in the minutes were reminiscent of the earliest years of the Council's operation. For example, one of the issues raised at a meeting on December 2, 1987 was the difficulty of keeping accurate membership lists and attracting new members. While there were several hundred members, it seemed that there was no procedure for recording their names and addresses. The executive decided that:

...the Secretary would write the Co-ordinator, or Contact Person, for French for each school board, asking for a list of the teachers involved in teaching French, the grade(s) taught and the name and address of each teacher's school.

Despite the success of the Council on many fronts, there was still no readily available, accurate list of members and potential members. As well, regular communication with the province's French teachers still proved to be difficult to establish and maintain. Even with its efforts to be more inclusive, almost all presidents were outside the "average teacher" designation; most being program coordinators at

district offices. While each executive was involved with a number of projects, the greatest emphasis was placed on the hosting of an annual provincial conference. With increased membership, greater emphasis on the teaching of French, federal funding, and the expansion of French programs, the demands on provincial MLC executives also dramatically increased.

Conclusion

The history of the Modern Languages Council may be divided into three time periods: from its founding in 1966 to the end of the 1971-72 school year, from September of 1972 until June of 1978, and from the start of the 1978-79 school year to that of 1988-89. All three periods share a commitment to the original aims of the MLC as outlined in the Constitution of 1966. While these four goals have not always been explicitly stated in support of various projects, they have nonetheless implicitly guided the direction of the organization as it has sought to improve French teaching in the province.

The first period, from its inception in 1966 until 1971-72 was characterized by difficulties associated with the start of an organization that was in some respects, ahead of and somewhat removed from, the realities of teaching French in the province at that time. The members of that period, and the

executives in particular, were highly trained, fluent speakers of French, all from the St. John's area. Their aims and objectives, the push for improved oral skills, the use of French at various MLC gatherings, as well as the term "specialists", and their strong connection with the academic French community at Memorial University, all reflected their own orientation. Despite their commitment, the goals and projects of this funding group were perhaps quite distant from the circumstances and needs of the "average" Newfoundland French teacher, who, as Champdoizeau himself remarked, was often teaching French out of necessity and not always because of competency.

The considerable lobbying by these early executive members, their frequent communication with the Faculty of Education and the Department of Education met with limited immediate success. However, this result was due not to the legitimacy of the requests but rather in part to the inexperience of the executive members, and to a greater extent, to the lack of French education infrastructure in the province. For example, in the beginning years neither the Faculty nor the Department had personnel trained in and responsible for this area. The lack of knowledge about, and direction for, French as a school subject was evident. Given this situation it is not surprising that executives did not get the hoped for responses.

However, even with these difficulties, the formation of a special interest council was a significant step. Without the perseverance and accomplishments of this devoted group it is unlikely that the organization would have started until perhaps the mid 1970s. According to Wayne Russell, present Executive Director of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, the St. John's area with its larger population and university community was perhaps the only part of the province that had, in the 1960s, the pool of trained French teachers capable of starting and maintaining such an organization. While their ideas may have been somewhat idealistic (for example, they hoped that Latin and German language teachers would become significant parts of the Council at a time when the teaching of Latin was rapidly declining and German was taught in only two schools), their commitment resulted in the start of a number of initiatives that would reach fruition only in the 1980s. No doubt their lobbying played a large part in the start of the Summer Institutes for French teachers, in the appointment of persons responsible for French at the Department, and in the increased awareness of French with other agencies.

By the end of this period the Council was experiencing growth in numbers and in projects. While for the most part this vigor did not continue in the second period, it is interesting to note that in the growth period starting in the late 1970s, the plans of the executives closely resembled the

original suggestions put forward by the early executives in 1970-1972.

Unfortunately the intervening period, from September of 1972 until the 1977-78 school year, saw a downturn in the activities of the Council. During this time the Council declined steadily, until by 1977-78 there were no specific MLC projects, only nine paid members and irregular meetings. The executives of this time appeared to have positive ideas, but seemed to lack the organizational and communication skills that were needed to translate these ideas into actions. Records from these years are often sketchy and incomplete.

Three developments sustained the Council: the formation of regional groups, involvement by several members in national French teacher organizations, with the increased exposure to conferences and other professional development that this brought, and thirdly, toward the end of this time, the infusion of federal monies for French education. The appointment of appropriate personnel at MUN's Faculty of Education, a French consultant with the Department, French program coordinators in school district offices, upgrading of French teachers through the Summer Institutes, increased emphasis on professional development by the NTA - all of these were in the beginning stages and provided the avenues through which the MLC could pursue its agenda.

These factors and circumstances came together in the third period--the great growth period for the Modern Languages

Council. A change in the location of the executive seemed to represent a new start for the organization. The executive of Labrador City and those of following years were more highly trained in professional development issues and activities than had been their predecessors. Some responsibility for this change lies with the NTA which was beginning to offer special training to the executive members of its sub-organizations. Executive members had often participated in a number of provincial and national projects and could bring these experiences to their work with MLC. The selection of executive members from different regions of the province gave the organization a wider appeal. With the general increase and interest in French in Canada, more French programs were offered in school districts, and the number of teachers of French increased. As more provincial conferences were held, and more teachers took advantage of the Summer Institutes and summer bursary programs, the prospective membership of the organization gradually became better trained. All of these factors contributed to the creation of a pool of French teachers who could become members of the Council. The continuous growth in the late 1970s, through the 1980s, to the present, indicates successive executives' abilities to attract members, mainly through a very well-received annual conference. Paradoxically, the success of the conference also poses a problem. As previously mentioned the burden of organizing the conference poses a strain on the executive's

work, and as will be shown in Chapter 4, the conference is seen by many teachers as the only benefit stemming from membership. Generally, teachers who cannot or will not attend the annual conference have significant doubts about the value of MLC membership. Even with the increased emphasis on French, and increased training, many teachers of French have not become MLC members.

The executive of the first Modern Languages Council developed four aims for the organization. These objectives have not been amended since the group's founding. An analysis of available information indicates that despite a difficult period from 1972-78, the Council has emerged in more recent years as a vibrant, province-wide organization that provides a valuable service to some French teachers and to the parent NTA body. However, it is also true that despite its rapid growth many of the same problems faced by recent executives were concerns of founding members. These include the perennial question of attracting people, especially those with limited formal French training, communication difficulties, how to involve classroom teachers at the executive level, and the cost and travel associated with meetings and conferences.

This study will go on to further examine these issues through a survey of French teachers. It will assess the influence of the MLC on the professional lives of present French teachers. The survey and the historical analysis will together describe the role of the MLC and establish its degree

of importance as an organization for modern language educators.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

As stated in Chapter 1, no detailed study of the Modern Languages Council, its membership and activities had been done. The documents used to provide a history of the organization together with other related information gave an overview of the activities of the MLC. However, further study, in the form of a survey of French teachers was the only feasible way to ascertain present opinions, a description of membership, and to garner suggestions for future developments. Given the setting for French education in Newfoundland and Labrador, with various initiatives for teacher training/retraining and curricula matters being discussed by both the Department of Education and the NTA, this was a crucial and opportune time to analyse the role French teachers believe the MLC has played and should play with respect to their professional development, as well as to evaluate to what extent the MLC had been able to attract membership from the general population of teachers of French in the province.

