

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PROBLEMS RELATED  
TO THE PRINCIPALSHIP OF A COMBINED  
FRENCH IMMERSION AND FRENCH MINORITY-LANGUAGE  
KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE FIVE SCHOOL

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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ELIZABETH MURPHY, B.A., B.Ed, M.A.









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OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE PRINCIPALSHIP OF A  
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BY

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to uncover an idiographic knowledge of the problems related to the principalship of a combined French immersion and French minority-language school. The study relied on the use of ethnographic research methods, participant observation of one month's duration and five semi-structured interviews.

Problems associated with the principalship of the French immersion program involved lack of support services in French, keeping abreast of changes in the English program, adapting to the special needs of the program's changing clientele and coping with parents' high expectations and frequent demands.

For the French minority-language program, the problems revolved around conflicting expectations of parents, parents' demands for control and management, difficulties of providing a culture base in an anglophone society, linguistic heterogeneity of students, demands of instruction in multigrade classrooms, and low enrolments in the program.

Problems associated with having the two programs housed in one school are associated with an increase in workload for the principal and the need to foster communication and cooperative relations between parents of the two different programs.

The problems were considered in respect to their

routineness, the times in which they occur throughout the year, their possible causes, and their implications.

Combining two relatively new programs in one administrative unit presents an exceptionally demanding and challenging situation for the principal. The problems related to parental participation in the school under study raise questions about the extent with which parents should be involved in school administration and governance. Perceived inequities in the distribution of the school's resources has caused concern among groups of parents and raises the issue of equity and of equality of educational opportunity in general.

The existence of French immersion and French minority-language programs also raises questions about the role of schools and their aims. Many of the issues related to the French minority-language program in the school are only superficially related to education and are merely a manifestation of a more complex struggle for political and social recognition and autonomy.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE PROBLEM**

From the one-room schoolhouse of the past to the complex institutions of today, education has changed dramatically. The evolution has been necessary in order to respond to the expectations, needs and demands of an increasingly complex society. Thus, as society changes so must and do its major institutions such as schools.

One of the major changes which Canadian schools have undergone in the past 30 years involves their role. Society's expectations about what schools do and ought to do have meant that the school has had to take on new responsibilities and adopt a more complex role. A prime example of this change in role has resulted from the introduction of two programs: French immersion and French minority-language education. Schools offering French immersion are expected to produce 'functionally bilingual' children. In the case of French minority-language schools, their role involves "maintaining and developing the French language skills and the cultural heritage of this minority" (Province of Newfoundland, 1991a, p.5 ).

In education, rapid change and evolving roles often result in a myriad of problems which complicate processes and functions, undermine efforts and reduce effectiveness. The introduction of French immersion and French minority-language education has resulted in the emergence of a



variety of problems for schools.

Regarding French immersion, Burns (1986) posits that it is "a highly complex educational innovation" (p.589) which "has implications for extant programs, services, activities, and resources (both human and material) within school board systems and individual schools" (p.573). In a study of the politics and planning of French immersion programs, Olson and Burns (1981) maintain that immersion alters the entire ecology of schools. It is not surprising then that Dagenais (1990) concludes in a review of research findings relating to the principal's role in French immersion that "immersion education has led to a number of administrative and instructional problems" (p.3).

Problems are part of the process of change and adaptation which education must undergo if it is to effectively respond to changes in and demands from society. In this sense, problems are both inevitable and necessary. However, understanding and resolving these problems is also a necessary part of the process of change. If schools are to be successful in their attempts to make children bilingual or to maintain French culture, they will inevitably have to identify and resolve certain problems.

For the principal of a French immersion or French minority-language school, problem solving will therefore need to be an ongoing activity. In fact, the principalship

In general can be defined as "a logical process of problem solving or as the application of standard techniques to practical problems" (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. xiii). As a leader, supervisor, change agent and decision maker, the principal is in an optimum position to orient goals, direct activities, designate roles and tasks in order to prevent and resolve problems. The degree to which he or she engages in effective problem solving will ultimately determine the effectiveness of the school and its programs as a whole. In 1962, Hemphill, Griffiths, and Frederiksen argued that

the elementary school principalship is a highly strategic position. The principal is faced with a host of problems... The problems that he sees and what he does about them influence the quality of education received by every child in his school. (p. 352)

### Statement of the Problem

Recently, a primary and elementary school in St. John's, Newfoundland opened its doors to a new population of students. Although it had already been an immersion centre for one year, in September, 1990 it took on a new role as a school for French minority-language students. As such, the school represents a unique setting pedagogically, socially and, in particular, administratively. In fact, it is the only school in the province which combines a French minority-language and French immersion program in one school

with one principal. However, its uniqueness does not make it immune to problems. On the contrary, it could actually be the source of problems.

The general purpose of this study is to identify, describe and analyze problems relating to the principalship of a primary and elementary school offering both a French minority-language and French immersion program. The specific purposes of this study are to:

- Identify the problems associated with the general principalship of this school.
- Identify the problems related to the French immersion program in this school.
- Identify the problems related to the French minority-language program in this school.
- Identify the problems which arise as a result of combining French immersion and French minority-language instruction in one school.
- Identify the problems which are routine and those which are non-routine.
- Identify the problems which are not particular to any time period but which occur throughout the year.
- Identify the causes of these problems.
- Identify the implications of these problems.

### **Research Questions**

This study will address the broad question of problems relating to the principalship of a combined French immersion and French minority-language school. The specific questions to which answers will be sought are:

1. What problems are associated with the general principalship of this school?
2. What problems are related to the French immersion program in this school?
3. What problems are related to the French minority-language program in this school?
4. What problems arise as a result of combining French immersion and French minority-language instruction in one school?
5. Which of these problems are routine and which are non-routine?
6. Which of these problems are not particular to any time period but occur throughout the year?
7. What are the causes of these problems?
8. What are the implications of these problems?

### **Significance of the Study**

Considerable research has been conducted in North America on French immersion programs. In fact "the immersion programs have been more thoroughly researched than any other

innovative program in education" (McGillivray, 1983, p.2). However, the bulk of this research has been very much focused on the area of program evaluation and student evaluation. Tardif and Weber (1987) posit that this tendency "can perhaps be understood in terms of the political pressures exerted by parents and administrators to focus research efforts on immersion outcomes" (p.75). While this type of research is both important and necessary, it should not be the only focus of attempts at understanding immersion. Burns (1986) points to the problems associated with this type of research:

Because of the limited foci of these immersion studies, a whole host of education related issues have not been adequately addressed. For example: the administrative processes, resources, and policies of school boards and their effects. (p.575)

The literature on immersion has largely tended to emphasize the effectiveness of the program rather than seeking to report its weaknesses. This focus has resulted in "too few attempts by both immersion researchers and planners to understand the problems of immersion" (Burns, 1986, p.574). There is a need to understand the weaknesses of immersion as well as its strengths because as Burns (1987) argues,

there is a notable lack of critical discourse on immersion....French second-language researchers need to engage in critical thought as a meaningful first step in addressing...French immersion issues. What is at stake at the moment is the critical thought and discourse that might lead to improvement and

consideration of alternative programs and courses of action. (p.47)

The focus on outcomes and evaluation of programs has also resulted in a dearth of studies relating to the administrative aspects of the immersion programs. Dagenais (1990) argues that,

while there has been a wealth of research on the academic outcomes of the programs, administrative issues in French immersion have not yet received much attention in the literature on educational administration. (p.3)

In general, the literature suggests a need for critical studies of problem areas in immersion and, in particular, in the area of administration of programs. At the same time, many authors argue in favour of a need to adopt a different approach to research in French immersion. Tardif & Weber (1987), in summarizing the state of the art in immersion research, note that "the lack of ethnographic and other qualitative research in immersion is somewhat disconcerting" (p.75). They point out that "the predominant methodological approach used in immersion research has been the empirical-analytical paradigm" (p.68). The reliance on this approach, the authors add, "can be explained in terms of the training (often, experimental psychology or linguistics) received by most of the researchers active in the field" (p.75). Dagenais (1990) echoes these same concerns:

Clearly there is a need for further research (specifically ethnographic research) on the

administration of French immersion programs and (sic) to document the realities of French immersion principals, so that solutions to current problems may be explored with greater insight.(p.7)

Much the same can be said of the needs of research in the area of French minority-language education. There has been a significant amount of research done which has led to theories on the cognitive processes involved in minority-language learning as well as studies contrasting majority- and minority-language learning. Also, a considerable body of literature exists related to legal issues of management and control of French minority-language schools. However, little documentation is available relating to administrative processes and problems of French minority-language education. The entire question of the administration of these types of programs is somewhat ambiguous at this time<sup>1</sup> because of the lack of a clear interpretation of Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the resulting lack of consensus regarding how much control parents should and can have in the administration and management of these schools.

It is for these reasons that this ethnographic study of problems in the principalship of a French immersion and French minority-language school is significant and necessary. The results of the study will contribute to

---

1. This is at the time of writing i.e. February, 1992

a greater awareness and understanding of the problems involved in the administration of this type of school. Identification of the problems may help in their eventual resolution. As well, the study will contribute to a more holistic understanding of immersion programs and the problems related to their administration. The findings should assist school boards in the development and implementation of programs as well as in the organization of schools for French first- and second-language instruction. They should also prove useful in discussions regarding the control and management of French minority-language schools. Finally, this study should complement the body of knowledge available on immersion and minority-language education and provide a stimulus for further research.

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

This study is limited to one school, i.e. to a school which combines French minority-language and French immersion classes without an English stream and which caters to primary and elementary students only. Furthermore, only those problems relating to the principalship of a French immersion and French minority-language school are considered. Administrative problems in general or those affecting the programs at the school board or Department of Education level are not considered; nor are instructional or



pedagogical problems not directly related to the administration of the school.

The study does not directly consider problems related to the administration of schools offering French immersion and French minority-language programs where the principal is a unilingual anglophone because the principal of the school under study is a bilingual francophone. In fact, all staff of the school under study are bilingual since the only programs offered are French immersion and French first-language. For this reason, the study does not address the issue of relationships between bilingual and unilingual staff; that is between the teachers of the English stream and teachers of the French stream. However, the study does address the issue of relationships between the teachers of the French minority-language classes and those of the immersion classes.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Several factors had a limiting effect on the validity, reliability and generalizability of the findings of this study. These factors relate to: 1. time restraints; 2. limited access; 3. observer effects; 4. observer bias; and 5. the focus of the study.

1. Time restraints:

The period of collection of data for this study was limited to one month (i.e. the month of May, 1992). The data gathered during this time period may not constitute a representative sample of the entire school year. Certain problems may tend to occur more frequently, or only, at certain times of the year such as during reporting time or at the beginning or very end of the school year. To compensate somewhat for this limitation, the research questions as well as the interview questions addressed this issue.

2. Limited access:

The researcher did not have complete access to all information, activities or events that took place in the school such as private conversations between the principal and staff, between the principal and senior administration or personal meetings with parents or telephone conversations. Where this was the case, the researcher questioned the principal about the conversations and meetings. Thus, the access was only partially limited.

3. Observer effects:

One disadvantage of trying to observe behaviour is that "the observer by his mere presence, biases the situation he

is observing" (McCall, 1969, p. 305). The researcher's presence may have affected the observed phenomenon such that the situation which was observed may not accurately reflect the normal situation or circumstances. Furthermore, as the subjects of observation, people may tend to behave differently either consciously or unconsciously than they might behave under normal circumstances. However, the extended period of observation provided the opportunity for the researcher to monitor the behaviour of the subjects and to monitor her own behaviour.

#### 4. Observer bias:

As the instrument for the gathering of data, the participant observer may have been limited and influenced by her perceptions, feelings, role-relations with the subjects, and personal characteristics or frame of reference. Bias in gathering, reporting, and interpreting data may have had a limiting effect on the validity and reliability of the findings.

#### 5. Focus of the study:

The focus of this study was one school only. It is a nontypical school, being the only one of its kind in Newfoundland and Labrador with this type of organization of program offerings. Strictly speaking, the generalizability

of the findings is limited to this type of school. However, because schools offering the same programs as does the school under study will likely encounter similar problems, the findings may be applicable to these schools. Chapter 4 addresses directly questions of validity, reliability and generalizability and indicates how many of the aforementioned limitations are minimized.

#### **Definition of Terms**

The reader will need to become familiar with certain terms which are referred to frequently in this study. The definitions of these terms are therefore provided here and, where necessary and possible, the explanations pertain specifically to the Newfoundland and Labrador situation.

1. **Problems:** Challenges, difficulties, stresses or concerns inherent in a situation or circumstance.
2. **The principalship:** "a collection of important tasks and responsibilities that must be carried out in order for the goals of the school to be efficiently achieved" (Hughes & Ubben, 1989, p.4).
3. **French first-language education:** A program for French-speaking students in which French is the language of instruction in the classroom for most of the subject areas except English, and the means of communication in

the school environment.

4. Minority-language education: "The term 'minority language education' refers to the opportunity for those people who do not speak the language of the majority to receive schooling in their mother tongue. Consequently, in Newfoundland and Labrador, minority language education refers to the educational opportunities provided to francophones in the province" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986,p.49).
5. French immersion: "a program designed for English - speaking students in which French is the language of instruction in the classroom for all or some of the subject areas and as much as possible, the means of communication in the school environment" (Province of Newfoundland,1986,p.37).
6. Early French immersion: "a program from Kindergarten to Level 3, beginning at the Kindergarten level with approximately 100% instruction in French. With the introduction of Language Arts and other subjects in English, the percentage of instructional time in French decreases somewhat as students progress through the varying grade levels" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986, p.37).
7. Late immersion: "a program from Grade 7 to Level 3 with approximately 70% instruction in French in Grades 7 and

8. The percentage of instructional time in French decreases somewhat as students progress through the varying grade levels" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986, p.37).
8. Primary school: A school accommodating students from Kindergarten to Grade 3.
9. Elementary school: A school accommodating students from Grades 4-6.
10. Core French: "a program of instruction in which students study the various aspects of French language during a regularly scheduled time slot as it is done in other subject areas" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986, p.31).
11. Dual-track school: "a school in which French immersion exists side-by-side with the regular English program" (Gibson, 1987, p.18).
12. Immersion centre: "In an immersion centre there is no English program, although both immersion and French first language programs may coexist in such a setting" (Gibson, 1987, p.18).
13. French school: "an educational institution whose very essence is francophone. All activities are conducted in French. The atmosphere and the spirit of the school embody the francophone heritage of which it is a product, as does its very structure. It is a vehicle of French Canadian culture. In a French school, instruction is in

French and a French first language curriculum is used" (Province of Newfoundland,1991a,p.3).

### **Organization of the Study**

This study of problems relating to the principalship of a combined French immersion and French minority-language school is organized into six chapters.

Chapter 1 describes the study: its purpose, significance, scope, limitations and research questions. As well, Chapter 1 provides a definition of relevant terms used throughout the study. Chapter 2 outlines the background information necessary in order to understand fully the study and interpret its findings. Chapter 3 provides a review of the literature pertaining to problems in the principalship in general and problems relating to the principalship of schools offering a French immersion program and of schools offering a French minority-language program.

An overview of the characteristics and objectives of ethnographic research is presented in Chapter 4 along with details of the specific methodology used in this study. Chapter 5 presents the findings in relation to research questions one to four which are listed in Chapter 1. Chapter 6 presents the findings in relation to research questions five to eight which are also listed in Chapter 1. The findings are also considered in relation to the review of

the literature presented in Chapter 3 and in relation to the background information on French minority-language and French immersion education provided in Chapter 2.

The study's final chapter, Chapter 6, provides a summary of the findings, a commentary on methodology, a discussion of the findings and concluding statements.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **FRENCH IMMERSION AND FRENCH MINORITY-LANGUAGE EDUCATION: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

French immersion and French minority-language education represent recent educational innovations. French minority-language education in Newfoundland and Labrador, and particularly in St. John's, is still in the evolutionary stages. It is likely, however, that historical aspects of the establishment and development of these programs contribute or have contributed to some of the problems which they may be experiencing. It is for this reason that, in order to understand the problems relating to the principalship of a combined French immersion and French minority-language school, it is necessary to have some understanding of the general context within which the programs operate. This chapter therefore provides background information relating to the history, clientele, general organization and characteristics of the two programs.

#### **French Immersion Programs**

##### **Historical overview: Canada**

French immersion began in Canada in 1965 in St. Lambert, a suburb of Montréal, Québec, with a small group of anglophone parents. Disillusioned with traditional methods

of language teaching, they began lobbying the Protestant school board of the region to offer an immersion class. The idea of French immersion programs was relatively new and uncommon at the time. It is thus not surprising that the school board was reluctant to begin a program in its schools. Faced with the board's opposition, the parents themselves began sponsoring language classes for the children and assumed responsibility for the costs. The school board finally initiated a program "when faced with the favourable publicity of the parents' classes in the local press and by (sic) the persistence of parents who regularly attended board meetings" (Canadian Education Association, 1983, p.11). Thus, Canada's first immersion program began.

In 1969, the Official Languages Act made English and French the official languages of Canada. In 1970, through the Official Languages in Education Program, the federal government moved to institutionalize bilingualism by providing financial support for educational programs such as immersion. The objectives of this program were "to enable Canadians to have their children educated in the official language of their choice and to permit students to learn their second official language" (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990, p.11). Immersion programs quickly spread across Canada such that enrolment grew from the first class

in the St. Lambert experiment to 228,000 students in 1989-90 (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990, p.25) (see Appendix A for growth of French immersion in Canada).

The success of the program has in part been attributed to the involvement of parents. De Lorenzo and Gladstein (1984) maintain that

parent support was a crucial factor in the continued success of immersion programs. Existing immersion parent organizations have been instrumental in convincing both sceptical administrators and prospective immersion parents of the fiscal and academic viability of immersion programs. (p.16)

Many of these parents were so intent on success in their efforts to have a French education program in Canada that they formed a strong lobbying group, Canadian Parents for French, a volunteer organization currently with more than 17,000 chapters across Canada whose leadership has been "outstanding in terms of advocacy and the preparation of information material for parents" (James, 1986, p.20).

Carey (1984) explains how social, cultural, economic and political factors have influenced the growing popularity of the program:

some parents as well as government agencies saw immersion as a uniquely Canadian vehicle through which to produce social interaction and communication between francophones and anglophones, thus leading ultimately to a greater empathy and understanding between the two linguistic and cultural communities. Many parents and teachers also saw the enrolment of their children in immersion programs as a means to an enriched and diversified educational and perhaps cultural experience leading to enhanced career

opportunities for their children.(p.246)

Carey summarizes the success of immersion programs by pointing to the fact that "the St. Lambert experiment has become a landmark in French language education not only in Canada but around the world" (p.246).

#### Historical overview: Newfoundland and Labrador

French immersion programs began in Newfoundland in 1975 in Cape St.- Georges on the Port-au-Port Peninsula as a result of a co-operative initiative among the school board, church and parents. The program was chosen as an option because French first-language schooling was not available to French- speaking residents of the area at the time. As such, the program did not really correspond to the pattern of establishment of most French immersion programs. In 1977, the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's established the province's first 'true' early immersion program. Central Newfoundland saw its first early immersion program one year later, in 1978, under the Terra Nova Integrated School Board in Gander. The Avalon Consolidated School Board in St. John's established the province's first late immersion program in 1979 and followed with an early immersion program in 1981. Since that time, other boards such as the Roman Catholic School Board for Labrador and the Humber-St. Barbe Roman Catholic School Board in Corner Brook have initiated

programs. By 1991-92, there was a total of thirteen of the province's twenty-seven school boards offering French immersion programs: four boards were offering both an early and late immersion program, seven were offering only early immersion, and two boards were offering only a late immersion program. At the beginning of the 1991-92 school year, school boards in the province were offering a total of eleven early immersion programs and six late immersion programs.

Although the growth of immersion programs "was at first rather slow, and limited to urban (sic) areas of the province, recent years have seen a considerable increase in both areas and numbers involved" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986,p.21). Participation in immersion programs has grown from one school with 56 students in 1975 to 34 schools with 4,328 students in 1990-91 (see Appendix B for statistics pertaining to immersion enrolments in Newfoundland and Labrador).

#### Characteristics and objectives

The four most important characteristics of an immersion program are that, first of all, it

is an optional program to which every student has access in principle. Second, the program serves a primarily unilingual anglophone population. Third, for early total immersion, teachers use only French, the second language, as the medium of instruction in the

initial years. Finally, immersion students study the same curriculum content as their peers in the regular English program. (Lapkin,1984,p.4)

What distinguishes immersion from other second language programs is its emphasis on teaching 'in' French as opposed to teaching French itself. The intention "is that the new language is to be learned by use while learning something else and not by formal language instruction" (Stern, 1984, p.4). Students study mathematics, science, social studies and many other such subjects in French and acquire the language in the process.

Immersion programs are traditionally housed or organized in either dual-track schools or immersion centres. Lapkin distinguishes between these two types of schools:

In an immersion centre, daily school announcements are made in French, the school secretary speaks French, students are disciplined in school corridors in French, and so on. Students in centres hear French spoken by the majority of adults with whom they have contact during the school day, both inside and outside the classroom. The proportion of French material on display in immersion classes and in the school corridors is greater in immersion centres than in dual track schools. Also, a greater number of school assemblies and special school events are carried out in French in immersion centres. In contrast, in dual track schools, the principal is usually an anglophone, half of the teachers speak only English and the opportunities for hearing French outside of the classroom in school are quite limited. (p.5)

Genesee (1987) outlines the aims of French immersion programs as follows:

1. to provide the participating students with functional competence in both written and spoken aspects of French;
2. to promote and maintain normal levels of English language development;
3. to ensure achievement in academic subjects commensurate with the students' academic ability and grade level; and
4. to instill in the students an understanding and appreciation of French Canadians, their language and culture, without detracting in any way from the students' identity with and appreciation for English-Canadian culture. (p.13)

#### Enrolment and program organization

During the 1991-1992 school year, 4,673 students were enrolled in French immersion programs from Kindergarten to Level 3 in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. Of these, 3,850 were enrolled in early immersion programs and 823 in late immersion programs. The Kindergarten to Grade 5 enrolment was comprised of 2408 students housed in 21 dual-track schools and one immersion centre in St. John's with an enrolment of 275. The following figure illustrates the breakdown of French immersion program enrolments for the 1991-92 school year for Newfoundland and Labrador.

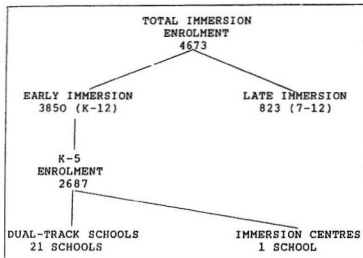


Figure 1  
French immersion enrolment and organization,  
Newfoundland and Labrador,  
1991-92

### French Minority-Language Programs

#### Historical overview: Canada

The 6,000,000 francophones in Canada represent 24% of the country's total population. While there has been a steady increase in the number of francophones in Canada for the past 35 years, the percentage as a proportion of the country as a whole has declined from 28% in 1961 to 25% in 1986 (Canada, 1988). The decrease has been attributed to low transmission of French as a mother tongue from parents to



children, international immigration of non-francophones, and the comparative growth rate of the non-francophone population (Dallaire,1990a).

For many years, francophone minority groups throughout Canada fought for improved access to education in French as well as the right to manage their own schools. At first, access was slow and irregular and depended on the political and economic willingness of provincial governments.

In 1969, the adoption of the Official Languages Act accorded equal status, rights and privileges to English and French languages in Canada. In 1970, the Government of Canada instituted a program of financial contributions to the provinces "aimed at giving official-language minorities the opportunity to be educated or have their children educated in their own language" (Commissioner of Official Languages,1990,p.10). However, for francophone minorities in many provinces, economic support was not sufficient. Political or constitutional recognition of minority-language education rights was necessary. In 1982, Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provided this recognition and guaranteed the linguistic rights of both official language groups as well as the right to minority-language education (see Appendix C for Section 23 of the Charter in its entirety). In brief, Section 23 guarantees that a parent has the right for his/her child to be educated

in French if

*either parent* satisfies any of the following criteria:

- his or her first language learned and still understood is French
- he or she received primary school instruction in French in Canada
- he or she has at least one child who has already received instruction at the primary or secondary level in French in Canada (Province of Newfoundland, 1991a,p.17).

The Charter further states that the right to minority-language education "applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction".

Again however, the Official Languages Act and Section 23 were not sufficient to ensure access to French education. Full application of Section 23 has been fought for in the courts by francophone parents because

despite the inclusion of Section 23 in the Charter and the efforts of the provinces and territories to implement it, major deficiencies in minority language education persisted, especially outside Québec: the arbitrary application of the "where numbers warrant" provision, the lack of a clear distinction between minority language education and the various forms of bilingual education, and the almost total absence of measures enabling minorities to manage their own schools. These are the factors that have repeatedly led Francophone parents to take their case before the courts in an effort to secure recognition of their rights. (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990, p.18)

In 1990, in the precedent-setting Mahé case, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in relation to Section 23

that,

official-language minorities in all provinces have a constitutional right to participate effectively in the management of the schools their children attend. In the opinion of the court, management and control ensure the vitality of the language and culture of the linguistic minority. (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990, p.19)

The full implication of this and other court decisions regarding the control and management of French schools by the parents has yet to be determined. It is likely that, in the upcoming years, further lobbying on the part of parents will result in clarification of many issues relating to minority-language education in Canada. Obviously the case is not closed. In fact,

the Supreme Court ruling is both an end and a new beginning. It may have taken a long time since the first attempts to enshrine in the constitution the right of the minority to education in its own language, but things have indeed changed and new vistas are opening up before us. (Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990, p.21)

In 1988-89, excluding Québec's enrolment figures, a total of 154,284 students were enrolled in minority-language education programs in Canada (see Appendix D for enrolments in French minority-language education in Canada).

#### Historical overview: Newfoundland and Labrador

According to the 1986 census, the 2,592 francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador represent approximately .05% of the population of the province and are concentrated

primarily in St. John's, Labrador City and on the Port-au-Port Peninsula (Canada, 1988). The number of francophones in the province decreased between 1971 and 1981 because of a low birth rate among francophones, interprovincial migration and the failure of parents to pass on their mother tongue to their children. In recent years, their numbers appear to be stabilizing somewhat with the number of francophones in 1986 being the same as that observed in 1981 (Dallaire, 1990).

Newfoundland's first French minority-language classes were established in Labrador City in 1960 in order to accommodate children of francophone miners from Québec and New Brunswick. Today, the Labrador Roman Catholic School Board, in two of its schools, Notre Dame Academy and Labrador City Collegiate, provides French education to these students using a curriculum from Québec. For their final year of high school, these students attend a school in Québec where they may pursue their studies at a Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (Cegep).

In 1975, a French immersion Kindergarten was established at Our Lady of the Cape Primary School at Cape St-Georges on the Port-au-Port Peninsula marking the beginning of French immersion education on the island portion of the province. Eleven percent of the peninsula's population of 5,245 claim French ancestry, having descended

from French settlers from France, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Acadia and the Magdalen islands. However, attempts at maintaining the French language and culture of the region were hindered by the dominance of anglophone culture and institutions. For many years in the area, not only was education available solely in English, but use of the French language in schools was often discouraged and, at times, forbidden. Initially, it was thought that the immersion program could respond to the linguistic and cultural needs of the francophone community; however, it soon became evident that as a program designed for anglophones learning a second language, immersion did not respond to the needs of the community. In the Report of the Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs, the members recommended

that the government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognize that the French language school is the type of school which best meets the objectives of preserving and strengthening the language and culture of Francophone students. (Province of Newfoundland 1986,p.52)

The Committee further stressed that

from the perspective of language development, the needs of minority language pupils differ from those of pupils who have a totally English language background. If education is not provided in their mother tongue there is a very real danger of complete assimilation of these pupils over a period of time. (Province of Newfoundland,1986,p.52)

In 1983, in Mainland, discussions began between a group of parents and the Port-au-Port Roman Catholic School Board.

Parents were requesting that a French first-language program be established in the community's primary school. Discussion and lobbying continued; however, the school board responded that it "could not meet the request until the whole question of French educational programming had been thoroughly examined" (Cormier, Crocker, Netten, Spain, 1985, p.6). Finally, in September, 1987, after considerable lobbying on the part of parents from the region, and following recommendations from a study established by the provincial ministry of education, the immersion classes were converted to French first-language classes. During this same year, it was announced that a French first-language school/community centre would be built in Mainland. The facility, largely financed by federal funds, officially opened in 1989 and now serves as a symbol of revival of French culture, language and identity for the people of the region. At the same time, the French immersion classes at Cape St-Georges became French first-language classes.

In St. John's, the French first-language classes opened in September, 1990 after a long period of lobbying and negotiation which began in 1987. At that time, a petition containing the names of 23 students requesting the establishment of French-first language classes was sent to the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's. When the school board rejected the petition, a committee of parents

was formed to lobby for the classes. The committee submitted a formal proposal to the board requesting the start-up of a French section in a French immersion school. In January, 1988, the board conducted a registration to estimate the demand for French programs. When only 17 children registered, the board refused to set up French classes. After an appeal by the parents to the Department of Education, the Minister created an advisory committee to study the problem. This committee made certain recommendations but negotiations ended because the parents perceived no commitment on the part of government to francophone education in the province.

In August, 1988, the parents decided to take their case before the courts under Section 23 of The Charter and named the provincial government and the school board as defendants. The parents' committee then joined other parents' committees in the province forming La Fédération des parents francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FPFTNL) which received financial assistance from the Department of the Secretary of State to help in its efforts to obtain French education in Newfoundland and Labrador. A date was set for the court case; however, the defendants requested a delay in order to prepare their arguments. In the meantime, a survey was conducted to determine the number of francophones in the region. The conclusion of the survey

which was conducted by a third party was that there were sufficient numbers to offer registration. Following the survey, the two parties entered into negotiations which led to an out-of-court settlement. After three years of negotiations, French first-language classes began in September, 1990 in St. John's at the school under study. (Fédération des parents francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, 1990).

Presently, the committee of parents is still preparing for a court case. Their initial demands were for a French program and French classes; however, the control and management of these classes has become the focal point of the most recent negotiations. Although they were successful in obtaining the right to the classes and program, their right to management and control has not yet been established. In the Mahé case (1990), the courts established a "sliding scale" whereby the degree of management and control would depend on the number of children involved. The Newfoundland court case would decide to what degree the parents would have a right of control. Whereas the Fédération des parents francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador favours the creation of a francophone school board, the Minister of Education, Dr. Warren, "believes that the number of francophone children is at present insufficient to justify the creation of a Francophone school board"



(Commissioner of Official Languages, 1990b, p. 267). The provincial government has established a committee to study the question of control and management of French schools and is expected to present its report in 1992. While no decisions have yet been made, it does appear that

the francophone population in the area concerned should have a significant amount of control over francophone education; that is to say, francophones should decide on matters referring to curriculum, staffing, and other pedagogical aspects of their schooling. (Province of Newfoundland, 1986, p. 51)

#### Characteristics and objectives

A French first-language school uses a curriculum designed exclusively for francophone students in a minority situation. All subjects are taught in French except for a daily period of English beginning in Grade 4. As well, French is also used as the language of the school's administration. All teachers and personnel are expected to be francophone. Most importantly, "the school encourages parental participation in school matters...and creates and maintains close ties with the francophone community of the immediate vicinity as well as with other francophone communities" (Province of Newfoundland, 1990, p. 4). Besides attempting to attain the goals of education as formulated in the Aims of Education of Newfoundland and Labrador, (1984) the French school also aims in general to maintain and

develop the French skills and the cultural heritage of this minority.