The survey was conducted to determine the extent of present French teacher participation in the Modern Languages Council, the nature and extent of the help teachers feel the MLC has given them, and suggestions for the future direction of the Council. Information was also gathered to be used to describe members of MLC as opposed to non-members, and to identify obstacles to membership. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the characteristics of members of the MLC in terms of age and sex? Do these differ from those of non-members?
2. Are factors of school size, geographical location, teacher's background in French, and grade level taught related to participation in the Modern Languages Council? More specifically, are teachers in rural or urban areas or those with an operationally defined strong or weak French background more likely to be members?
3. What obstacles prevent teachers from becoming MLC members and/or attending annual conferences? How can these difficulties be overcome? Do teachers feel that their lack of training in French limits participation in Council activities?
4. How does the MLC contribute to teacher professional growth? Do teachers feel that information about the Council is readily available?
5. What should the Modern Languages Council do to best help French teachers in the next several years?

Design

The instrument used for the survey was a seven page, thirty-three item questionnaire. It was designed to be easily and quickly completed, hoping that this would facilitate a high response rate. However, there were also several open-

ended items, and ample space was allotted for additional comments.

The questionnaire had four sections:

- Section A. General Information
- age, sex, teaching experience, general geographical location, school size.
- Section B. Education
- university training including degrees, numbers of French courses, methodology courses, time in a French milieu
- Section C. Teaching Situation
- French programs taught, percentage of instructional day spent teaching French, enjoy teaching French.
- Section D. Participation in the Modern Languages Council
- present and past membership; attendance at annual conferences and factors affecting attendance, use of information, executive positions, membership in other French teacher organizations and other special interest councils.
 - open-ended items
 - help provided by MLC
 - suggestions for future activities
 - additional comments

- Likert-type scale (5 items)
- series of five statements which were to be responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree; all statements were related to the role of the MLC.

With the permission of the district superintendent, the instrument was piloted with a group of French teachers of the Deer Lake-St. Barbe South Integrated School Board, Deer Lake, Newfoundland. Based on their comments, as well as those of several experts in French education at school, district and university levels, some revisions were made and the final instrument developed. A copy of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix A. The questionnaire was submitted to and approved by the Faculty Committee for Ethical Review of Research involving Human Subjects, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Sample Population

All French teachers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador were deemed to be members of the population. This group numbered approximately eight hundred.

The population was stratified into two groups: teachers in elementary schools (K-6) and teachers in high schools (generally grade 7 to level III). It was anticipated that these divisions would overlap, since in some instances, school

buildings house classes from kindergarten to grade 9 or from grade 4 to level 3 (grade 12). This possibility was confirmed. Consideration was given to further stratifying the sample according to rural/urban school location. However, a tally indicated an almost equal natural representation from the two areas and further divisions were deemed unnecessary.

Two hundred teachers were included in the sample; one hundred from each of the two groups, elementary and high school. Since no complete list of elementary French teachers existed, and since it was judged that a one-to-one correspondence existed in most cases between a French teacher and each elementary school, the elementary sample was chosen from the pool of all schools having elementary grades.

From the total population of schools with elementary grades, one hundred were then selected using a procedure for random sampling outlined by Glass and Stanley (19). The questionnaire was addressed to the French teacher in schools of a population of less than one hundred pupils. In larger schools, where there were possibly several French teachers, the questionnaire was mailed to the principal, with instructions to pass it to either the only French teacher or the one whose surname started with the letter closest to "T". This procedure ensured the randomness of the responses.

A list of high school teachers was obtained from the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and

Labrador. Again one hundred were randomly selected and questionnaires mailed directly to the participants.

Explanatory letters and sample copies of the questionnaire were forwarded to the district superintendents of each school board.

The survey was conducted during the months of January to March. Each participant received an explanatory letter, the questionnaire, instructions for its completion and a stamped, addressed envelope for returning the document. Participants who wished to receive a copy of the data analysis were asked to forward their name and address, under separate cover.

One hundred and thirty-two of the two hundred questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of sixty-six percent. Seventy of these were from the group originally labelled as high school teachers, while sixty-two were returned from the one hundred sent to elementary schools.

Data Analysis

Data from the survey was tabulated by frequency and percentages. Some factors were cross-tabulated to explore possible significant relationships. Open-ended items were analysed individually. A detailed breakdown of the results is presented in Chapter 4, while further comments relating the data to the overall study of the MLC are included in chapter 5.

The analysis permitted a profile of the sample respondent, MLC members and non-members to be drawn. It was also possible to determine if such factors as training in French and rural/urban location affected participation. Obstacles that inhibited teacher involvement with the MLC were identified. Finally, the survey yielded information about how MLC had contributed or could contribute to the present and future professional development of French teachers.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey returns were analyzed using the SPSS_x program on a VAX/VMS system. The results were divided into three sections. The first describes Modern Languages Council members and non-members as indicated by frequency distributions for each variable and a Likert type scale. The second section lists responses to open-ended items and provides a summary of these answers. Finally, significant relationships as indicated by cross tabulations of specific variables are explored.

Profile of the Respondents

1. Sex

As indicated in Table 1, 58 (44 percent) of the respondents were male and 74 (56%) were female. This division was not unexpected, since there are more female French teachers than male in the total population.

Table 1**Male/Female Distribution in Sample**

	No.	Percent
Male	58	43.9
Female	74	56.1
Missing Cases	0	0
Total	132	100

2. Age

About 20 percent or one--fifth were between 25-30; while another one-fifth or about 19 percent were 41-50. Fifty percent (66 respondents) of the sample were between 31 and 40 years of age and 3 (2 percent) were older than 50. These results seem to indicate that most French teachers are slightly younger than the overall teaching force. The Newfoundland Teachers' Association gives the average teacher age as 40 years. This result would be expected, as the demand for teachers of French in the school system has increased considerably in the last ten years.

3. Number of Years Teaching French

As shown in Table 2, half of the teachers had 10 years or less French teaching experience. This finding is below the provincial average for overall teaching experience. It may

reflect the recent prominence given to French and, coupled with data from the age of respondents variable, may indicate that teachers who already have teaching experience in other areas have more recently started teaching French. This interpretation would be supported by the findings of Flynn (1989).

Table 2
Number of Years Teaching French

	No. of Respondents	Percent
less than 5 years	33	25.0
5-10	33	25.0
11-15	27	28.0
16-20	21	15.9
more than 20	8	6.1
missing cases	0	0
Total	132	100.0

4. School Population; Community Population and Location

More than one-third (about 36 percent) of the teachers taught in schools with a population of less than 200 students, as is shown in Table 3, while, as indicated in Table 4, 42 percent taught in communities with a total population not greater than 2000. Of those who responded to the question of

whether or not the community was located within one hour's driving distance of a town of 5000 or more, 41 percent were in this category. This question was answered by those who lived in towns with a population of less than 5000. The high number of missing cases represent those living in larger towns. These results are shown in Table 5.