Some of the specific objectives of the French school are to:

stimulate and strengthen the learner's sense of cultural and linguistic identity as a francophone; serve as a cultural centre for the French Newfoundland community; reinforce the learner's sense of belonging to the immediate francophone community.... provide the learner with the opportunity to develop a good knowledge of the history of the French Canadian people. (Province of Newfoundland, 1990, pp.5-6)

#### Enrolment and program organization

A total of 268 students were enrolled in French first-language schools in Newfoundland and Labrador during the 1991-92 school year. All of these students attended Roman Catholic schools in St. John's, Labrador City or on the Port-au-Port Peninsula. The French-only school in Mainland on the Port-au-Port Peninsula operates classes from K-7 with a total enrolment of 75 students with the Kindergarten to Grade 5 enrolment totalling 55. Another 95 students were enrolled in the program in the Cape St-Georges dual-track school. Fifty of these students were enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 5. In Labrador, where French first-language education takes place in 2 schools (one K-6 and one 7-10), enrolment totalled 64 with 38 students from Kindergarten to Grade 5. In September, 1991, The Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's began a French first-language program at the

immersion centre with 34 students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 4. The following figure illustrates the 1991-92 French first-language enrolments in Newfoundland and Labrador.

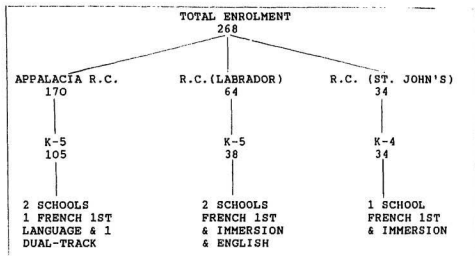


Figure 2  
French minority-language  
program enrolment and organization,  
Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991-92

### Summary

This chapter has provided the background information necessary for the understanding of the context in which French immersion and French minority-language programs

operate both in Canada and in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is likely that some of the problems related to these programs result from the context in which they operate. The review of the literature in Chapter 3 will illustrate examples of such problems.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter provides a review of the literature pertaining to problems in the principalship of schools offering a French immersion or a French minority-language program or both. As was indicated in the section on definitions in Chapter 1, for the purposes of this study, the word "problems" is defined to include "challenges, difficulties, stresses or concerns inherent in a situation or circumstance".

The review proceeds from the general to the more specific focusing initially on problems associated with the general principalship and finally on problems specific to the principalship of schools offering French immersion or French minority-language programs. Some of the problems encountered by principals of schools offering these types of programs are similar to those problems experienced by principals in other school settings such as in regular English-stream schools. The general review therefore provides a point of comparison which permits a better understanding of the specific problems with which this study is concerned.

### **Problems Associated with the General Principalship**

Problems relating to the principalship have received significant attention in the literature. It is interesting to note that while the approach and focus of the studies vary, the findings are often quite similar such that patterns in the problems clearly emerge. The approach taken in much of the literature on principal's problems is to report the diverse problems by grouping them into categories. The approach used here will be to present the problems relating to the principalship by using the categories most frequently cited. These categories encompass problems relating to:

1. the role of the principal;
2. teachers;
3. students;
4. parents and the community;
5. general administration; and
6. senior administrators.

While these categories may fail to cover all the problems reported in the literature, they nevertheless provide a broad overview of the findings of much of the research on principals' problems for the past 10-15 years. To appreciate and understand the nature and scope of these problems, the findings in each category will be reported separately.

# 1. The role of the principal

One of the chief concerns expressed by principals and documented in the literature is the ambiguity of the role. In a group discussion amongst a stratified sample of 100 principals and administrators of education from Saskatchewan, the participants expressed concerns about the "sometimes conflicting expectations of different groups for the principal's role" (Renihan,1983,p.10). The participants emphasized that there are "very real stresses associated with the emotional and psychological effects of increased expectations" for the principal's role (p.9). Lyons (1990) posits that while

most principals know they are expected to be instructional leaders in their schools, and the majority of them would like to fulfil this role.... (they) find that the administrative role tends to dominate the instructional leadership role (p.44).

Lyons further posits that much of the conflict and ambiguity in the role relates to the fact that

the principal's day is busy and fragmented with numerous interruptions. Approximately two-thirds of the principal's day is spent responding to the initiatives of others. This obviously leaves little time for careful thought, reflection and long-range planning. (p.45)

Problems with time are referred to frequently in the literature because it is often this factor that prevents principals from effectively carrying out their role. Barth (1980) maintains that

there is a huge discrepancy between what principals would like to do and what they really do. Most say they want to be instructional leaders who work closely with teachers, children, and curriculum. Instead... principals spend the bulk of their fragmented time in an elaborate juggling act. Principals rarely control their tasks, their time, or their location...few are able to shape the job as much as it shapes them.(p.6)

In a 1987 study conducted by The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 83% of the principals surveyed identified "time taken up by administrative detail" as being an important problem (Pellicer,Anderson,Keefe,Kelly & McCleary,1988,p.19). Sackney (1981) found that the principal's workday is

hectic, unpredictable and riddled with 50 to 100 different occasions for decision. Pressures of time force him or her to spend minuscule amounts of time on most activities...interruptions and emergencies are commonplace, and undisturbed time alone is a rarity. (p.4)

## 2. Teachers

Problems frequently identified by principals result from their relationship with teachers. Leithwood, Cousins and Smith (1990a,b,c) conducted a study involving interviews with 11 elementary and 10 secondary school principals and vice-principals in which they documented "the nature of problems typically encountered by principals over the course of a significant portion of a school year" (p.9). Of the 907 problems reported by the study, 247 of these related to teachers. Teacher conflict, assignment of duties,



supervision and evaluation, competency levels, new teachers, teacher exchange, personal problems and professional development were some of the factors that caused problems for principals.

Supervision and evaluation are frequently identified in the literature as problems. In the Saskatchewan study involving a discussion amongst 100 principals and administrators, the participants noted that while there are increasing demands from school boards, the teacher's federation and the department regarding supervision of teachers, "there is an element of resentment among teachers directed at the supervisor, the principal" (Renihan, 1983, p.11). The study concluded that a lack of interaction between principal and teachers because of time constraints likely contributed to the resentment to supervision on the part of teachers.

Sackney (1981) notes regarding evaluation that principals are expected to evaluate teachers periodically in order to "get rid of incompetents" but also in order to promote professional growth (p.5). The problem for the principal according to Sackney is that it is difficult to evaluate and foster professional growth at the same time. Teachers demand professional autonomy yet the principal "is expected to safeguard the interests of the organization by acting to upgrade the quality of staff performance" (p.5).

Other problems relating to teachers are associated with staff apathy, low teacher morale,

difficulties with substitute and part-time teachers.... Coping with staff cuts caused by declining enrolment; professional development of principals and teachers (and the fact that) such things as supervision and scheduling extracurricular activities sometimes force one into an adversary position with one's staff. (Renihan, 1983, p.11)

Fris, Fris and Balderson (1987) administered a questionnaire in which the main goal was to determine what significant issues or problems face school executives. In the category of teacher personnel issues, the respondents identified supervision and evaluation, staff reduction, teacher welfare and a decline in morale as frequent problems.

In a Newfoundland study of principals' problems, Walsh (1973) found that teacher-related problems resulted from such factors as difficulties securing qualified substitute and replacement teachers, getting teachers interested in school and classroom innovations, and getting teachers to adopt newer teaching techniques (Walsh, 1973).

### 3. Students

Leithwood et al. (1990a) reported 113 problems in the category of students. The types of problems included abuse, attendance, complaints, discipline, evaluation, injuries, placement, special requests and vandalism. However, the

authors noted that

student problems were by no means limited to the control of students. The majority had some direct link to the likelihood of student growth: for example, incidences of child abuse, counselling adult students on diploma requirements, 'behavioural' (sic) students running away from school. A large minority of this category of problems did involve control: discipline, attendance, and the maintenance of order were examples. (p.12)

In a study of principals by Schmuck and Schmuck (1990), more than 50% of those interviewed identified the number one problem facing their schools as "changing attitudes and motivation of their student populations" (p.32).

Walsh (1973) found that student problems related to: involving all students in school activities; developing programs to meet the needs of low-achievers and of gifted students; and providing supervision of students during recess, lunch and before and after school.

#### 4. The community and parents

Therrien (1984) posits that, increasingly, parents want to influence the school life of their child. She notes the "increased pressure from parents for involvement in the decision-making process that affects them and their children" (p.4). Sackney (1981) posits that "parental involvement is currently in vogue" (p.5). However, he notes that this involvement poses problems for the principal:

teachers in many instances feel that parents have

sufficient involvement in schools and that further intrusion may in fact restrict their professional autonomy. The principal is thus caught in a dual accountability - to community groups and to school staff. (p.5)

Studies of principals in Newfoundland and Labrador have noted problems related to: militant parents, inadequate communication channels to the community, resistance of the community to program and organizational changes in the school, and pressure groups in the community blocking changes desired by teachers and students (Walsh,1973,pp.77-78). Ivany (1975) concluded that school-community relations ranked among the five most important problems of elementary principals in this province. School-community relations' problems included difficulties "interpreting school programs to the community; reporting the needs of the school to...parents and the community; reconciling controversies between teachers and parents" (p.67).

Leithwood et al. (1990a) reported 105 principals' problems related to parents. These problems concerned communication, complaints, parent groups, parents' night and parental involvement in the school. Principals participating in the Saskatchewan study expressed concerns regarding "outside agency involvement in schools", "changing community attitudes about the role of the schools" and the "supportiveness or lack of supportiveness" of the local school board (Renihan,1983,p.10).

## 5. General administration

Finances, curriculum, programs, aging buildings, and school routines are just some of the issues which appear to pose problems for principals as they administer their schools on a daily basis. Eaton and Hills (1983) describe how financial restraints entail reductions in operating budgets, a decrease in the number of support staff, a state of disrepair of equipment and facilities, poorer working conditions for teachers, and a curtailment in the number of field trips, extracurricular activities and other events.

Sixteen percent of the respondents in the study by Fris et al. (1987) identified financial constraints as a major challenge. One of the principals surveyed "noted the relationship between reductions in funding, staff morale, and consequently...the quality of instruction provided for students" (p.21). Another identified "increased parental expectations and legislation by the province to introduce new programs, together with maintenance and renovation of aging buildings, as sources of financial stress" (p.21).

Principals interviewed in the Leithwood et al. (1990a) study perceived school routines as a source of problems. The 138 problems reported in this category related to such factors as assemblies, attendance, budgets, fire drills, field trips, special education meetings, report cards, timetabling, fundraising, and student registration.

Under the category of problems of general administration, Ivany (1975) found in his study of elementary principals in Newfoundland and Labrador that revising and implementing curriculum, providing adequate library services, finding time for classroom visitation, developing budgets, and requisitioning and accounting for supplies and materials were important problems.

#### 6. Senior administrators

Leithwood et al.(1990b) found that "principals view the work of senior administrators as less than helpful" (p.14). They found also that "senior administrators were viewed by principals as the greatest source of problems outside the school" (p.14). Such problems resulted from the fact that the administrators

place accountability demands on principals, visit their schools, provide approval or non approval of principals' initiatives, request attendance by principals at board meetings for a variety of purposes, and insist on adherence to system procedures. (p.12).

A study by Duke (1988) into why principals quit their jobs revealed that three of the five sources of job dissatisfaction for principals were associated with senior administrators.

**Problems Associated with the Principalship  
of a School Offering a French Immersion Program**

Many of the problems faced by principals of schools offering a French immersion program may be similar to those experienced by principals in schools which do not offer French immersion. Unless the school is an immersion centre, it offers two programs: a regular English program and a French immersion program; or a French immersion program and a minority-language program. Principals of these type of schools, (dual-track schools) may therefore have to contend with the same problems that any principal might face; yet, at the same time, they may also have to cope with the extra pressures, concerns and challenges related to the operation of an immersion program.

The approach used in this section will be to present the problems relating to the principalship of schools offering French immersion classes by creating categories of the problems most frequently cited in the literature. These categories encompass problems related to:

1. the role of the principal;
2. teachers;
3. parents; and
4. curriculum and instruction.

### 1. The role of the principal

Guttman's (1983) observations of French immersion prompted her to conclude that "there is a crisis of leadership in French immersion programs" (p.20). Similar conclusions were reached by Lamarre (1989) in a study of the experiences of anglophone elementary principals of French immersion schools. She noted that immersion principals "play a supportive role rather than a leadership role vis-a-vis their French immersion teachers" and attributed this to the fact that principals receive no specialized training to deal with French immersion programs and are not involved in in-services related to its implementation (p.29). Tétrault (1984) noted in his study of the concerns of French immersion principals in Saskatchewan that principals are often placed in charge of an immersion program without the opportunity to become knowledgeable about it or committed to it. In a large-scale study of immersion in Ontario, Olson and Burns (1981) determined that "no principals had specialized training for being a principal in a school with an immersion program" (p.13).

Similar findings have emerged from other studies of French immersion principals. Lemire (1989) reported that school boards frequently assign principals to French immersion schools "whether or not these individuals are experienced, trained or motivated to assume these new



positions"(p.2). Lack of inservice and training often results in "each principal having to learn on the job - sink or swim approach" (sic) (p.2). Lemire affirms further that "there is virtually no systematic information available, or directive or prescriptive documents such as handbooks, policy manuals or departmental guidelines and procedures for principals of immersion schools" (p.3).

Lemire maintains that, given their lack of training, "the demands and expectations placed upon these men and women appear unrealistically high" (p.4). He argues that French immersion principals face heavy workloads with administrative tasks involving such activities as coordinating curriculum development, answering parents' concerns, completing correspondence in French, becoming familiar with French programs, engaging in extra meetings, obtaining support services in French, promoting the program and obtaining appropriate resource materials. For the principal of a dual-track school, the administrative workload can be even greater. One principal in Lemire's study commented regarding the administration of a dual-track school that "operating a school like this is a great deal more difficult than a single track school because you have to organize, in effect, two separate schools and combine them in your time-table...it's a complex process" (p.34).

## 2. Teachers

According to McGillivray (1979), one of the most difficult problems facing the principal of an immersion school is staffing the immersion classes. Dagenais (1990) maintains that "the acquisition of personnel who are competent in French and who have some background in immersion education has been a perpetual problem for French immersion administrators" (p.4). In Lemire's study (1989), "ten of the 12 principals stated that the availability of French immersion teachers was a problem in that the supply was limited or lacking" (p71). Tétrault's study (1984) found that 24 of 30 Saskatchewan principals reported staff shortages.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the shortage of teachers promoted The Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs to conclude that "there is not, at the present time, an adequate qualified teaching force to permit the expansion of French programs requiring near native fluency in French" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986, p.41).

The lack of availability of qualified French immersion teachers results in a dilemma for many principals because they "are torn with having to choose between a teacher whose French language proficiency is 'somewhat suspect' and one who has sound pedagogical skills or vice-versa" (Lamarre, 1990, p.99). Not only are immersion teachers often in short

supply, but also, they frequently suffer from a "high burnout rate" (Lamarre,1990) and a high "turnover" rate (Lemire,1989).

### 3.Parents

Lamarre (1989) argues that immersion parents are "demanding, concerned, committed, involved, visible and 'want a lot of answers'" (p.35). Because they want to be frequently reassured that their children are progressing normally and advised if their children are having problems, concerned parents may occupy more that 'the usual amount' of the principal's time (McGillvary,1979,p.108). The majority of principals in the study by Lemire (1989) attributed much of their extra workload to the need to educate, counsel and meet with parents who continually require reassurance.