Table 3
School Population

	No. of Respondents	Percent
less than 50	2	1.5
51-100	19	14.4
101-200	27	20.5
201-300	19	14.4
301-500	38	28.8
more than 500	27	20.5
missing cases	0	0
Total	132	100.0

5. School Location - General Region

Table 6 demonstrates that all regions of the province were represented. Heavy population areas (the West Coast and the Avalon Peninsula) accounted for more than half (about 58 percent) of the sample.

Table 4
Community Population

	No. of Respondents	Percent
less than 500	12	9.1
501-1000	20	15.2
1001-2000	23	17.4
2001-5000	28	21.2
5001-10000	18	13.6
more than 10000	30	22.7
missing cases	1	.8
Total	132	100.0

Table 5
Teachers Who Are Within One Hour Driving Distance of
Community > 5000

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Yes	54	40.9
No	30	22.7
missing cases	48	36.4
Total	132	100.0

Table 6**School Location--Region of Province**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Labrador	5	3.8
Western/Northern	36	27.3
Central	28	21.2
Eastern	22	16.7
Avalon	41	31.1
Total	132	100.0

6. Program Coordinator

One hundred and twenty said that their district had a program coordinator for French. Eleven replied in the negative, and one did not check either yes or no.

7. University Training in French

Almost half of the respondents (about 49 percent) have an academic major in French, while another large portion (42 percent) has either 4-7 courses or a minor of 8 courses. Ten teachers (8 percent) have fewer than four university French courses. University training in French is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

University Training in French

	No. of Respondents	Percent
French major	64	48.5
Minor or 4-7 courses	55	41.7
Less than 4 courses	10	7.6
Other	3	2.3
Total	132	100.0

8. French--Native Language

One person stated that French was his/her native language. The remaining 131 indicated that it was not.

9. University Degrees

As shown in Table 8, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education, and Bachelor of Arts (Education) were the most commonly held degrees. None of the teachers surveyed had a Bachelor of Science Degree. Almost 10 percent had graduate degrees. Further study of the questionnaires revealed that most high school teachers have Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees, while it is most common for elementary teachers to hold a Bachelor of Arts (Education) degree.

This result is to be expected, given the programs at Memorial University.

The totals for Table 8 are not given, since some teachers hold several degrees.

Table 8
University Degrees

	No. with this Degree	Percent of Total Sample (132)
Bachelor of Arts	77	58.3
Bachelor of Science	0	0
Bachelor of Education	61	46.2
Bachelor of Arts (Education)	60	45.5
Bachelor of Physical Education	2	1.5
Master of Education	11	8.3
Master of Arts	2	1.5
Other	6	4.5

10. French Methodology Courses

One-quarter (25 percent) of the respondents have completed no methodology courses in the teaching of French. Table 9 shows a further 27 percent who have completed only one course.

Table 9
French Methodology Courses

	No. of Respondents	Percent
0 courses	33	25.0
1 course	35	26.5
2 courses	31	23.5
3 courses	12	9.1
4 courses	11	8.3
more than 4 courses	10	7.6
Total	132	100.0

11. Time Spent in a French Milieu

As seen in Table 10, about 48 percent (nearly one-half) have spent six weeks or less in a French milieu, including 15 percent who have had no experience of this sort. Approximately 55 percent have spent several months or longer in a French setting. This group includes 12 percent who have lived in such an environment for several years.

Table 10**Time Spent in a French Milieu**

	No. of Respondents	Percent
None	20	15.2
up to 3 weeks	6	4.5
3-6 weeks	33	25.0
several months	40	30.3
1 year	16	12.1
several years or more	17	1.9
Total	132	100.0

12. Date of Last French Course Completed

One hundred and fifteen teachers responded to this item. Of these, five (4 percent) had not completed a course since 1970. Twenty-four (21 percent) indicated they had last taken a course in the 1970s. Eighty-eight (77 percent) had studied at least one French course in the 1980s. In this last category, a substantial number (34) or thirty percent, had studied French in the 1988 calendar year.

13. French Programs Taught

Table 11 indicates that most teachers are responsible for either elementary, junior, or senior high core French. Many teachers are instructing at more than one grade level and teaching from more than one set of curriculum resources. The high number of teachers for elementary and junior high is to be expected since these levels involve the greatest number of students and since some school boards encourage the teaching of French by the homeroom teacher at these grade levels. It is interesting to note that while grade 4 is the official starting point for French, nearly 10 percent reported teaching core French at the primary level.

Table 11
French Programs Taught

	No. of Respondents	Percent
Early immersion	4	3.0
Late immersion	1	0.8
Extended core	3	2.3
Senior high core	35	26.5
Junior high core	61	46.2
Elementary core	78	59.1
Primary core	13	9.8
Accelerated French	4	3.0
Other	1	.8

14. Percentage of Instructional Day Spent Teaching French

Table 12 shows that about 36 percent spend 60 percent or more of the day teaching French, while 43 percent spend less than 40 percent. Further study of the questionnaires reveals that high school and immersion teachers are more likely to spend higher proportions of the school day teaching French. This result would be expected. Spending a high proportion of the school day teaching French is also more common in larger schools.

Table 12

Percentage of Instructional Day Spent Teaching French

	No. of Respondents	Percent
80-100 percent of the instructional day	38	28.8
60-79 percent	9	6.8
40-59	28	21.2
20-39	34	25.8
1-19	23	17.4
Total	132	100.0

15. Enjoy Teaching French

Approximately ninety-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they enjoyed teaching French while two percent said they did not. One person gave no response.

16. Member of Modern Languages Council 1988-89

About one-third (36 percent or 48) of those surveyed were members of the MLC for the 1988-89 school year.

17. Member of the Modern Languages Council 1983-88

Over half (53 percent or 70) of those surveyed indicated that they had been members sometime during the five years previous to 1988-89.

Summary--Respondent Characteristics

The data indicated that the average respondent is likely to be female, between the age of 31-40, and have slightly less than ten years experience teaching French. The teacher works in a school with a student population of between one hundred and five hundred pupils, and a total community population of two thousand or more. Three-quarters of those surveyed either live in a large town or within one hour's driving distance of a major centre. The respondent may live anywhere in the province but is more likely to live on the Avalon Peninsula or

the West Coast, and has the help of a program coordinator for French at the district level.

The average respondent has an academic French major or minor, but is anglophone. He/She has at least one Bachelor's degree, either Arts or Education, with one French methodology course, has spent up to 6 weeks in a French milieu, but is unlikely to have a graduate degree. The last French course was completed in the period 1985-88.