Dagenais (1990) notes that

the implementation of immersion programs, and related administrative decisions, is usually subject to close scrutiny by French immersion parents - who tend to be very vocal, to closely monitor their children's school, and to demand a high level of accountability on the part of teachers and administrators. (p.4)

### 4.Curriculum and instruction

A frequent source of problems for immersion principals is the inadequacy and unavailability of curriculum resources such as resource materials, library resources, diagnostic

tests and materials (Lamarre,1990; Tétrault,1984; Burns, 1986; Burns and Olson,1981). Lemire (1989) found that, for principals, curriculum guides in all subject areas and standardized tests for immersion students were often unavailable. As well, many of the principals in his study indicated that "French learning resources were more costly and a primary concern for their budget"(p.52). He also reported that "in terms of supplementary learning resources, one interviewee complained that it was very time consuming to order these and that it took more time to receive them because many came from Québec" (p.53).

#### **Problems Related to the Principalship of a School Offering a French Minority-Language Program**

The literature pertaining to minority-language education focuses almost exclusively on the cognitive aspects of this type of education (see Cummins, 1978,1981; Landry,1982,1984) and on legal issues of management and control (see Martel,1991; Beaudoin,1991; Foucher,1991). There is also some descriptive documentation pertaining to the types of program offered in the different provinces and on the history and social context of the development of these programs (see Keough,1990; Martel,1991; Commissioner of Official Languages,1990b; Mougeon & Heller, 1986).

This review of the literature uncovered very little

documentation on problems relating to the principalship of schools offering a French minority-language program. Only one study was found which made reference to problems of principals. This study was carried out in 1983-84 and involved superintendents, consultants and principals associated with 55 school boards with elementary French minority-language schools. It reported that, of the 42 individuals who responded to the questionnaire, 90% indicated that the presence of anglophone pupils in these types of schools poses an important and frustrating problem because their presence could slow the learning of French by the francophone pupils (Canale, Mougeon, Heller, Bélanger, 1987).

It is likely that once legal issues of management and control have been settled, researchers will begin to focus their efforts and attention on other issues pertaining to French minority-language education such as problems encountered by principals of these programs and schools.

### **Summary**

Principals face many problems; at least 900 according to Leithwood et al.(1990a). Problems with teachers, students, parents, and senior administrators; problems coping with the often conflicting and ambiguous demands and expectations of their role; problems with general

administration such as finances, buildings and timetabling. These are but some of the challenges that principals must face in their profession.

It would appear that many of the problems faced by immersion principals and which are identified in the literature fall into the same categories as do the problems of principals in general. Problems with the role and with teachers and parents are frequently cited in the literature on immersion principals and English principals. The nature of the problems themselves are, however, particular to the immersion phenomenon and often result from shortages. Immersion principals must cope with shortages of resource materials and teachers. As well, the principals themselves often suffer from a lack of training for their role.

There are few, if any, studies documenting the problems in the principalship of schools offering a French minority-language program. With respect to this type of school, the literature thus far has concentrated primarily on legal issues and on the cognitive processes involved in minority-language acquisition.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides a brief and general description of the primary methods and techniques used for gathering the data for this study. The theoretical orientation is explained and the general epistemological and ontological assumptions are discussed. The specific details regarding the research setting, the interview questions and procedure, the observation and participation are presented. The methods used to collect, report, analyze and interpret the data are described. As well, questions of internal and external validity, and of reliability are addressed. Finally, ethical concerns and the responsibilities and rights of the informants are considered.

#### **Ethnographic Research**

Ethnographic research offers an orientation to understanding the process and structure of a social setting and employs research techniques consistent with this orientation. Spradley (1980) describes ethnography as "the study of both explicit and tacit cultural knowledge" (p.8). Culture is defined as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour" (p.6). Whereas explicit cultural knowledge can be communicated at a conscious level and with relative ease, tacit cultural

knowledge remains largely outside of people's awareness. An example of tacit cultural knowledge would be the way in which individuals of a given culture define space.

Spradley (1980) further posits that because so much of any culture consists of tacit knowledge, informants or interviewees often know things they cannot talk about or express consciously. Thus, the role of the ethnographer "is to make inferences about what people know by listening carefully to what they say [and] by observing their behaviour" (p.11). This is why ethnographers must participate as well as observe. As Spradley maintains: "participation allows you to experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record your own perceptions" (p.51).

According to Taft (1988), ethnography is "naturalistic enquiry". In fact, the emphasis on subjective realities as the focus of the investigator's attention has much in common with the philosophy of naturalism which purports that "there exist multiple realities which are, in the main, constructions existing in the minds of people" (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p.81). Since these constructions are intangible, they can best be studied in "holistic and idiosyncratic fashion" (p.81).

The epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying this study and much of naturalistic, ethnographic



research, emphasize the subjective reality of individuals and stress the relativistic nature of the social world which can be understood by adopting the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied. Thus, the vantage point for understanding human activities lies in the frame of reference of the participant in action (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This approach highlights the importance of knowledge as something which is personally experienced and which can thus be best understood from the inside i.e. from the subjective experience of individuals.

The focus of ethnography can be broad or narrow. Hymes (1978) identifies three types of ethnography: comprehensive ethnography, hypothesis-oriented ethnography and topic-oriented ethnography. The last involves the selection of a more limited and specifically focused research problem. The present study is topic-oriented with the specific focus on the problems related to the principalship.

### Interactionism

Ethnography can be best understood by examining the theoretical assumptions which underly it. Blumer (1969) posits that "the concept of culture as acquired knowledge has much in common with symbolic interactionism, a theory that seeks to explain human behaviour in terms of

meanings"(p.2). These meanings are derived from the social interaction between individuals and groups and are "modified through an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer,p.2). This process can be seen in terms of the interpretive paradigm which attempts "to understand and explain the social world primarily from the point of view of the actors directly involved in the social process" (Burrell & Morgan,1979, p.227). The methods of investigation based on the interpretive paradigm "seek to understand human beings, their inner minds and their feelings, and the way these are expressed in their outward actions and achievements"(p.229). The subjective realities of individuals thus become the focus of the investigator's attention.

#### Validity and Reliability

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) describe the high degree of internal validity inherent in ethnographic research. They note that participant observation provides the "opportunity for continual data analysis and comparison to refine constructs and to ensure the match between scientific categories and participant reality" (p.221). It is also "conducted in natural settings that reflect the reality of the life experiences of participants more accurately than do more contrived or laboratory settings" (p.221). They argue

as well that informant interviews are "less abstract than many instruments used in other research designs"(p.221).

Taft (1988) describes validity as being a "quality of the conclusions and the processes through which these were reached" (p.61). However, he argues that the exact meaning of validity depends on "the particular criterion of truth that is adopted" and that "in ethnographic research, the most appropriate criterion is credibility" (p.61). He further indicates that credibility can be enhanced by and is dependent on the apparent accuracy of the data and the way the study is communicated to the audience.

The use of data triangulation, or multiple sources and methods, allowed the researcher the opportunity to crosscheck findings and thus assures greater validity and reliability. The extended period of observation also provided the researcher with the opportunity to crosscheck findings. Any data gathered during the interviews was checked through observation and participation. Data gathered during the observation and participation were crosschecked through questioning during the interviews. As well, during the period of observation and participation, the researcher was able test for evidence that would tend to disconfirm or contradict any information provided in the interviews as well as any conclusions or interpretations.

As was noted previously in the study, limited access

may have restricted the validity of the findings. The researcher did not always have access to all information, activities or events that took place in the school such as private conversations between the principal and staff, between the principal and senior administration or personal meetings with parents or telephone conversations. However, the principal was often willing to provide information on the nature of the conversation, meeting or call without compromising the privacy of those involved. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) posit that "although research results generated by ethnographers whose positions (are) limited in scope may be narrowly applicable, they are nonetheless legitimate" (p.214). The results become "slices of data" that "taken together, contribute to the total picture" (p.214).

In order to minimize the "observer effect" as well as "observer bias" the researcher engaged in questioning, reevaluation and "the continual monitoring of the effect the investigator [had] on others" (Taft,1988,p.61). Taft notes that

in order to take into account their own contributions and to assess what the situation would be if it were not for the fact that their presence is influenced by the group, investigators need a great deal of self-awareness and a thorough understanding of the group processes.(p.61)

In reference to external validity, the aim of this

study, like many ethnographic studies was not to make generalizations on the basis of the data gathered. The aim of the inquiry was to uncover an idiographic knowledge about the principal's professional problems and the contexts in which these problems occur. Guba and Lincoln (1988) posit that this type of "knowledge is best encapsuled in a series of 'working hypotheses' that describe the individual case" (p.82). Kennedy (1979) argues that, in ethnographic research, the onus of generalization lies not with the researcher but with the reader of the research report:

Clearly the study of a single case with no replications limits the strength and the range of generalization arguments considerably....But, in fact, the range of generalization simply cannot be known to the evaluator. That the range cannot be known, however, does not mean that a range does not exist...the range of evaluation is a matter of judgement. For studies of single cases, however, that judgement should not be made by the evaluator. Instead, it should be made by those individuals who wish to apply the evaluation findings to their own situations. That is, the evaluator should produce and share the information, but the receivers of the information must determine whether or not it applies to their own situation. (p.662)

### **The Research Setting**

The school under study offers instruction to boys and girls and operates under the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's. It is the only immersion centre in the province as well as one of only five schools in Newfoundland and Labrador offering a French minority-language program. It is

the only school in the province which combines French immersion and French minority-language education in one school without an English stream.

In the 1991-92 school year, thirty-four pupils were enroled in the French minority-language program which accommodates students from Kindergarten to Grade 4. There is one Kindergarten class and two multigrade classes with a total of three francophone teachers. Approximately 275 students were enroled in the school's French immersion program which has 11 teachers and runs from Kindergarten to Grade 5. There were also 5 half-time teachers for the following areas: music, strings (i.e. violin, cello etc.), physical education, learning resources, Kindergarten (one class).

The school officially came into existence in 1989. Before that time, it did not have its own principal as such; rather, its administration was handled by the principal of a larger school with which it was affiliated. From its beginnings and up until 1988, it was an all boys' school and offered an English program housed in two buildings on the same grounds: a primary school and an elementary school. In 1986, as a result of reorganization of many of the schools under the Roman Catholic School Board, a number of primary grade French immersion students were moved to the primary school building where there was already an English stream.

As the numbers grew and the program expanded, the primary school gradually became an immersion centre. In September, 1989, the centre was allotted its own principal. However, this principal resigned after one month due to illness and was replaced by the principal who is currently in the position. The current principal is, like her predecessor, a woman and a bilingual francophone. In 1990, when the Roman Catholic School Board made a decision to offer French minority-language classes, the school under study was chosen as the site.

### **Data Collection**

The data for this study were collected by means of one month (May, 1992) of participant observation, five formal semistructured interviews, and informal conversations with the principal. The following sections provide a general description of the techniques of participant observation and of ethnographic interviews as they were used in this study.

### **Participant Observation**

For Hammersley (1983) ethnography and participant observation are cognate terms. For the purposes of this study, participant observation is considered as a technique which the researcher uses as the main tool of investigation (Ball, 1988). The researcher accumulates data "by following

those under study through their daily round of life, watching what they do, under what circumstances, when and with whom, by questioning them about the meaning of their activities" (p.507). Taft (1988) describes how participant observation

provides investigators with an understanding of the culture and the interactions between the members that is different from that which can be obtained from merely observing or conducting a questionnaire survey or an analysis of documents. The investigator's involvement in the normal activities of the group may be treated as a case of partial acculturation in which they acquire an insider's knowledge of the group through their experience with it. These experiences provide them with tacit knowledge.(p.59)

Participant observer fieldwork is often carried out in the framework of a case study or studies in order to collect the data on site. Stenhouse (1988) explains that "in ethnography, a single case is studied in depth by participant observation supported by interview" (p.49). The method involves collecting and recording data relating to the understanding of the actors in the case or cases. Stenhouse notes that case study methods are often described as naturalistic or interpretive and are well suited to the study of the complex interaction of variables in educational problems.

In the present study, the principal was observed for one month by the researcher who also participated where possible in the same activities as the principal. The



researcher was present in the school during much the same hours as the principal and occupied a role similar to that of an intern. The daily activities and interactions provided the researcher with the opportunity to personally observe and experience problems, concerns, challenges or stresses which occur in the school each day. Most importantly, the observation and participation provided the opportunity to understand and better appreciate information provided in the interviews. The questions for all interviews except the first were based on the observation and participation.

#### The Interviews

The interviews conducted in this study served as a means to focus on specific areas or questions. In general, they provided "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts from informants that are based on personal experience" (Burgess, 1982, p. 107). Two types of interview were used: formal, semistructured; and informal, unstructured interviews.

The interviews were formal in the sense that they were scheduled for a specific time and place. They were semistructured meaning that, although there were specific questions to which answers were sought, some deviation from

these questions occurred and other questions inevitably arose from the discussion. As such, they were 'flexible' yet 'controlled' (Burgess,1982) (see Appendix E for the questions which were prepared in advance for each of the five interviews).

The formal interviews were conducted with the following people: the current principal of the school, the program coordinator for French immersion and French minority-language education and the assistant superintendent for curriculum of the school board. Before the start of the observation, the principal was asked in a two and one half hour long interview to identify the problems related to the administration of the school and to identify problems relating to each of the school's two programs. The questions for this first semistructured interview with the principal related to research questions one to four listed in Chapter 1 of this study. It should be noted, however, that they served as a guide and that other questions arose as the interview progressed. After one week of participant observation by the researcher, a second interview took place with the principal. The interview questions were based on the researcher's observation and participation during that week. At the end of the third week of observation and participation, the principal was interviewed again. During the final week of observation and participation, an

interview was conducted with the program coordinator and the assistant superintendent. The questions were based on the entire period of observation with the principal and on the interviews previously conducted with her.

All formal interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient and comfortable for the interviewees. The interviews with the principal took place in the school on three Sunday afternoons when no students were present and when there was less chance of an interruption. The interviews with the program coordinator and the assistant superintendent took place in their offices.

The informal conversations between the principal and the researcher arose spontaneously during the period of observation and participation and no specific questions were prepared in advance for these interviews. Palmer (1928) argues that "the conversation of human beings are an important part of the data of social research, as well as an important part of social research technique" (p.169). He further notes that

the ability of the objects of social research to converse with each other and with the scientific investigator is so vital a characteristic of the subject matter of the social sciences that it cannot be disregarded in any well-rounded study. (pp.168-169)

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### Data Recording

Since all informal conversations with the principal, daily occurrences and observations could not be recorded, selected notes were taken. Initially the observations were of a broader nature and provided an overview of the situation. As the research progressed, the observations became more focused and selective (see Spradley,1980). The observations of problems were recorded by means of a daily log (see Appendix F for a sample daily log). The formal interviews were recorded on audio cassette. The informal conversations were recorded as part of the daily log.

### Ethical Considerations

The observation and participation for this study were overt. No information was concealed from any participants. Written permission to conduct the study and report all relevant findings was requested from the superintendent of the school board involved and from the principal. The program coordinator and assistant superintendent were also asked to sign the appropriate consent form (see Appendix G for the letters of consent). The name of the school was not used in the reporting. The names of all individuals were kept confidential. However, when verbatim accounts were reported, the role of the speaker was indicated ie. principal, program coordinator, assistant superintendent.

Consent was requested from the participants to record the interviews and they were given the opportunity to request erasure of the recordings when these were analyzed. All data collected remained confidential except where written consent was given. The principal and the school board reserved the right to view the findings and research report before its submission to the thesis committee. Any information which the board or any participants felt should be kept confidential was deleted.

The researcher did not solicit comments from teachers or parents involved with the school since the perspective chosen for the study was that of the principalship and the concern was therefore with administrative problems. This study did not report or intentionally consider parents' or teachers' comments or conversations. Thus, letters of consent were not be requested from these individuals.

### **Data Reporting and Interpretation**

The reporting of the findings consists primarily of verbatim accounts of the interviews with the principal, and with the two other interviewees. The presentation is designed largely to reflect the principal's subjective perception. Excerpts from the interviews are interwoven with text composed by the researcher and designed to organize the data. Chapter 5, The Findings: Types of problems, is

designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What problems are associated with the general principalship of the school?
2. What problems are associated with the French immersion program in this school?
3. What problems are associated with the French minority-language program in this school?
4. What problems arise as a result of combining French immersion and French minority-language instruction in one school?

The logs and cassette tapes were analyzed to determine patterns and recurrent themes. Categories and types of problems were organized where possible. These categories and themes form the basis of the reporting.

Chapter 5 presents the types of problems encountered and constitutes largely a description of the problems. Chapter 6 presents the nature of the problems from the perspective of their routineness, their causes and implications. It also considers the problems in relation to the background information on French immersion and French minority-language education in Chapter 2 of this study and in relation to the review of the literature as specified in Chapter 3. The following research questions were addressed in the interpretation:

5. Which of the problems are routine and which are non-routine?
6. Which of these problems are not particular to any time period but occur throughout the year?
7. What are the causes of these problems?
8. What are the implications of these problems?

### Summary

The study relies on the use of ethnographic research methods. The primary techniques used were the semi-structured interview and participant observation. The general epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying the approach are those of the naturalist paradigm. The theoretical orientation is interactionist.

The data gathered through participant observation was recorded by means of a daily log. The participant observation provided the opportunity to crosscheck data gathered during the interviews. The analysis of the data involved a search for themes and patterns. From these themes and patterns, categories of problems were determined. The problems were analyzed in the context of and compared with, the problems cited in the review of the literature and research in Chapter 3. They were also analyzed and interpreted in terms of the larger context of French immersion and French minority-language programs which are

described in Chapter 2 of this study.

The study does not make generalizations on the basis of the data gathered. The aim of the inquiry is to uncover an idiographic knowledge about the principal's professional problems and the contexts in which these problems occur. The onus is on the readers to decide whether or not the findings apply to their own situations.

The use of data triangulation, or multiple sources and methods, allowed the researcher the opportunity to crosscheck findings and thus assure greater validity and reliability.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE FINDINGS: TYPES OF PROBLEMS

This chapter presents the findings which relate to research questions one to four listed in Chapter 1. These questions are:

1. What problems are associated with the general principalship of the school?
2. What problems relate to the French immersion program in this school?
3. What problems relate to the French minority-language program in this school?
4. What problems arise as a result of combining French immersion and French minority-language<sup>1</sup> instruction in one school?

As was noted in Chapter 4, the findings were collected by means of interviews and by participant observation. In total, ten hours of interviews were recorded and logs were kept on a daily basis. Although the data were collected from various individuals, on numerous days and by different means, they were nonetheless considered as a whole and grouped together for purposes of determining categories of problems. The findings are reported using quotes

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1. For this chapter only, the term *French first-language* will be used for consistency with the interviewees' use of the term.

from the interviews with the principal, the assistant superintendent (asst. supt.) and the program coordinator (prog. coord.). Except where brackets are used [ ] indicating that the writer has added text for clarification, all quotes are presented verbatim. The findings are organized into categories in response to the four research questions with each question having its own sub-categories of problems.

The data analysis involved identifying patterns and themes from which categories of problems were established. In some instances, certain data were relevant to two categories. Thus a decision had to be made to include the data in one category or the other. The categories serve to organize the data but they are not absolute in that they could be organized differently if the data were seen from a different perspective.

#### **Problems Associated with the General Principalship of the School**

The findings in this section pertain to the general problems in the principalship. In response to research question one, eight categories of problems were identified. These relate to:

1. teachers;
2. staffing;

3. students;
4. parents;
5. the role of the principal;
6. programs, curriculum and methodology;
7. facilities; and
8. communication and information.

#### 1. Teachers

An important problem facing the principal results from the fact that teachers frequently have certain expectations of what the principal should be doing for him\her, or for the school in general. At times, these expectations may not correspond to what the principal may be able to accomplish given her role and given the time constraints within which she must work. Some teachers expect the principal to be a trouble-shooter and to solve day-to-day problems. These problems may, for example, relate to the photocopier not functioning properly; they may involve dealing with troublesome pupils; or they may relate to classroom equipment or supplies. However, often, the problems cannot be solved by the principal either because they are outside of her jurisdiction and beyond her control or because they require time which the principal does not have. Some teachers also feel that it is the responsibility of the principal to deal with all discipline problems:

There are certain teachers who feel I should be able to deal with all problems. For example, with discipline. If they're having certain problems with a child, they feel that it's the principal who should deal with it even if it's within the classroom....I have certain days when I can have a dozen kids in the office and somebody sends them there and they expect me to see all of them at the same time. (principal)

From the other perspective, the principal may have expectations for teachers which result in problems. There are certain expectations regarding the teacher as a disciplinarian and the problem arises when there are inconsistencies in the interpretation of these expectations:

You're going to have some teachers who are very vigilant but others may turn a blind eye. Some of them are very strict disciplinarians but others are very laissez-aller. And that in itself causes problems. ....When you have two teachers who have different approaches to discipline, it causes major problems when they have to work together. It causes friction. The ones who have a strong discipline tend to criticize the ones who don't. (principal)

At other times, problems arise when teachers themselves need to be disciplined for not complying with school or board level rules:

Sometimes you have problems with teachers. Often, they are not in the classroom at given times and they take offense if you say that they've got to be there. If an accident happens, you're liable....Teachers are so used to disciplining children but if you try to speak to a teacher and you're basically disciplining teachers .... they really take offense to it.(principal)

Teachers may often not see that their role or activities affect the administration. In planning activities or field trips, they may act in isolation and overlook the

administration's need to be well-informed in advance of any field trips or special activities:

Sometimes teachers don't realize that they should advise the administration sufficiently ahead of time. They make all the arrangements but don't tell me in advance. There are certain activities that I want planned for the whole school. I'm not blaming teachers but sometimes this causes problems. (principal)

As a leader, the principal has expectations of teacher performance and involvement. These expectations can best translate into behaviour if the teachers are motivated and can understand and appreciate the expectations. However, it can be difficult to motivate some teachers to go beyond what they feel they should be doing. As the principal noted: "You can have somebody who does half a job....Often, it's hard to communicate to the teachers what is expected of them and what the board expects of them."

Interaction among teachers can also pose problems for the administration. When two teachers or a group of teachers enter into conflict, the principal often has to become involved whether or not she wants to:

There have been problems whereby a teacher said something in a classroom and someone else didn't take it very well. For example, you have teachers complaining about the performance of their students and blaming it on whoever taught them last year....The teacher who feels that she is being talked about feels slighted but doesn't have the courage to confront that person. Then you've got personality conflicts and often it means juggling for the administrator. (principal)

Teachers' personal problems can also present a

challenge to the principal who must act as a counsellor or advisor. Teachers who are under excessive stress for professional or personal reasons require special attention, frequent meetings and extra assistance from the principal:

I have excellent teachers who are showing signs of burnout. There are teachers who have personal problems. They are very demanding....This year I've had two fathers of teachers die and one Mother-in-Law die....I try to keep an eye on any teacher who has problems coping....And I have to watch it because my job is to make sure that the children in this school have the best education possible. In order for my teachers to give the best education, they have to be as stress-free as possible. (principal)

Professional development for teachers is another area of concern for the principal. The introduction of new programs and approaches requires that teachers have the opportunity to participate in inservice activities; however, because of limits on the number of days available to teacher for inservice or for leave, professional development is not always easily accessible:

The teachers feel that they need to have professional development. There were the transitional years where we switched from being a dual-track to a unitrack. There was so much going on that some of the other schools really got a jump on us. There was Peer-Coaching, Project Two Thousand. We were trying to deal with our problems so we didn't have time to take part in these other things....This year, there have been different workshops and conferences that teachers could have attended but didn't because of the cutbacks. There was one on science, one on language arts....The board is saying that we only have X number of days and we're out. In March they had to put a freeze on the number of workshops. (principal)

Problems can arise when there are teachers as parents,

or teachers who also have their own children in the same school. If the child of the teacher has to be disciplined, the teacher may act in defense of her child but if another teacher is involved, there can be disagreement among the teachers: "You've got two teachers involved. The parent who's a teacher may be inconsistent with discipline when it's her child and it creates bad feelings among the teachers." (principal)

## 2. Staffing

The school under study has only a half-time physical education teacher and a half-time music teacher. These teachers provide instruction to the school's students on alternate days. This arrangement means that there is gym every second day and music every other day. On those days when there is gym, there is no music and on those days when there is music, there is no gym. Because these teachers are shared between two schools and therefore work half-time in another school, they are not always be able to offer extracurricular activities in their subject area to the school's students. This also causes problems for the administration in scheduling meetings or supervision:

When we have meetings, I cannot set up a meeting on a day that everyone is there. We have a phys. ed. teacher who never comes here. The only time he sees the teachers is when they go to the other building.... Although he's teaching our kids, he stays there. He

does his recess duties there. But he does not do duties for us. (principal)

An important area where staff shortages affect both programs is in the area of learning resources. The principal is attempting to promote resource-based learning as much as possible but the learning-resources' teacher comes to the school only every second day. Many teachers are using the approach but need extra support, particularly as they are becoming more accustomed to it and are wanting to use it more:

For resource-based teaching we need a resource-based teacher for about two or three years full-time to get the teachers trained on how to do it, and then drop to half-time but that's not what we do. We're half-time now and we continue on being half-time as teachers are struggling with the program. (principal)

In the administrative as well as the instructional areas, the necessary support can, at times, be lacking. Although the principal is helped in her administrative role by the vice-principal, she cannot rely on this person's assistance on a regular basis because the vice-principal must teach full-time. If the vice-principal were only teaching half-time she could share more of the administrative duties and the two administrators could work more as a team:

The principal and the vice-principal should work as a team but because she's [the vice-principal] locked into teaching, we can't always do that. She cannot follow through. She can start certain things but she cannot necessarily follow through. (principal)



From the school board's perspective, the primary role of any administrator who teaches full-time is to provide instruction to the students under his/her care. Teaching limits the involvement of the vice-principal in the administration of the school and places a greater onus on the principal to be almost entirely responsible for leadership in the school:

When we appoint a vice-principal who is designated a full-time classroom teacher, we expect that her first priority will be her class and, consequently, the number of areas in which that vice-principal can become involved in the school is limited to mostly clerical things such as calling in substitutes, taking care of attendance in the register, maybe fundraising....It removes the vice-principal from leadership and instruction. It does not allow that vice-principal sufficient time to become involved in administration and in real leadership and curriculum....It really puts more ownership on the principal...and it means that the principal has to accept more responsibility for administration and it causes problems. It doesn't give the principal and the vice-principal the time to dialogue.(asst. supt.)

In the area of special education or remediation, the school does not have a teacher. This presents problems because many of the students have special learning problems such as dyslexia or an attention deficit:

I find that one of the biggest problems is getting teachers to accommodate children with special needs or children who are slow learners. The support is not there for these children. We dearly need a special ed. teacher to take these children out every day.  
(principal)

### 3. Students

The school under study is a primary and elementary school with the age of students ranging from approximately five to eleven years. Having to care for children so young presents a set of problems which would not occur if the student population were older. On a regular basis, and quite frequently during the lunch hour or recess time, children come to the office because they have fallen and hurt themselves or because they need bandaids or because they are sick. Attending to these children can be very time-consuming and almost requires the services of one person who could attend to only these needs. Injuries must be thoroughly cleaned, then bandaged and, at times, a telephone call must be made to the parents to advise them that their child is injured or sick. For this reason the lunch hour is a very busy time in the office and as well a very hectic time for the principal:

Dinner time is when a lot of children get sick. I try to be there when the children go out at lunch time but I cannot always be there....You have to have somebody in here to receive the kids at lunch time. There's somebody who comes in here everyday. It takes up my dinner hour. (principal)

Lunch times can be very busy times for the principal because it is then that she must deal with discipline problems. These are most often not of a grave nature; however, they must be dealt with and so the principal must

be available at this time:

The main time that I have discipline problems is during lunch times....I need to be available for discipline problems at lunch hour....The problems in this school are not very serious because of the clientele....One of our biggest discipline problems outside is children from the other schools who go through our yard.  
(principal)

Supervision of the students is another area of concern for the principal. Reaching a compromise between assuring adequate supervision and, at the same time, not overburdening teachers can be a challenge. The supervision schedule also has to be devised in such a way that no one teacher has any more supervision than another teacher in the school. The children must be supervised in the morning before classes, during recess time and during the lunch hour. A minimum of two teachers are needed for each period of supervision in order to cover two floors. To avoid the need to have three teachers on three floors, the children have to be grouped into the classes on two floors. However, even this solution has its problems:

I try to have as much supervision as is safe because safety is very important. But I need to see how many teachers are needed to cover a certain space. We have three floors and I try to give the teachers the least number of supervision periods as possible. To do that I mix the French first-language classes with the immersion so that we only have to do supervision on two floors rather than on three floors. What happens is that, it not being their classroom, they don't always leave it very clean which can really annoy the teacher who comes back and finds that things have been moved and there is jam on the floor. This causes some friction.  
(principal)

The lunch-hour period is a particularly busy time of day in terms of the amount of supervision necessary. Extracurricular activities also put a strain on the school's capacity to provide adequate supervision:

Supervision is a problem during the lunch hours. Parents are needed to cover all the supervision.... Extracurricular activities cause problems. You've got extra supervision with extra-curricular activities and we are only a small staff. (principal)

A less frequent but serious problem for the principal and for teachers is that of child abuse. Any suspected cases of abuse must be closely monitored and reported. When it has been determined that abuse actually has taken place, the school must become involved in a complex process involving social workers, parents and, sometimes, lawyers. As well, teachers may be more reluctant to show affection to their young students because of the fear of being accused of child abuse:

If there's a case of child abuse, child protection comes in here and they ask all kinds of questions. They have to question the children. Often times they have to question the teacher. We don't really need the hassle but it's something that has to be done....it can be very unpleasant....Some teachers said they used to hug kids but now they're going to be very careful about what they're doing....but that comes naturally....You want to hug them and they want to hug you. (principal)

#### 4. Parents

In general, parents' expectations about what the school should or could be doing may often be beyond what it can

effectively deliver. These expectations translate into certain pressures on the principal because, to an extent, she must take into consideration their needs and demands. Satisfying the various expectations can be challenging, in particular, when it is not clear what the role of the school really should be:

Parents sometimes expect the school to do everything. I, as an educator, have concerns about this. Is the role of the school to teach the children to skate or to provide swimming instruction to the students? Is the role of the school to take the place, in some cases, of the parents? A lot of parents want the schools to do these things but, at the same time, they want good CTBS scores. They want the best education for their children yet they want them to have all these extras. (asst. supt.)