The teacher is teaching at more than one grade level, is most likely to be working with elementary or junior high students and spends approximately 40-50 percent of the instructional day teaching French. He/She enjoys teaching French, and while not likely a member of the Modern Languages Council in 1988-89, there is an almost 50/50 possibility that he/she has been a member sometime in the previous five years.

Participation in the Modern Languages Council

18. Conference Attendance 1988-89

Thirty-three percent (or 43 respondents) had attended the 1988-89 annual conference of the MLC, held at Gander, Newfoundland. Sixty-seven percent or two-thirds of the respondents had not attended.

19. Reasons for not Attending 1988-89 Conference

As indicated in Table 13, of the 89 persons not attending the annual conference, thirty-five percent gave financial constraints as the reason. Another one-third (30 percent) said that the travel involved was too great, while over one-fifth (23 percent) listed personal reasons. However, a further 21 percent said that they were either completely unaware of the conference or unable to obtain leave from the school board in order to attend.

Table 13

Reasons for not Attending 1988-89 Conference

Reason	No. of Respondents	Percent
Financial	31	34.8
Unable to obtain leave	7	7.9
Unaware of conference	12	13.5
Not interested	9	10.1
Personal (i.e., could not leave family)	20	22.5
Travel distance too great	26	29.2
Greater responsibility in other subjects	3	3.4
Other	14	15.7
Total	89	

20. Use of Information

Of the forty-three respondents who had attended the most recent conference twenty-one or nearly 50 percent said they had used information from the sessions in their work. Twenty-eight or nearly two-thirds said they had used the information "to some extent". Some respondents checked both 'yes' and 'to some extent'. Five people or about 12 percent said they had not used the information.

21. Attended Other MLC Conferences

About three-fifths of the respondents (57 percent) indicated they had attended other MLC conferences. However, two-fifths, almost 41 percent, stated that they had never attended. Two people did not respond.

22. Number of Annual Conferences Attended

As shown in Table 14, nearly half (47 percent) of the sample had attended one to five conferences. Nine percent had gone to six to ten conferences, about 2 percent had been to more than 10 conferences, and 42 percent had, as already stated, attended no conferences.

23. Executive Position--MLC

Three teachers indicated service at the executive level of MLC, while one hundred twenty-four had none. There were five missing cases.

Table 14**Number of Annual Conferences Attended**

No. of Conferences	No. of Respondents	Percent
0	56	42.4
1-5	62	47.0
6-10	12	9.1
more than 10	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

24. Would Consider Executive Position

Interest in serving on the MLC executive is quite low. Only 16 (12.1 percent) said they would consider running for office in the next several years while 107 (81.1 percent) would not. There were nine missing cases.

25. Membership in other French Teacher Organizations

Less than five percent, only six respondents claimed membership in other French teacher organizations. The remainder said they did not hold memberships in any other French-related professional groups.

26. Membership in Other Special Interest Councils

Twenty-one people were members of at least one special interest council other than the MLC. The other 113 (86 percent) were not.

Summary - Participation in the MLC

A synthesis of the data related to participation in the Modern Languages Council shows approximately 33 percent of the sample attended the annual conference in 1988-89, and that 57 percent had attended at least one MLC conference during their teaching career. Only about 10 percent had attended the conferences on a regular basis, that is, had attended more than five conferences. Reasons for not attending included personal commitments, great travel distance, lack of information, difficulties in obtaining leave and the most frequent--financial constraints.

About half of the teachers who attend the conference (that is about 1/4 of the total sample) used the information obtained from the MLC Conference in their day-to-day teaching. Very few have held executive positions and only 12 percent would consider running for such a position in the next several years. While almost 15 percent are members of other NTA special interest councils, less than five percent have joined any other organization for French teachers.

Analysis of Likert Scale Item

As shown in Table 15, teachers responded to a set of five statements about the role of the MLC using a scale of choices ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Forty-six percent believed the MLC plays an important role in French teacher professional growth. Eighteen percent indicated disagreement with this statement. However, only 24 percent felt that the MLC had helped them become a better teacher. This finding appears to be consistent with the finding that 25 percent of the French teacher population actually used the information from French conferences in their teaching. Almost 33 percent of those responding would like to be a member or more active member. Twenty-eight percent or nearly one-third felt that participation in MLC was limited due to their lack of training in French. The majority though, 55 percent, did not think that training in French was a factor. Finally, almost 40 percent believed that information about the Council was readily available, while 28 percent disagreed with this statement.

Overall this section indicates that while about half of the French teachers believe the MLC is important in professional growth, substantially fewer could say that the MLC had helped them, specifically, become a better teacher. Many are interested in being members or more active members and feel that they have sufficient training in French to participate fully. Despite these positive indicators, the

Table 13
Response to Statements on Role of the Modern Languages Council

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Average Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	(5 - 1)	
1. The Modern Languages Council plays an important role in the professional growth of French teachers.	19	(14.4)	42	(31.8)	47	(35.6)	11	(8.3)	0	(0.0)	3.58	(1)
2. The MLC has helped me become a better teacher.	8	(6.1)	23	(17.4)	50	(37.9)	17	(12.9)	17	(12.9)	2.9	(2)
3. I would like to become a member/ a more active member of the MLC.	14	(10.6)	29	(22.0)	46	(34.8)	25	(18.9)	8	(6.1)	3.13	(3)
4. I feel that my lack of training in French limits my participation in the MLC.	13	(9.8)	24	(18.2)	14	(10.6)	22	(16.7)	50	(37.9)	2.41	(4)
5. Information about the Council and its activities is available to me.	22	(16.7)	30	(22.7)	36	(27.3)	24	(18.2)	13	(9.8)	3.19	(5)

(1) No response 13 (9.8%)
 (2) No response 17 (12.9%)
 (3) No response 10 (7.6%)
 (4) No response 9 (6.8%)
 (5) No response 7 (5.3%)

fact that 28 percent (or more than 1/4 of the teachers) feel that their lack of training limits participation and that information about the Council is not readily available, indicates some areas of difficulty.

Analysis of Responses to Open Ended Items

Teachers were asked two open-ended questions, items 13 and 14 on the questionnaire. The first asked for ways that the Modern Languages Council had been helpful. The second asked for suggestions as to how the MLC could best help French teachers in the next several years. A summary of the responses follows.

1. How the Modern Languages Council has helped teachers.

Seventy-one or just over half of the respondents completed this item. Many of those made more than one comment. There were both positive and negative responses, but a large majority were in the first category. Generally, teachers seemed to associate the MLC with the annual conference, and comments about this event were most positive. Conversely, negative comments were generally rooted in the perception that the conference is the only activity of the Council. Comments indicated that respondents are either unaware of the role of MLC beyond hosting the annual

conference, or view its other activities as being insignificant.