#### 5. The role of the principal

Many of the problems related to the role result from lack of time. Much of the principal's day is spent engaging in meetings with teachers, parents and administrators, answering telephone calls, caring for students, teaching, and coordinating activities. Thus, the principal is left with very little uninterrupted time:

In the run of a day, it doesn't matter how well you organize your day, there are going to be emergencies. You have somebody who starts a fight, somebody who hurts themselves....I probably could only get one hour of uninterrupted time during the day....As far as the board is concerned, the number of letters I wrote last week is nothing compared to what I should have written. I need time to let the board know what the school's requirements are but I find that there's hardly during the day a half hour that I can sit down and write it. I'll start writing and something will happen. Either

the telephone will ring or a teacher will have an emergency. All kinds of little things can happen.  
(principal)

The principal also needs time to be able to communicate with the vice-principal in order to facilitate their work as a team. Although this is a necessary activity, it can be almost impossible for both administrators to find time available in order to plan together:

I get all the memos of meetings. She should have a memo of everything that goes home too because it would keep her informed. I find that as much as I would like to be able to inform her, I simply don't have the time to do it. I told her that on Mondays we should sit down and plan the week but if Monday happens to be on day one, we can't do it because the two of us are outside doing supervision. So that causes a problem. What happens is that, at certain times, she is not being informed. I cannot go in and bother her in her class.  
(principal)

Although the principal may have visions about what she would like to accomplish in her role, she is often hampered in her efforts by lack of time. Large projects require blocks of uninterrupted time to plan, organize and coordinate but this time is often not available to the principal:

Time and task organization is difficult. I have a whole lot of ideas in my head and I see things that should be happening. "School improvement" and "Growth for Excellence" take time. If I had more time, I could do a lot more. When you start something, you need to be able to follow through but I am not able because I can't always be there. There is only so much I can do.  
(principal)

Coordinating school activities, although necessary, can

be very time-consuming. As an example, during the month of May and June, the school was involved in activities such as: a spring concert and spring carnival, a sports day, a Father's day contest, a Mother's day contest, sneaker day, the mayor's walk, a school-improvement survey, an oratorical festival, a party for parent volunteers, a contest for the French newspaper Le Gaboteur, a symphony concert, a visit to an environmental fair, a visit to Cape Spear and the Kindergarten orientation. As well, an after-school program, drama classes, art classes and ballet classes are hosted in the school. Although these classes are run primarily by outside groups and agencies, they nonetheless frequently require the attention of the principal. An important but challenging task for the principal thus becomes deciding what is important and setting priorities:

I find that there are so many things coming at me and I have to decide what's important and what should I tell teachers about. For example, I've got contests going on continuously.... Last week I had to make the arrangements for swimming for the school. I continuously get pamphlets from various groups and they want to come into the school and they want to put on shows so I've got to decide which ones are worth it and I've got to decide how often. And I've got to organize it so the activities are not all at the one time....Life would be much more simple if I said to teachers just stay in your classroom and teach. I don't encourage that. I really encourage teachers to get involved. I really encourage field trips. (principal)

Large-scale activities often require time for planning in order for them to be successful. They also require the

commitment of individuals who are convinced of the worth of the initiative. As part of her role, the principal may want to solicit this commitment on the part of teachers to projects, programs and methodologies. She may want to provide leadership in curriculum; however, to do so, she must face the challenge of trying to convince her teachers of the worth of new initiatives:

I had some teachers who were convinced about resource-based teaching. You always have a little section of the school which does not buy into it. Unless you get as many teachers as possible to buy into whatever you're trying to do, it will not work. (principal)

In general, providing leadership can present certain challenges for the principal in that she must make important but sometimes difficult decisions about the role of the school, its main aims and its mission:

The board wants the teachers to look after their own classroom and that causes a problem because we do not all have the same vision. We all want to educate but principals and administrators have different perceptions of what is important in the school. I think that a board should say: 'In a school the following things should be happening'. We should be given guidelines so that we all aim for the same things.... Unless they have certain expectations for me, I cannot give it to my teachers. (principal)

Regardless of what the school's mission or vision may be, an essential task for the principal is to coordinate the efforts of the staff, to help them work together and to share goals. This can be a major challenge when people have different goals and especially when they have different



personalities:

I would like to see a school where people work as a team. Different personalities, jealousies, mundane things prevent them from working as a team. There are different personalities in the school. When I form a team, I've got to try to get people to gel together... sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. (principal)

The principal's role is complicated by the task of having to teach. Not only must she fulfil her duties and role as an administrator but she must also plan classes and teach a group of 31 Grade 5 children:

This year I find the workload to be overwhelming because of the teaching....I have to teach eight, 40 minute periods of language arts per week which is a big program to teach so I have to put a lot of energy into it....Language arts is a program that if you want to do it justice you've got to get really involved but before I get a chance to get involved, something comes up. I'm often in my class when the secretary calls up and says there is an emergency and that disrupts my class. I'll often go to the board for a workshop but I have to come back to teach the class....[having to teach] means that my afternoons are shot and what happens is that time is taken away from administrative work....Last year, I used to send a memo to teachers every Monday but, this year, because I'm teaching, I don't have time to do it. (principal)

At times, the principal may have to do extra teaching because she must replace a teacher who is temporarily out of the classroom, late for school or attending an outside appointment. Where possible, the principal will try to get another teacher to replace the teacher who is absent but this is not always possible. Replacing teachers takes time away from administrative duties and presents its own challenges:

I cannot be in here [in the office]. I've got to go in somebody else's class and try to figure out...what I should do with the kids. One day it could be Grade one and the other day it could be Grade five. So I've got to adjust whatever I'm doing to whoever I'm dealing with. It's kind of hard to just walk into somebody's classroom and do something. (principal)

One of the major problems facing the principal is keeping track of and processing money which the school collects on a regular basis. Students pass in money to their teachers for school activities, money is received from fundraising and cheques must be written on a daily basis for bills which must be paid:

Bookkeeping is a big problem because I'm not an accountant and neither is my secretary. It's a lot of money to handle....I find that there's too much. I think last year about \$50,000 went through our hands. It seems like such a huge amount of money to be handled. Some of it was in and out of our hands but it still has to be entered into the books, cheques written for it, deposits made, these kind of things.(principal)

#### 6. Programs

A serious problem facing both programs at the school under study is the uncertainty about their future. The school board is presently studying the organization of many of its inner-city schools with a possible intention to relocate some programs. For teachers, parents, students and administrators, this uncertainty can be disturbing:

Uncertainty is one of the biggest issues at the school. Where will the school's immersion students and the French first-language students be in 1993 or in 1994? Right now in the school, in the French immersion or the French first-language program, the anxiety level might

be a bit high because of the uncertainty. (asst. supt.)

## 7. Facilities

Problems related to facilities are associated with their availability and with their condition. As is the case with many school facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador, the facilities of the school under study are old and in need of repair but the school board does not have the necessary money to pay for these repairs. The principal of the school under study noted that:

one of the biggest problems is the building. We have leaky windows. You have to tell children to move because there is water leaking in...For example when we get lots of rain, we have classrooms where we just about have floods.

Problems related to facilities can lead to other problems such as allergies in children and loss of administrative time trying to get money for repairs:

Someone put carpet in the primary grades. Children spill things. They do everything. They throw up. To the point where it became a health hazard. When children get into a certain class they get allergies, yet when they moved into classes where there weren't carpets, the allergies disappeared. The physical got to be such a huge problem. The PTA did not want to spend the money on carpets. So I had to try to convince the board to change the carpets. And I had to fight for that for two years. They finally acted on it because they got so many letters from parents complaining about it. (principal)

The principal may often have to lobby the school board for money for necessary repairs. However, the school board

may simply not be able to help the school financially because it does not have the funds. The task of raising funds for school repairs is beyond the mandate of the Home and School Association. For these reasons, repairs to facilities often cannot be made:

They've had heating problems...they've had leaky windows. The building is old. It needs upgrading inside and really, the board has not got the funds to do it and neither can a PTA take on that responsibility. (asst. supt.)

Problems with facilities such as not having screens on the windows may seem like a minor issue. However, it is something which can cause a variety of problems and can even result in the disruption of classes:

We have wasps which come into the building. The wasps are everywhere. Last year we had three teachers with eight wasps in the classroom. You want to upset children - you get some wasps. I was told by the board to get some Raid. But we can't use Raid because there are all kinds of chemicals. The children might be allergic to it. I tried to get the board to do something. I asked for screens....But the school board said that they did not have the money. (principal)

Not only is there a problem with deteriorating facilities, there can also be problems as a result of lack of facilities. The school under study does not have a sufficiently large lunchroom so that children must eat in their classrooms even though these rooms are not designed for such a purpose:

We have a problem when it comes to lunchhour because we had a lunchroom but most of our children stay in to lunch and we had over one hundred students in a

room and a fairly small room and the noise was atrocious so we had to go back to having the children eat in the classrooms. (principal)

A similar problem occurs because the school does not have a gymnasium. On days when the students are scheduled for physical education, they must go outside and walk to the elementary school next door where they use their gymnasium:

The winter is not a very good time because it takes so long for the children to get dressed and undressed ....They have to get ready at least ten minutes earlier. So what starts off as a 40 minute period is not....When it's raining, you end up with a whole lot of little children who are soaking wet. (principal)

This means a loss of time for the classes not only because of the distance but because the elementary school runs on an elementary schedule of 40 minute periods, whereas the primary classes in the school under study operate on a primary schedule of 30 minute periods. As well, access to the gym is limited to only every second day:

The music teacher is not here on the same day as the gym teacher so if we want to practise for a concert, it's got to be a day when the music teacher is here and the gym is free but the gym is not free because we don't have it on that day. So we either have the gym and the music teacher is not here or we have the music teacher and the gym is not free. And a concert has to be practised in the gym, at least for the dry run.(principal)

If the teachers want to alter the days or if they want to book the gym for a concert, the principal must ask the permission of the other school. This often results in restrictions on timetabling, on the types of activities

which the school can offer and, as well, it means that the principal must often use valuable time trying to arrange gym time with the other school and trying to juggle schedules:

Next year I'm going to have major problems organizing the gym because I'll have one more class. We can only have gym for three days out of six. The other building runs on an elementary schedule. One teacher was given supervision on the days that he had gym and this caused problems. In the other building, it's not as easy as it may seem. It's not a matter of switching one day for the next because what happens is that the moment that you switch someone's schedule then there's a domino effect and everybody else is affected.  
(principal)

#### 9. Communication and information

The school under study, like many schools, receives and disseminates large quantities of information on a daily basis. The information passes most often from the school board to the principal who then communicates with the teachers. The teachers or the principal then communicate information to the parents. However, because of the way in which it is communicated, the information is not always received:

Sometimes the information doesn't go to the right people.... Sometimes the message is not received. It comes down and it doesn't reach me and sometimes I start the message and it doesn't get to all people. The information trickles down to us from the school board, then to the teachers and then to the parents. But for it to trickle down to the parents, we don't have enough meetings to communicate with them. There is just too much information. (principal)

Depending on how the information is communicated, the

intended message may not be the one that was originally communicated. Information may be lost between contacts or it may be received but not as intended:

The information sometimes gets lost between the board and the teachers....The message goes from the board to the principals and from the principals to teachers and from teachers to parents. The message to parents might be blurry. (asst. supt.)

During the preliminary stages of their planning of certain projects such as school reorganization, the school board may release only a small amount of information. When teachers receive only partial information on issues concerning them, they may speculate about the information which is missing and can be disturbed by the interpretation of the information received:

They're talking about the inner city schools. There's all these rumours flying around that our school is going to close. If the board would only communicate with teachers and let them know what's happening. (principal)

Information about new programs or new pedagogical approaches and methodologies arrives on a regular basis at the school. However, the frequency and the quantity of this information means that it is not always communicated as effectively as it should be:

You're going to have certain times when you're going to have a breakdown in communication because there are so many things going on at the same time....You can't handle all of it. You do have overloads....You have X number of coordinators and each one wants to promote their own program....you have anecdotal reporting, you have remediation, you have a new math program, a

new science program and now there is the Care program ....Resource-Based Teaching, Child Protection, School Improvement....There's a whole lot of information coming my way. I have to decipher the information and pick what would be best. (principal)

When the information is transmitted at a faster pace and in greater quantities than it can be processed and put to effective use, teachers can suffer from an "information overload":

The teachers' heads are buzzing because there are so many things coming at them....You think you've got it down pat and all of a sudden they just pull the rug from under your feet and everything is just up in the air and it's very frustrating for teachers because they're trying to keep on top of it and trying to teach at the same time. So it's like being in a transitional role all the time where nothing is ever stable....The teachers get overwhelmed and this causes problems for me because the teachers get overwhelmed.(principal)

Communicating with the school board can be a complicated process at times. Depending on the request, the principal may have to contact one or more different people:

When you're dealing with the board it's not a matter of writing the board and saying this is what I need. At the board, there is someone in charge of staffing and another person in charge of curriculum and another in charge of the French immersion and French first-language. (principal)

In communicating with the parents, it is important from the school's perspective to determine what information should be sent and when. The principal has to strike the proper balance between ensuring that the parents are adequately informed while at the same time taking precautions to avoid overloading them with information:



The danger is that, if we send too many letters home, they will not be read. Last year, at the first of the month, I used to send a letter home to the parents and I used to tell them what was happening during the month. And that was great. But I cannot do it this year because I don't have the time.(principal)

To ensure adequate communication among staff members, between staff and the administration, and between the administration and the school board, frequent meetings are necessary. The quantity of meetings, while sometimes not adequate to discuss all issues, can be difficult to juggle:

We don't have half as many meetings as we should have. We are involved in resource-based teaching. I can't remember the last time we had a meeting. We should have more meetings. Then we've got the Social Committee, the Fund-Raising Committee, the Staff Council. Then we have regular staff meetings once a month.....When a child is diagnosed with a serious problem and there's testing, I've got to try to get five or six people together and these meetings take a lot of coordinating because I've got to try to get everyone there....We have principals' meetings on administrative issues -one of them was on discipline, the other was on language arts, the other was on problems in different schools and then there are meetings about policies which are being developed. Then there's the Inner-City School Study and all the principals had a few meetings on that then we had to meet with the teachers about it....I meet at least once a month with the Home and School Association. And it just goes on and on. (principal)

#### **Problems Related to the French Immersion Program**

The categories of problems for the principalship of the French immersion program in this school are related to the following:

1. staffing;

2. students;
3. parents;
4. the role of the principal;
5. programs, curriculum and methodology; and
6. communication and information.

#### 1. Staffing

Finding teachers on a permanent, substitute or replacement basis for the French immersion classes presents a challenge to the administration. Finding available substitute teachers is a problem because many of those who are qualified to teach French immersion are able to find full-time, permanent teaching positions. Recruiting full-time permanent teachers is also a problem, particularly at the primary and elementary levels. Because of the organization of the province's university education programs, prospective teachers often opt for an education program which trains them in high-school methods and still allows them sufficient course time for specialization in French. This means that there are few qualified primary and elementary teachers for French immersion in Newfoundland and Labrador. Thus, many of the teachers at the school under study are high-school trained even though they are teaching at the primary or elementary level. This causes problems for the school under study because these teachers are not always

trained to deal with the special needs of young children:

The teachers are just about exclusively high-school trained. This causes problems because it takes them a while to know what to expect from a little child. On numerous occasions, I have seen problems. You need teachers who are nurturing at the primary. When it comes to day-to-day dealing with students, it takes them a while to get used to it. It takes practice. Their expectations are different about how well the child can perform and what to do when a child has certain problems. You don't use the same approach. The teachers had not been trained in anecdotal reporting or remediation. When you get up in the higher grades, remediation is too late but it's very important at the primary and elementary level.(principal)

The most consequential area in which staffing presents a problem is in the area of special support services. For French immersion students in need of services from a guidance counsellor, a speech pathologist or an educational psychologist, there are no services available in French. For French immersion students in the primary grades, this can present serious problems:

Our chief problem would be the provision of support services in French such as guidance services, special education or speech language pathologist services. Even getting a child tested by the guidance counsellor who's an anglophone, by the ed. therapist or by the educational psychologist who's an anglophone causes problems. We don't have support services in French. If the student is in Grade four or five, we can test in English but, in primary, it's difficult because the child has been doing French until Grade three and if you give the child a test which requires reading, that child will be disadvantaged because the child doesn't read in English until Grade three....We find sometimes that even an educational psychologist feels a little bit ill at ease in giving a test to a primary French immersion student when that immersion student doesn't write or read in English. It's been a problem.  
(principal)

## 2. Students

For the children in the French immersion program, coping with the demands of learning a new language presents its challenges. For many students, this does not cause a problem. However, when a student experiences difficulties, it can be hard for the parents to help the child because the language being used in the school is not English:

Outside of here, everything is in English. It's an English world. The children don't have parents who can help them if they have a learning problem because they don't speak French....In the English program they have a certain base or support which they don't have in French immersion.(principal)

For many years, in the immersion program, children with special learning needs were less common because of the select clientele which opted for the program. Recently, the program has been attracting a much broader group of students, some of whom are experiencing learning problems and who may have difficulty coping with the demands of the program:

We do have children in immersion who have special learning needs and it's only now that this has come to the forefront because, at one time, the students who enrolled in immersion tended to be a rather compact group basically from middle and upper class backgrounds with strong support in the home for education. Now we are having children entering immersion with certain deficiencies in their early childhood and, moreso than ever now, we have children with learning problems.(asst. supt.)