As indicated in Table 16, positive responses could be placed, for the most part, under four headings--Classroom Activities and Techniques, Information Update/Current Trends, Sharing and Motivation, Conference (Overall). The help received in practical classroom activities was cited most often. When studying Table 16 it is important to remember that almost all comments, regardless of category, stemmed from participation in the conference. Commenting under information update, teachers stated that MLC provides help with new programs and new trends in language teaching. The annual conference was viewed as a major event and an excellent opportunity to discuss professional concerns in both informal and formal settings. Respondents believed this aspect to be a great motivating factor, and a real time of sharing. There were general comments about the overall success of the annual conference and the high quality of speakers and presenters. Finally, two comments fell in neither category. One teacher felt that the MLC had been a strong political lobby group for improved French education. Another said that the program coordinator had prepared a booklet of information from the Modern Languages Conference and distributed it to all teachers, an initiative which that teacher thought to be effective.

Table 16**Positive Comments About the Modern Languages Council**

Comment Category	Number of Comments
Classroom Activities and Techniques	27
Information/Current Trends	13
Sharing and Motivation	21
Conference (overall)	13
Other	2
Total	76

Several respondents who had not attended the annual conferences saw no benefit at all stemming from the Council. Four people held this view. Others were of the opinion that only those who could attend conferences received any help from the MLC. One person felt that the Council had been quite slow in recognizing French immersion and that it was just now beginning to meet teacher needs in that branch of French programs.

2. How the MLC can help teachers in the future.

In this item teachers were asked to suggest how the Modern Languages Council could help teachers in the future. Seventy-four or just over one-half of the people responded,

many with more than one suggestion. This response indicates a high degree of interest in the future of the MLC.

There were several main comment categories. Some responses called for continued or increased emphasis on practical teaching, methodology and activities. These included twelve requests for updated materials, and four calls for teachers of grade levels to pool resources. Nine teachers suggested that the MLC emphasize methodology. Two thought the council should publish a resource list, and one suggested that the MLC should actually have materials available on loan. The annual conference should continue according to fourteen of the respondents, while three wondered about the possibility of regional conferences and regional council branches. Another substantial group would like to see seminars or teaching clinics held on a regional basis.

Another major area of concern for the future appears to be teacher training and retraining or refreshing. There were seventeen comments related to this issue, which included calls for lobbying for increased government funding. One respondent wrote:

...lobby long and loud for MUN and Department of Education to offer refresher courses around the island so teachers can upgrade oral skills which are so vital and so easily lost.

Several respondents felt there should be a greater use of French at MLC gatherings. At least three people suggested

that the Council organize one or two week language sessions, and still others felt that a list of summer program options with evaluations by the MLC should be sent to members.

Increased information on the Council also seemed to be desired. Five people requested increased contact with the executive between conferences and six asked for more frequent and regular newsletters.

Other more isolated comments suggested an emphasis on junior high, closer link with program co-ordinators and from there to teachers, sessions on student evaluation, more discussion groups, and more input into text decisions. There were two specific comments about funding to attend conferences. One person asked that boards be lobbied: "...it would be helpful if school boards could offer more money. We get \$25 per conference and live 4 hours from St. John's. Even gas is not covered let alone accommodations and meals."

Additional Comments

Many of the suggestions made in responding to the previous question were echoed in the additional comments. There were twenty-one responses. To summarize, these comments noted:

- a need for better, year-round communication with membership; more newsletters
- additional financial help from school boards for attendance at conferences is needed

- that MLC should counsel MUN as to French courses for teachers
- that other teaching responsibilities preclude extensive involvement with MLC
- that executive members should be from all parts of province

From an active member came this comment:

...I can understand why some teachers may feel a little intimidated about going to the conferences. In my first few years of teaching, I did not attend...and I have a major in French! Many teachers are unaware of its usefulness and a campaign should be undertaken to better educate the many French teachers about the MLC's usefulness.

A final comment recognized the volunteer nature of executive positions, and the amount of work involved:

...the potential amount of leadership and influence it [MLC] has on an individual depends upon the dedication and work of those involved in organizing and running it. There have been years when the MLC has had strong leadership and great influence and others when that has been weak.

Overall, the information gathered from the open-ended items supported findings from other sections of the questionnaire. Teachers are concerned about long term retraining and financial support for the MLC from school

boards. They favour a greater degree of communication with the executive, and a continued emphasis on practical teaching methodologies. Those who attend benefit from the annual conference and think it should continue, but many cite concerns about travel distances and asked for more regional events. On the opposite side, teachers who did not attend the conference saw few, if any, benefits in membership. These teachers, as well as others, would like to have more frequent communication with the provincial executive.

Further Data Analysis

Further analysis of the data using the Pearson correlation coefficient was undertaken to determine which factors were significant in determining participation in the Modern Languages Council over a five year period. The .05 level of confidence was used to determine significance.

1. Age. Table 17 indicates that age is a factor in determining participation. It appears that teachers at both the younger and older ends of the scale were less likely to be members, while those in the age group 31-40 years were much more likely to be members. Sixty-four percent of those in that category had been members at some time during the previous five years. This is the only age group that has a majority as members. Age

proved to be a significant factor at the .048 level of confidence.

2. Sex. The sex of the respondent was not significant. From the total of fifty-eight males 32 were members, 26 were not. A similar result was true of females. Of the 64, 38 were members, 26 were not. It is worth noting, that while there have been more females than males as MLC members, males have more often held the positions of president and vice-president.

Table 17

Age Factors and Participation in MLC (5 years)

Age	<u>MLC</u>	
	Yes	No
< 25	4	9
25 - 30	13	13
31 - 40	42	24
41 - 50	11	13
> 50	0	3

3. Years Teaching French. The results here, as shown in Table 18, were somewhat surprising. It might have been predicted that newer teachers with fewer than ten years French teaching experience would be more likely to be

members of MLC. However, this was not the outcome. In all three categories above ten years teaching experience (i.e., 11 to 20 years experience) more teachers were members of the MLC than non-members. Years teaching French proved to be significant at the .015 level of confidence.

4. University Training in French. Teachers' university training was significant in determining MLC participation at the .035 level of confidence. Sixty-six percent of those with a French major had been members during the past five years. In the other categories less than half of the populations were members. These findings are illustrated by Table 19.

It is obvious that the greater the amount of formal French study, the greater the likelihood of MLC membership.

5. Community Population. Community size does appear to be related to participation even though it did not meet the .05 level of significance criterion. As shown in Table 20, in all communities with a population greater than 1000, there is a greater probability that the teacher will be a member. In communities below 1000 the opposite is true, with a marked rate of nonmembership in communities with fewer than five hundred people.

Table 18

Years Teaching French and Participation in MLC (5 years)

Years Teaching French	<u>Membership</u>	
	Yes	No
< 5	11	22
5 - 10	15	18
11 - 15	27	10
16 - 20	12	9
> 20	5	3

Table 19

University French Training and Participation in MLC (5 years)

Training	<u>Membership</u>	
	Yes	No
Major	42	22
Minor or 4-7 courses	24	31
Less than 4 courses	3	7

Table 20

Community Population and Participation in MLC (5 years)

Population	<u>Membership</u>	
	Yes	No
< 500	3	9
501 - 1000	9	11
1001 - 2000	13	10
2001 - 5000	17	11
5001 - 10000	10	8
> 10000	18	12

6. School Population. The relationship between school size and membership is significant at the .03 level of confidence. In schools with fewer than 100 students the teacher is not likely to be a member. Of twenty-one teachers in this category, only five had been members in the previous five years. However, from a total of eighty-four teachers in schools with between 101-500 pupils, fifty-two reported membership. Interestingly, this trend did not really continue in large schools where, of twenty-seven teachers, thirteen were members and fourteen were not. These results are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21

School Population and Participation in MLC (5 years)

School Population	<u>Membership</u>	
	Yes	No
< 50	1	1
51 - 100	4	15
101 - 200	16	11
201 - 300	14	5
301 - 500	22	16
> 500	13	14

7. Region. The area of the province did not seem to be a determining factor although there were more members than non-members in the Eastern, Western-Northern, and Avalon Regions. The reverse was true for Labrador and Central Newfoundland.

Overall, four factors proved to be particularly significant in determining Modern Languages Council membership. These were the teacher's age, number of years teaching French, university training in French, and the school population.

Summary

The data analysis yielded a profile of survey participants. From this it was possible to describe an "average" respondent. The next section of the analysis detailed involvement with the Modern Languages Council. Data related to conference attendance proved to be particularly helpful. It became obvious that teachers equated MLC membership with conference attendance.

The analysis of the Likert scale item together with responses to the open-ended items revealed the Council's difficulties in communication and in creating a professional development program extraneous to the annual conference. At the same time and somewhat paradoxically, other responses to these items lent considerable support to the provincial conference as a key professional development initiative. Those who attend the conference believe the MLC to be important. Those who, for a variety of reasons either do not or cannot attend, judge the Council to be of little value in their lives as teachers.

Many teachers offered suggestions for future MLC work. Chief among these were calls to focus on teacher retraining, practical methodology clinics offered on a regional basis, and improved communications.

In the last section of the analysis, four factors were found to be significant in determining MLC membership; age, university training in French, years teaching French, and

school size. A relationship was also shown to exist between community size and membership.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

A study of the Modern Languages Council, a special interest council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, was conducted to record the development of the Council and to determine its role in the professional lives of French teachers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The study had two major parts. The first was a review of the history of the Council. All available print documents were used, as well as oral interviews with a number of relevant people. This part of the study provided a history of the organization, with particular emphasis on the success of its various professional development initiatives. The second part of the study was a survey of two hundred French teachers. The survey's main goals were to discover the characteristics of MLC members and the possible differences between members and non-members, and to identify significant factors that influenced membership. It sought to determine, from active members, the benefits of membership. In addition the survey obtained suggestions from all participants for the future operation and development of the MLC.

Findings

A study of the organization revealed that its development could be divided into three main periods. The beginning

years, 1966-1972, which were something of a false start, were characterized by an emphasis on appealing to the language "specialist". Membership was low and activities were centered in St. John's. However, this early group did lobby for, and in some cases start, projects that would come to fruition much later.

A middle period of several years, 1972-1978, saw a downturn in the group's activities, with an accompanying decline in membership. By the end of this period the Council was almost defunct. The election of a Labrador based, professionally experienced executive, coupled with a host of external factors led to the rejuvenation of the Council in the late 1970s, and the start of a third phase in the Council's life. This third period saw a rapid growth in membership and in services offered by the Council. It included a focus on major provincial conferences often drawing several hundred teachers, financial prosperity (in large part due to federal funding for bilingual education) and regional and provincial newsletters. This phenomenal growth corresponded with a rapid expansion of provincial French program offerings and an overall higher profile for French language and teaching in the province and in the country. The growth and activity of the Council continues to the present.

The research questions posed in Chapter 3 guide the summary of the other findings of the study.

1. Characteristics of Members of the Modern Languages Council.

Members of the Modern Languages Council tend to be in the age group of 31-40 years. In all other age groups teachers are more likely to be non-members. The sex of the respondent did not prove to be a significant factor in determining membership, but in terms of leadership, more men than women have been president.

2. School size, geographical location, number of years teaching French, teacher training, and grade level.

The survey indicated that teachers in larger schools are more likely to be MLC members. In fact school size proved to be a significant factor in determining membership. However while teachers in schools with 101-500 pupils were most likely to be members (especially in schools 250-500), this trend does not continue in very large schools, where there were more non-members than members.

Geographical location or region in the province was not a factor related to membership. Community size though was somewhat related. Teachers working in small communities were less likely to be members. Overall teachers in rural areas are less likely to be members than those in more urban areas.

Number of years teaching French was a factor that helped determine membership. In all categories of 10 years or more teaching French, teachers were more often members than non-

members. For newer teachers the opposite was found to be true. This proved to be a very significant factor.

The teacher's background in French also proved to be significant. The survey indicated that if the level of training in French was high, the person would probably be a MLC member. MLC members tended to have a strong French background and were usually university French majors. To contrast, very few of those with less than a French minor had been MLC members. Since most of the French majors are teaching at the Grade 7-12 level, one can assume that grade level taught is also related to membership.

3. Obstacles preventing membership and/or conference attendance; communications; overcoming barriers.

Travelling to the conference centre was stated as the greatest obstacle to membership. Teachers felt that attending the conference was the only membership benefit. Knowing that they would be unable to attend the conference, they thus saw no reason to become members of the organization.

Financial reasons or the great travel distance (the two were often connected) were given as reasons for not attending the 1988-89 conference by 60 percent of those who were not there. Another 20 percent cited personal reasons, i.e., could not leave family. These findings are extremely important, since they indicate that the present annual major provincial conference is not meeting the professional development needs

for many, and attendance at the conference is indeed an impossibility for a substantial proportion of French teachers.

Also of importance is the fact that 14 percent of the survey respondents did not know the conference was being held. This dissemination of information difficulty was confirmed by responses in the rating scale item. Almost 30 percent of respondents felt that information about the Council and its activities was not readily available to them.

Surprisingly, only a few teachers said that they were unable to obtain leave to attend the conference. However, the results for this item might now be quite different since recent changes in substitute teacher allocations have been made. Responsibilities in other subjects or lack of interest were rarely checked as obstacles to attendance.

Teachers offered a number of suggestions to help overcome some of these difficulties. These included more financial support, especially from school boards, and regional conferences, workshops, or teaching clinics. In addition more frequent newsletters and an emphasis on improving overall communications were recommended.

The importance of French competence for membership was an issue with some teachers. Despite the improved language ability of most French teachers, a proportion still felt that their lack of competency in French limited their participation in Council activities. Almost 30 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement, "I feel that my lack of training in

French limits my participation in the MLC." These results suggest that almost a third of those surveyed, possibly those who may be most in need of improving their French teaching skills, are not at ease with involvement in MLC.