For teachers and administrators accustomed to a more select group, dealing with children who experience learning

difficulties can be challenging:

We need more help with how to deal with children who have learning problems in immersion. The teachers aren't used to learning problems in immersion. The first few classes that went through the immersion were the cream of the crop. They were achievers who would have done well in any system. But now we're getting more and more children who are having problems. They're average students but they're in the program. We have to deal with these students but we haven't been used to dealing with them before. (principal)

If a child does have too much difficulty coping with the French immersion program, a decision has to be made to transfer him/her to a school offering an English program. The receiving school may be reluctant to accept the transfer because they may feel that the student's problems can best be dealt with in the school where he/she is presently:

When you take out a child, it's not as easy as that. I have to contact the school to say: 'We've got this child who's got these problems. Can you accommodate this child?'. But who wants somebody else's problems? But we're dealing with children where it's not in their best interest to be in immersion because there are too many problems that it creates. (principal)

### 3. Parents

Parents of children in the French immersion program generally contribute positively to the running of the school. They fund-raise, organize activities, help teachers prepare classroom materials and provide moral support to teachers. With this interest and contribution come certain expectations about what the school should be doing for their

children. As the principal noted: "The French immersion parents are the most demanding parents that you could ever meet. They want the best for their child. You're fully accountable."

Parents' expectations often relate to their perceptions of how their child should be performing in the French program. They may feel that if their child is having a learning problem, it is due to the fact that he/she is in the immersion program. For the principal, it can be a challenge to try to discuss the child's problem with the parents:

There are parents who have unreasonable expectations. Some parents feel that the moment they put their child in French immersion, he's going to do well. The moment that there's a problem, the parents always think that it's because their child is in French....It's hard communicating to these parents because a lot of them feel that their child is having a problem because their child is in immersion.(principal)

Parents may also have expectations about the degree of fluency that their children will achieve in the immersion program. These expectations may be unrealistic given the nature of the clientele:

The French immersion students have anglophone parents so they will never be as fluent as francophones. But the expectation at the start was that we could take people from a totally different culture and totally assimilate them. You hear all these things in the media about how French immersion is not working but that's because the expectations were unrealistic. You can't turn anglophones into francophones.(principal)

Allaying parents' fears becomes a necessary but onerous

task for the principal. Some parents may be concerned that their child will not get as good an education in the French immersion program as he/she would in the regular English program:

Parents are always afraid that their children are going to miss out on something and that, somehow, the English stream is doing something that the French immersion is not doing. That is the parents' biggest fear. And then there are of course parents who say I wish I could help my child but I don't know any French.(principal)

#### 4.The role of the principal

As was noted in a previous section of this chapter, the school does not have a special education teacher or a remediation teacher in the area of French immersion. This causes problems for students, teachers, parents and, in particular, for the principal. It complicates her role because she herself must then try to provide the services of a special education even though she may not be qualified to do this and even though this is not part of her role:

We should have a full-time remediation teacher because right now I play the role of what a remediation teacher should do....Remediation is the biggest problem with the French immersion. We have children with dyslexia and who are slow learners. I don't have a special ed. teacher. Therefore, the moment we come up with a problem, I have got to try to somehow deal with that problem. So in other words, at that time, I'm thrown into the role of a special ed. teacher which I don't have the training for.(principal)

#### 5.Programs and curriculum

Although the French immersion program has been in

existence in Newfoundland for approximately 17 years, in many respects, it is still not as well firmly established or developed as is the English program:

In French immersion, it's past the pilot stage but there still needs to be improvement and we still need to keep abreast of what's happening in the English stream....In the English system, you have so many more resources that you don't have in French immersion. And until you learn how to deal with this, it can be frustrating.(principal)

For a principal, the implementation of new initiatives in methodology can often be a difficult task. In the English program, it may be easier to get teachers to adopt new approaches such as resource-based teaching. In the case of French immersion, it can sometimes be more difficult because time and resources may not be readily available in the necessary quantities:

Resource-based learning has been a problem because it takes a lot of extra time if you're going to plan with the librarian or a couple of teachers in a particular grade....The planning aspect takes time and immersion teachers have to teach a curriculum same as in English but they also have to teach language as well and that creates extra work. So teachers will tell you that resource-based learning can take away generally from their ability to plan and correct and monitor. That is one of the problems....Another problem would be insufficient resources. It's difficult when you're confined to limited resources even though we have a fair amount of resources, we wouldn't have the same volume as the English.(asst. supt.)

## 6. Communication and information

It is often necessary for the principal to take time to



reassure parents about the French immersion program. Problems occur when a parent is unsure about some aspect of the program or when he\she believes that there may be inadequacies with it. Parents' lack of information or lack of understanding about the program may cause some confusion:

I need to reassure parents. The parents open the papers and there's all kinds of negative things that come up in the paper. So the parent comes to me and asks what's going on. And some of what has been in the paper has been half-truths....The parents are not always informed. Everybody has a bit of information but I don't think we always understand each other. And this sometimes leads to a lack of communication.(principal)

#### **Problems Related to the French First-language Program**

The categories of problems pertaining to this research question are associated exclusively with the French first-language program and are related to the following:

1. staffing;
2. students;
3. parents;
4. the role of the principal; and
5. programs, curriculum and methodology.

##### **1. Staffing**

Teacher turnover in the French first-language program is an important area of concern for the principal. To ensure continuity from year to year and to promote the development

of the program, the principal needs to establish a team of teachers who are dedicated and committed. However, frequent changes in staff in the past year have meant that the principal has had to make up for the lost continuity:

I had three teachers last year and only one stayed. One went on maternity leave and the other went back to immersion and the other went on educational leave. When you're starting a new program, one of the most important things to do is to try to get some teachers to form the base and it has to be steady. Then I've got to explain to the parents why these teachers left. Then I have to start all over again with the new teacher.  
(principal)

Recruiting qualified teachers for the French first-language classes can be very difficult. The problem of trying to recruit teachers is intensified by the fact that the teachers must be francophone. For the school under study, in order to find a replacement for a teacher on maternity leave, it was necessary to advertise outside of the province which was a lengthy and time-consuming process. Finding substitutes for these classes is also very difficult if not impossible:

Substitutes are a big, big problem with French first-language. We really can't get them. They have advertised here in town and they advertised on the mainland but they could not get anyone to come here. Someone is not going to come from Québec - they want a full-time job. It's a major problem even for immersion. The best teachers get picked up to teach.  
(principal)

There is not a sufficiently large population base of francophones in the province from which French first-

language teachers might be recruited. The choice is narrowed by the fact that, as with French immersion, it can be difficult to recruit candidates who have mastered the language and who are also trained in primary or elementary methods:

Do we pick a teacher who speaks excellent French who's a francophone or do we get someone whose French might not be as good but whose teaching is better. If it's a French school, you need to have a francophone. So you might have to sacrifice a good teacher for somebody who speaks French.(principal)

Recruiting teachers who are well-qualified and who also speak French well can present even greater difficulties in specialty areas. Specialists teachers in the areas of music, physical education and learning resources are hard to recruit because there is a need to have teachers who are qualified in these areas but who also speak French. In the school under study, neither of the teachers for these subjects speaks French which means that for French immersion, the classes must be taught in English but, in the case of the French first-language, the classes cannot be taught in English because of the program requirements. According to the principal, this situation has an effect on the quality of education which the students receive:

One of the problems that I've had in French first-language is that the students are not getting the same quality of education as the other students from the music and gym point of view and even from the library science because we don't have a French-speaking music, Phys ed., [teacher] and librarian. So these children

are missing out.(principal)

The administration is still attempting to find a teacher who is able to teach these subjects in French; however, until one can be found, the classroom teachers themselves must try to offer these services as best they can. In order to recruit a teacher for these areas, the school board may have to make some compromises between linguistic proficiency and qualifications in the subject area:

The teachers do their own music and they do their own physical education. They don't have a bilingual librarian....We have been trying for a number of years to have support services in French....For music, phys ed. and guidance, there are very few people around who have qualifications and also speak French....The accusation that is being made now is that we will dilute qualifications in order to get someone who can speak French which may or may not be true. (asst. supt.)

A solution to this problem might be to have some of the French immersion teachers take charge of the instruction in these subjects. However, because these are specialist areas, the subjects require the skills of a person with specialist training. As well, although the French immersion teachers speak French, they may not be able to teach the French first-language program:

There's as much difference between the French first-language and the immersion as there is between the immersion and the English. It's a totally different program and approach in teaching. I can't use my French immersion teachers to teach gym or music to the French first-language.(principal)

As is the case with the French immersion program, there are no support services available in French for the French first-language students. This can pose serious problems for these students because they may not speak any English and can therefore not be tested by a guidance counsellor or educational psychologist who speaks only English:

We have no support services in French first-language for any of what we call the psychological services or student services.... the only language spoken by the francophone student is French except when they do language arts in English in Grade four. (asst. supt.)

## 2. Students

Problems arise with the French first-language classes due to the lack of linguistic homogeneity of the students. For some of the children French is their first language, whereas others are more comfortable speaking English:

You have some children who can't even speak any English and others who speak French hesitantly....I have had some students who were francophones who started picking up the English expressions. (principal)

The linguistic background can vary widely from one student to the next. As well, the cultural background of the students may vary and this may cause problems because of the expectations of the program:

In the French first-language, I have children that are francophones. I have children that are anglophones and I have the ones in the middle. So I have three distinct groups of people. In the French immersion, they're all in the same situation. Everybody speaks English at home...But in French first-language, the children are

expected to get involved in the culture which is kind of tricky because the culture that they're talking about in school is not the one that they're experiencing at home. At no time in immersion did we assume that we wanted to change the culture of the child.(principal)

The students may also differ in their cognitive abilities as well as their linguistic proficiency. For some students, the demands of the program may be beyond their ability. As a result, these children may experience learning problems:

To come to school and be in a totally different environment and learn everything that you're not learning at home is a major task and it's fine if you're dealing with a child who has above-average intelligence. But the fact of the matter is, in the French first-language school, you have all kinds of students. You have the strong ones, you have the average ones and you have the weak ones....I can identify quite a number of children in the French first-language program having learning problems.... They are not a select group.(principal)

### 3. Parents

With the French first-language parents, a problem arises because of the fact that there are different groups of parents and, therefore, different expectations:

With French first-language, the biggest problem is the expectations of the parents. You have parents from Paris, from St. Pierre, but with the great majority of them, there is a francophone and an anglophone parent....The Frenchmen want their children to be in a French environment. They want their children to be brought up in a French school. The parents have different expectations. Some of the parents have put their children in the French school because of the low numbers. Others put their children in there because it's the French school.(principal)

Not only are the expectations different, but at times they may be unreasonable given the circumstances. Some parents may not fully appreciate the implications for francophone classes of being almost completely surrounded by anglophones:

Some of the parents don't have a clear understanding of the implications of being in a totally anglophone society so they expect that the children that come out of here will be the same as those who come out of Moncton but here you are inundated with the anglophone culture.(principal)

In other cases, expectations differ over what should be taught in the French school. Many of the parents from France or Québec often prefer a more explicit, analytical approach to language teaching, whereas anglophone parents generally prefer that their children be educated in the same way as they were:

With the parents from France, the expectations of the educational system are totally different. There are different expectations especially as far as teaching goes. There are some that believe in the grammar approach versus the creative approach. That's been a problem. In the French schools even in Québec you put the emphasis on French and grammar. The emphasis is not on what you write but on how you write it. In the English system and with the anglophone parents in the French school, the content comes first. They were not brought up in the French system... but I have other parents who say that this is not the way that it's taught in France. I have parents who are pushing to get more French taught in class - that is more grammar. And that's fine if everyone agrees with it but not everyone does.(principal)

While the school system is attempting to educate the children using what they have determined to be the most

appropriate methodologies, some parents are advocating methodologies which conflict with those presently in place:

In the French first-language classes, you don't have a homogeneous group. You have people coming from France with a very different view of schooling versus what francophones who have been living in Newfoundland or coming from New Brunswick have. Their system in France is so different. They want very rigid discipline and their approach to language acquisition is so different from ours. They are great believers that children learn to use language and to read through the phonetic approach and through grammar whereas we're trying to advocate the whole-language approach....We try to offer in our curriculum exposure to all the subjects and all the core areas. The francophone parents would like to see a lot more time, a lot more emphasis going into language. Right now we've a hung jury on that. The Department of Education is issuing certain guidelines for the amount of time for French and the emphasis and the methodology for teaching French first-language and language arts. But the parents are not happy with that approach. They really want to see more of the traditional approach to teaching French. It's been a major issue.(asst. supt.)

In general, the Comité des Parents (French first-language parents' committee) is lobbying for control and management of the French first-language classes. One particular area in which they would like to have more control is curriculum development and implementation. They may try to influence the choice of textbooks or programs in certain areas. This can cause problems because they may not be always informed about the general aims of the program and about how these aims might be effectively achieved:

Last year, the program we used came from Manitoba because we didn't have time to develop a curriculum so we took in the Manitoba curriculum. Manitoba math's textbook was approximately ten years behind where our



new Math Quest program is. It was more of a traditional approach through drill and practice and not as much through concept development through the use of manipulatives and through the use of problem-solving. We brought in an alternate text...a math book similar to Math Quest. Parents were really annoyed by that because we changed a textbook without consulting them and because they feel that they have a right to decide. One of the areas on governance that will be coming up is the role of parents in curriculum development and curriculum implementation. The francophone parents are very fortunate because there are two consultants at the Department hired for curriculum development. Any work they do is always presented to the parents for reaction before it's finalized so they do have input. Now they want more direct control. We try to explain to parents that we have core objectives for math and when we choose a resource or a variety of resources, our core objectives don't change. The only thing that changes is that we're using more than one resource to meet that core objective. Now the parents have not understood that...they have great difficulty accepting why we would make that kind of change because it's getting away from the more traditional approach to teaching - an approach which worked well for them when they were students 20 years ago.(asst. supt.)