4. Contribution of the MLC to Professional Growth.

In terms of the contribution of the MLC to French teacher professional growth, the findings were somewhat surprising. In response to the statement, "The MLC plays an important role in the professional growth of French teachers", almost fifty percent of those surveyed indicated agreement. However, a further thirty-six percent neither agreed nor disagreed. That is, they were neutral, or ambivalent to the professional contribution of the MLC. In addition, when asked to respond to a less general, more personal item, "The MLC has helped me become a better teacher", only twenty-four percent agreed. Those who believe the MLC has helped them believe almost invariably that this contribution has come about through the provincial conference.

These findings seem to indicate that, while teachers have a general notion that the MLC is an important organization, their own experience with MLC has not had a substantial impact on their professional lives. This finding should be of concern to the MLC and to the NTA, since it indicates that, despite the positive response of many active members, three-quarters of the French teachers surveyed did not feel that the MLC had helped them become better teachers. The impact of the

MLC has not been as significant as executives may have believed it to be, or as the NTA would wish it to be.

Some teachers did list and explain ways in which the MLC had contributed to their professional growth. These benefits, as already noted, were clearly associated with attendance at the annual conference. The comments underlined the importance of the conference for exchanging information on current trends, improving classroom techniques and activities, and motivating teachers through discussion with peers and exposure to new ideas.

5. Suggestions for Future Work of the MLC.

The high response rate to the call for suggestions demonstrates a great degree of interest in the direction of the Council. Respondents were asked to indicate how the MLC could best help teachers in the next several years. These comments generally indicated that more emphasis needs to be placed on teacher retraining, regional activities, and on greater communications with all potential and active members.

Conclusions

The Modern Languages Council has been important in the development of French education in Newfoundland and has contributed to the professional lives of a group of active members. In the course of its history it has been 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. From a handful of dedicated, highly trained professionals centered in St. John's, the Council has grown to include members from all areas of the island and Labrador. These comments paint a positive picture of the life and work of the organization. However the findings of this study have shown that even with these accomplishments, many French teachers have not been involved with or feel they have not benefitted from the efforts of the Modern Languages Council.

Given the fact that these teachers will likely be active in the education system for the next ten to fifteen years, more must be done to ensure first of all, that they participate in the professional development experiences offered by the Council, and secondly that the MLC together with the NTA consider how it can provide professional development that can be accessed by a larger pool of French teachers on a more regular basis. Newfoundland and Labrador is a province with limited resources. While this study has examined only the MLC, professional development is also provided by school boards, schools, the Department of Education and Memorial University. There is though, no coordination of the efforts of these agencies. Much needs to

be done to ensure that all French teachers participate in an effective, on-going professional development program.

Recommendations

The findings of the study show that the Modern Languages Council has contributed to the improvement of French education in the province. Members who have attended provincial conferences feel that they have benefitted through participation. As well the MLC has often been a strong lobby group for changing in second language education. However, substantial numbers of teachers are unable to enter into the work of the organization. Due to financial costs, geographical location, lack of knowledge of the Council's activities, and teachers self-perceived limitations in French, a fairly large proportion of French teachers in the province do not or cannot avail of the services offered by the MLC.

According to the survey results ninety-eight percent of the respondents enjoyed teaching French. More than a third of those surveyed indicated they would like to increase their involvement with the MLC. Almost half believed that MLC has an important role to play in the professional development of French teachers. Given these findings, it is evident that teachers want the organization to continue. With a number of changes to both the Council and its work in conjunction with

these agencies, the Council could expand and increase its impact.

The Newfoundland Teachers' Association and/or the MLC should take steps to improve the effectiveness of this, and perhaps other, special interest councils.

1. It is recommended that the Modern Languages Council review its constitution and by-laws with a view to redefining its focus and establishing clear objectives for the 1990s and beyond. For example membership suggestions ask the MLC to become more involved in language training/retraining. Is it the role of the Council to provide this training or to provide training in areas more closely linked with pedagogy? Are the original aims of the Council still valid? If not, what new direction should the Council pursue? At its founding the MLC was meant to appeal to a "specialist" group. Officially its aims have not changed to incorporate the diversity of potential members.
2. The Modern Languages Council should do a thorough needs assessment. This would determine the services French teachers would like the Council to provide and how they can best be provided to all French teachers. The findings of this study might be the basis for the formulation of such an assessment.

3. It is recommended that the MLC in conjunction with the NTA investigate ways to improve communication with all French teachers. This investigation could be part of the overall needs assessment or be done through an NTA/MLC ad hoc committee. In particular, the group should consider mailing lists, newsletters, regional councils, and the use of computer networks/technology, to keep members informed.
4. It is recommended that the MLC, again working with the parent NTA, review its commitment to one annual provincial conference and consider other modes of professional development delivery. Among those suggested by teachers in this survey were: stronger regional councils, travelling clinics, regional conferences, biennial provincial meetings, and several day institutes.
5. In conjunction with recommendation #4, the MLC and the NTA should study differences between school boards with regard to travel policies to regional/provincial conferences. Teachers could be made aware of the support they could expect to receive from the employer.
6. It is recommended that the NTA/MLC financially assist teachers from remote or isolated areas who find the cost of conference attendance prohibitive.

7. In response to teacher requests and in keeping with Department of Education and national emphasis on this area, it is recommended that the MLC should investigate and advise both its membership and the NTA of current trends in French teacher training/retraining. This might include annotated lists of summer programs, personal accounts from French teachers, information on the supply/demand of French teachers, available financial assistance from various sources, and program options.
8. It is recommended that the NTA consider automatic council membership. If indeed the organizations see all teachers of a particular subject or interest as the clientele, and the NTA plans to continue with the present SIC structure, then all teachers should automatically receive literature, etc. related to their areas. This would mean, for example, that all French teachers would be MLC members. Hopefully this would lead to improved communications and greater active participation. At the very least, it would eliminate the need for time-consuming tasks, such as membership drives, by each successive executive.
9. It is recommended that the NTA make a special effort to inform new teachers of the work of the special interest councils. Surprisingly, a

majority of new teachers were not MLC members. The NTA might work with Memorial University's student teaching division to facilitate a flow of information. The various councils might send copies of newsletters to university students in their graduating year and encourage their attendance, free of charge, at meetings and conferences.

10. In light of the low participation rate in the MLC by teachers in schools with low student enrolments, it is recommended that the NTA review special interest council membership in small schools, with a view to creating appropriate, accessible, professional development programs. The NTA might also wish to see if the results found here, with regard to a lower participation rate in the largest schools, is true for other councils.
11. Given that the elected council executive plays a large role in the success of a Council in any given year, the NTA should continue and possibly expand its leadership training program for council executive members.
12. Finally, given the gaps and inconsistencies in the records of the MLC, the NTA should establish procedures, through its leadership training, to

ensure adequate record-keeping and proper filing and storage of important documents.

Suggestions for Further Study

While this study reveals some interesting data about the Modern Languages Council, it also indicates that more research needs to be done in the area of professional development. These topics, in particular, merit further study:

1. The NTA should review the professional development program offered by its special interest councils. This study should focus on how to provide consistent, effective services accessible to all teachers who wish to participate. The Association should also consider how it can work more closely, in consultation and cooperation, with other agencies that share a responsibility for teacher training. This would include the Department of Education, Memorial University, and school boards.
2. At present, the executive of a particular council is responsible for a daunting list of tasks: provincial conferences for several hundred teachers, professional newsletters, representation on provincial and sometimes national committees, administering various funds - all of these in addition to the more routine duties. A study

should be done to determine the workload of executives. It should include:

- a) a profile of those who serve in executive positions
- b) the actual duties performed by the executive
- c) the degree of support services available to the executive
- d) whether more professional development personnel may be needed to work with the NTA and specifically with the special interest councils. Such a study might find that the expected program of a council is now too complex to be effectively delivered by a small group of volunteers.

Even as it exists, the Modern Language Council will continue to be a force in French education. By incorporating some of the changes suggested in this study though, it can become an organization with greater grassroots support; one with a stronger influence on the professional lives of French teachers, and ultimately, on the quality of French instruction in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Appendix A

A survey on French teacher involvement with the
Modern Languages Council

P.O. Box 1437
Deer Lake
Newfoundland
AOK 2E0

February 3, 1989

Dear French teacher:

Enclosed is a copy of a questionnaire being used to survey French teacher involvement with the Modern Languages Council, a special interest council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. This study is being done as thesis research for a Master of Education degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland, under the direction of Mrs. Joan Netten.

You have been selected from a list of all French teachers in this province, and I certainly hope that you will take just a few minutes to complete and return the questionnaire. The items are straightforward and easy to answer. This questionnaire will only take ten to fifteen minutes to complete. As noted in the instructions, all responses are confidential and for research purposes only. If you wish to receive a copy of the data analysis, simply complete the last page and forward it separately. While I realize there are many demands on your time, your cooperation would certainly be appreciated.

Again, thank you for your anticipated help.

Sincerely,

PH/mk

Patricia Hooper

Questionnaire**Instructions for participants:**

Please complete and return in the enclosed envelope before February 28, 1989. All replies are confidential and for research purposes only. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. However, if you would like to receive a copy of the data analysis write your name and mailing address on the last page, detach, and return in a separate envelope.

Section A: General Information**1. Sex:**

_____ Male _____ Female

2. Age:

_____ under 25
_____ 25-30
_____ 31-40
_____ 41-50
_____ over 50

3. Number of years teaching French:

_____ less than 5
_____ 5-10
_____ 11-15
_____ 16-20
_____ more than 20

4. School population:

- ☐ less than 50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ 101-200
- ☐ 201-300
- ☐ 301-500
- ☐ greater than 500

5. Community population (in which school is located):

- ☐ less than 500
- ☐ 501-1000
- ☐ 1001-2000
- ☐ 2000-5000
- ☐ 5001-10,000
- ☐ greater than 10,000

6. If the community has a population less than 5,000, is it located within one hours driving distance of a town with a population of 5,000 or more?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. In which region of the province is the school?

- ☐ Labrador
- ☐ Western/Northern
- ☐ Central
- ☐ Eastern
- ☐ Avalon Peninsula

8. Does your school district have a Program Co-ordinator for French?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section B: Education

1. Which best describes your university training in French?
- ☐ French major
 - ☐ French minor
 - ☐ 4-7 university courses
 - ☐ less than 4 university courses
 - ☐ other
2. Is French your first/native language?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
3. Please check degrees awarded.
- ☐ Bachelor of Arts
 - ☐ Bachelor of Science
 - ☐ Bachelor of Education
 - ☐ Bachelor of Arts (Education)
 - ☐ Bachelor of Physical Education
 - ☐ Master's Degree--Education
 - ☐ Master's Degree--Arts
 - ☐ Other
4. How many methodology courses in the teaching of French have you completed?
- ☐ 0
 - ☐ 1
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3
 - ☐ 4
 - ☐ more than 4
5. Which best describes your total time spent living/studying in a French milieu?
- ☐ none
 - ☐ up to 3 weeks
 - ☐ 3-6 weeks
 - ☐ several months
 - ☐ 1 year
 - ☐ several years
6. In what year did you last complete a French Course or live in a French milieu? _____

Section C: Teaching Situation

1. Check French programs you are teaching this year.

☐ early immersion
☐ late immersion
☐ extended core
☐ senior high core
☐ junior high core
☐ elementary core
☐ primary core
☐ accelerated
☐ other, please specify _____

2. Approximately what percentage of your instructional day is spent teaching French?

☐ 80 - 100%
☐ 60 - 79%
☐ 40 - 59%
☐ 20 - 39%
☐ 1 - 19%

3. Do you enjoy teaching French?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Section D: Participation in Modern Languages Council

1. Are you a member of the Modern Languages Council for this year, 1988-89?

☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Have you been a member of the MLC at any time during the previous five years?

☐ Yes
☐ No

3. Did you attend the 1988 conference/annual general meeting of the Modern Languages Council?

_____ Yes
_____ No

4. If no, which, if any, of the following factors affected your decision?

_____ financial
_____ unable to obtain leave
_____ not aware of conference
_____ not interested
_____ personal (ie. could not leave home at that particular time)
_____ travel distance too great
_____ other (please specify):

5. If you did attend the 1988 conference, have you used the information from sessions in your work?

_____ Yes
_____ No
_____ to some extent

6. Have you attended other conferences of the Modern Languages Council?

_____ Yes
_____ No

7. If yes is the response in Question 6, approximately how many annual conferences have you attended?

_____ 1 - 5
_____ 6 - 10
_____ More than 10

8. Have you ever held an executive position in the Modern Languages Council?

_____ Yes
_____ No

9. Would you consider running for an executive position in the next several years?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If no, why not? _____

10. Are you a member of another organization for French teachers?

_____ Yes Please list. _____

_____ No

11. Are you a member of another special interest council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association?

_____ Yes

_____ No

12. If you have answered yes to Question 11 and you are not a member of the Modern Languages Council, why did you choose to be a member of the other special interest council?

13. In what ways, if any, do you believe the Modern Languages Council has helped you?

14. How can the Modern Languages Council best help French teachers in the next several years?

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following by circling the appropriate number.

		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
1.	The Modern Languages Council plays an important role in the professional growth of French teachers.	a	b	c	d	e
2.	The Modern Languages Council has helped me become a better teacher.	a	b	c	d	e
3.	I would like to be a member/a more active member of the MLC.	a	b	c	d	e
4.	I feel that my lack of training in French limits my participation in the MLC.	a	b	c	d	e
5.	Information about the Council and its activities is available to me.	a	b	c	d	e

Additional comments: _____

I would like to receive a copy of the data analysis.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Please detach and mail separately to ensure the confidentiality of your questionnaire responses.