Although the issue of control and management of French classes is under ministerial review, no decision has yet been made as to the role that the parents might eventually play in the administration of the school. Thus, for the meanwhile, the primary authority in the French school rests with the principal:

The French first-language parents are fighting to have their own school board....There's a group of them who feel that they are in charge of the French school but they are not. But they have given themselves that right and any time a teacher is hired they want to go in on the interview but this is simply not done....The francophone parents want to be able to hire and fire whatever teachers go there. They want to be master of their own school....These parents feel that they have the right to go to the teachers and question them. And

this is very unsettling for teachers who begin to ask who is their boss.(principal)

To exert their influence, the Comité des Parents may compromise the authority of the principal by bypassing the school's administration and going directly to the school board in an effort to try to control which teachers are hired:

At one point the Comité des Parents went to the board about a teacher. But not all the parents agreed. But they felt that they had been given the mandate to do this. Now that affected me directly because it's a very dangerous precedent for parents. When they go as a group, it's dangerous. The Home and School Association would never consider going to the board about a given teacher without coming to me first. I had objections. It is not proper protocol.(principal)

Although the Comité is a very active group, it does not always represent the needs, aspirations or expectations of all the parents. The parents themselves are not a homogeneous group; rather, they come from different geographical areas and may have very different concerns and different perceptions about their role in the education of their children and in the administration of the school. Some of the French first-language parents may be very actively involved in attempts to promote their rights whereas others may feel that the administration should be the sole responsibility of the principal:

The French first-language parents are not an homogenous group at all...For example, the people who come from France, their needs and their views on education are very different from the parents who come from New

Brunswick. New Brunswick parents are very different from the parents who come from Québec....We have 20 families in the program. Of the twenty parents, you have, like in most groups, a very hard working, influential, small group of five or six people but there are many other people among these French parents who want to leave the administration to the school. They're not pushing governance, management or control to the same extent. So, even within the parent group themselves, there are different expectations as to roles. (asst. supt.)

Not all the parents of children in the French first-language classes are involved in the efforts of the Comité des Parents to gain management rights over the French first-language classes. Furthermore, not all the parents are in agreement with the Comité. At times, the principal can be caught between these two groups:

In that school [French first-language], there are certain parents that see the principal as being the one in charge and not the parents. The Comité des Parents is not seen by all the parents as being the ones in charge....Whatever little disagreement they have with the Comité des Parents they bring it to me....There is dissention in the ranks. They do not agree on what the school should be. (principal)

An additional problem associated with the French first-language parents relates to religion. The school under study is the only French first-language school in St. John's and operates under the Roman Catholic School Board. Thus parents who opt to enrol their children in the French first-language school must enrol them in a Catholic school system whether they are Catholic or not. This can often result in problems for the administration of the school:

We had some parents who did not want their child to be in the class when religion is taught and that's an administrator's nightmare because where do you put the child. We just had a Jewish family from France who does not want their child to be exposed to Christian ideas or beliefs. And they did not want their child to know about Jesus. It is hard to accommodate parents like this because you've got to make alternate arrangements for their kids. (principal)

The French first-language classes include students from various backgrounds. Whereas some of the children may not even speak any English, for others, English is actually their first language. This mixture of anglophone and francophone students in the French first-language classes disturbed some of the French first-language parents and created some conflict for the administration:

We had some parents who were very vocal and were heard to say to other people that this is a French school and you should not have English-speaking students in here. That if they don't speak French they should not be here. The fact of the matter is there were five children last year in the French first-language program whose first language was English and they would have had very few children in Kindergarten last year if they hadn't had these children. The great majority of the students that we have got in the French school really their first language was English but they had one parent who was francophone except for one case. (principal)

##### 5. The role of the principal

As was mentioned in a previous section related to parents, at times, the principal's role becomes unclear or is brought into question by the some of the French first-language parents. The Comité des Parents is lobbying the

provincial government for control and management of the French first-language classes. However, it has not yet been determined what exactly the role of the parents should be:

Right now, there is uncertainty as to what kind of governance structure the provincial government will give to French first-language. We're waiting to see what the advisory committee will recommend and what the Department will accept and put in place. The whole question of parents' rights is not going to be resolved until the issue of French first-language is resolved. The parents are looking for their own school board.... They are talking about court precedents and the Mahé judgement. They believe that there should be involvement by the parents at certain levels and some parents feel that there should be mechanisms in place where they can have not just input but some control and management.... This issue will be resolved in the future but right now, this can cause frictions for the principal not only with some of the parents but with teachers also. (asst. supt.)

In the meantime, some parents may try to exert their influence where possible. Their actions can interfere with the authority which normally is conferred to the role of the principal:

Before the parents send a letter home, they should come here to the administration first. Any time the Home and School Association sends a letter home, they run it by me saying: 'Look this is what we're sending. Is that fine with you?'. I have had serious problems trying to explain that to the French parents and probably because they are not used to dealing with the school they just assume that if they want to send a letter nobody is going to stop them. And nobody is going to stop them but the thing about it is that they are doing it through the school. Now what they were doing last year was that they were going directly to the teachers and just giving the letters out to the teachers. It wasn't done because they wanted to ignore me. They just assumed that what they were doing had nothing to do with the administration. But it does. Anything that has to do with the students in here and my teachers is

under my jurisdiction and not parents. Needless to say, that has caused me extra problems. (principal)

Because of lack of time, the principal is not always able to devote the necessary attention to programs and to teachers who may need guidance:

This is only the second year that French first-language is on the go. I should be meeting with my French first-language teachers once a month to discuss what they're doing but I'm not able to do it because I don't have the time. (principal)

#### 6. Programs, curriculum and methodology

As was previously mentioned in the category of parents, the entire question of religion and the school is a particular problem for many of the parents in the French first-language program. For the administration, it becomes a serious program concern:

One program concern for French first-language is religious education. The program is intended for francophones and it is in our district. Being in a Catholic school, we teach the Catholic religion program. There are the non-adherents and those who are not Catholic and those who belong to the integrated religions. Right now, the logistics of trying to offer two programs or no programs because we have three groups of parents is difficult....This has caused some serious concerns. It has been a problem for the integrated people but it has been a bigger problem for people who are not affiliated with any religious denomination. Right now we have a problem with a small group of parents who do not want religious education taught and don't want their children exposed to religious education or to religion in the school.... Some families don't want Catholic religious education. Some don't want the integrated program and some don't want religion period. Some want a morals and ethics program. So, from a program perspective, that is a

big concern.(asst. supt.)

A more important problem facing the French first-language program is that of numbers. The right to minority-language education conferred by the Charter is based largely on enrolment figures because of the "where numbers warrant" provision. To ensure the program's viability, it is important that there be an adequate enrolment. There are many parents who qualify under the Charter to enrol their children in the French first-language classes but who have chosen not to do so. In the upcoming years, the school's French first-language program could be facing serious problems if the enrolment does not increase:

The Comité des Parents is very clear as to what their mandate is because they work as a network and they meet continually. But certainly they were not getting the support from the people who hold rights and even from people who have their children enrolled in the program. One of the frustrations I can see from the French first-language parents is the fact that they have not been able to mobilize the rightholders for French first-language. We have students enrolled in French immersion and even in our English stream who are rightholders who could be in the program but who are not and that is really a contentious issue for the parents...Many people, many rightholders are sitting back, waiting to see what's going to happen before they enrol their students. So in that sense it makes the program seem weak in numbers. If the perception by parents is that it's weak in numbers, it might also be weak in quality. So it's difficult to sell the program. It could mean that we will have no Kindergarten students next year and no Grade one the next year so we'll be void one Grade going through unless we get some students transferring in.(asst. supt.)

The school's French first-language classes are

relatively new, having been in place for only two years. The provincial program and curriculum, though already well-developed, are new as well. For the administration, this can mean going through a period of readjustment:

The program only started last year and the first few years are fairly chaotic. There's so much havoc at the beginning of a new program....In any program, the first few years are rough....I went through the French immersion and it's the same thing that happened there....The English program is very well-established now because it's been collecting things for years and it's been growing but the immersion is newer and the French first-language is even newer and it takes a while to get established. I knew that it was going to be chaotic and I told the teachers it was going to be chaotic but when it hits you, it's two different things. (principal)

Working with a new program can involve some experimentation and adaptation. In the case of the French first-language program being used in Newfoundland, it may mean adapting a program that was not originally designed for the Newfoundland clientele:

The program is a pilot. It's never been tried.... Because it is a pilot program there are certain things we are doing that we know now we shouldn't be doing but we didn't know until we tried....They have it [the program] in Manitoba but Manitoba has a stronger French population than here. Here you're talking about a very, very small group of people totally surrounded by anglophones and they've got to try to maintain the culture. So we have taken the program from Manitoba and we're trying to adapt it to our situation. (principal)

The entire question of culture and the fact that the aim of the program is to reinforce the French culture for the children presents an almost impossible challenge for the



administration:

The problem is that we have to try to make francophones out of them. This means that we have to try to establish some kind of a culture base for them....And that's fine if the culture is fostered at home but it is not. There are a fair number of our students who go home and they speak English. Yet we're trying in the French school to establish a French culture. Somebody's culture is carried over from the school into the home and into the community. Here we only have the school for some of them. For many of them, their culture is anglophone....You have a group of francophones who are totally surrounded by anglophones and you don't have a base for the culture.... In the French immersion program you had just about exclusively anglophones. But in the French school, how do you define somebody's culture? Just because a child speaks French does not mean that they are francophone. (principal)

The new program presents an additional challenge to the principal in that she has never taught it and is not yet thoroughly familiar with it, and yet she must oversee the program and ensure that it works smoothly:

I don't know the French first-language program as well as I would like to. In immersion schools, you have an anglophone principal who knows the English program but doesn't know the immersion...but because I taught the immersion, I know it quite well but I don't know the French first-language program as well. (principal)

As was previously noted in the category of problems related to staffing, problems arise from the fact that the program requires that Francophones be used to teach the French first-language classes, and yet, at the same time, the Grade four students need to receive instruction in English language arts. If the teachers are francophones, they may not be able to teach the English language arts.

Where they are able to teach it, the parents may prefer to have an anglophone teach this subject. This means that one of the anglophone French immersion teachers must leave his/her students in order to teach language arts to the French first-language students for one period each day. This can be disruptive for students, teachers and cause scheduling problems for the principal:

Next year we have to decide who is going to teach English. I want the French first-language teachers to teach it to their own students. Some of the parents will be against it because they [the teachers] are French teachers. The immersion teachers find it is too disruptive to go and teach English to the French first-language classes....For young children they've got a phys. ed. teacher, a library teacher, a music teacher, a violin teacher, and there's the classroom teacher. You can't add another teacher to that. (principal)

Multigrade classes present an additional problem to the principal in terms of scheduling but also in terms of the strain that it puts on teachers. All teachers in the French first-language program in the school under study teach in multigrade classes:

One of the problems that the French first-language has which the French immersion does not have is the multigrade classes. In the French school you have Grades three and four combined but up to Grade four you cannot teach any English. The Grade threes have to be removed from the classroom....Multigrade classes are a problem in the sense that teachers get frustrated that much more. (principal)

**Problems Which Arise as a Result of Combining French  
Immersion and French Minority-Language Instruction  
in One School**

The problems in this section are those which result specifically from having a dual-track school with two different programs. It does not include problems which are common to both programs as in the previous section, but rather it includes those problems which arise from the fact that the school is dual-track. The categories of problems relate to the following:

1. teachers;
2. parents;
3. the role of the principal; and
4. communication and information.

**1. Teachers**

A frequent challenge to the principal involves ensuring cooperative and amical relations between the teachers of the school's two different programs: French immersion and French first-language. The two programs operate separately and, at times, the teachers in one program may be resentful of what the other program has:

Sometimes there is a bit of resentment in the French school because they don't have any free periods and there is nobody to relieve them....They had been teaching in the other system and they were used to having a free period and, all of a sudden, they

could not have it any more because their students were not doing gym or music. This caused all kinds of problems. But I could not give it to them because I simply did not have it....By the same token, the French immersion teachers - some of them have over 30 students - resent the fact that the French first-language teachers downstairs might have only nine children. (principal)

The fact that the French first-language program is new requires that it receive extra attention from the principal, and from school board personnel. For teachers affiliated with the French immersion program, it may seem as if the French first-language program is benefiting from extra attention:

Another problem we've had, and this wouldn't be peculiar to this school, is the perception when a program is new, that there are people giving an inordinate amount of time to that program. I'm sure the staff has had questions about the amount of time the principal has had to give to French first-language - time which would be taken away from the French immersion. Especially getting the program started and even now continuing the program, there is a problem with the perception, and often not just the perception, the reality - that we have to devote an enormous amount of time to a few children and a small program. (asst. supt.)

## 2. Parents

Parents' interest in the education of their children can sometimes lead them to question the school's organization or administration. Such is the case when some French immersion parents may feel that they have to compete with the French first-language program for educational resources:

I had one classroom with 36 children in immersion and one teacher. In French first-language, I had 27 students and three classrooms and three teachers. I had to make sure that the parents with 36 would not cause total chaos in the school. By the same token, the French first-language parents were thinking - 'well, what do the French immersion parents have against us'. I had a couple of militant [French immersion] parents who went to the CBC. I explained that the money for French first-language classes was federal money. This created some bad feelings. How can you justify putting one teacher with five kids and another teacher with 36 kids. Yet the French first-language parents said it was their right. This really caused problems. This decision was made by the Secretary of State and it's beyond my jurisdiction. I had to be a mediator. This had the making of an all-out war. (principal)

The tensions between the two groups were intensified by the fact that, whereas the French first-language program is receiving funds from the Federal Government for the implementation of the program, the French immersion funding has ceased. Thus, for some individuals it may seem that the French first-language is receiving extra resources which ought to be shared with French immersion:

Whenever you have two different programs vying for the same resources at the same time, you are always going to have tension. The human resources alone for this group of children has been a contentious issue....The funds for immersion basically have dried up. At the school, there's no money for immersion because the program has been fully implemented so we're getting no funds. The French first-language are still getting it. We applied for funds for French first-language under 'teacher unit', 'after-school programs', 'materials for library' and 'classroom materials' and also for 'classroom renovations' and that money was approved by the Department of Education through the Secretary of State and that money will be coming and should come because the program is just new. (asst. supt.)

Another problem results from some of the French first -

language parents wanting to distinguish themselves as a group separate from French immersion. Their program is different from the French immersion program and they may feel the need to differentiate between the two when it comes to materials and to teachers:

The French first-language parents do not want to be associated with French immersion. Everything that the French immersion does, they want to do it different ....We had some books made for francophones and they're the same books that are used by francophone children in some parts of Canada except there's a difference of one year....If the French immersion used this book, these French first-language parents would say that they don't want to use this book - that they want a different book for no other reason than they don't want to be associated with French immersion....The francophone parents don't want the immersion teachers to teach the French program. They get the feeling that once you're in immersion you're incapable of teaching in the French school.(principal)

As a result of these parents wanting to distinguish themselves as a group separate from the French immersion, the school now has two parents' organizations: the Home and School Association (PTA) for the French immersion parents and the Comité des Parents for the French first-language parents. Even though the two groups operate in the same school and both groups of parents have their children there, they do not work together, but rather they function as two separate entities:

This school has a very active PTA...but then they see another group in the school which is the francophone parent group and they do not talk to, meet with, discuss with the French immersion parents, any issues

concerning school. They are two separate groups.(asst. supt.)

Some of the francophone parents perceive the need to reinforce their identity as a separate group. This may explain why, in spite of the efforts of the Home and School Association, that the Comité des Parents preferred to remain as a separate group:

The Home and School made every effort possible to include the French first-language parents. Now one thing that they cannot do is send the communiqués home in French. Everything from the Home and School had to be sent in English. The Comité des Parents wanted their "gestion" [management] so they decided to totally divorce themselves from the French immersion. So what I have is one building and two schools. And that causes problems. (principal)

Although the two groups have somewhat different concerns, they nonetheless share facilities and certain resources which they could, but do not, work together to improve:

They are sharing the same building and the same school. A lot of things are in common. I agree that there should be a Comité des Parents for the French school because they have a different program, they're just starting and there are considerations which don't apply to immersion but I really feel it should be a subgroup and those people should be involved in the general PTA...because when you share a building and you try to do things to improve the building and to improve the common library, two groups should be involved constantly. (prog. coord.)

### 3.The role of the principal

The introduction of the new French first-language

program has meant extra responsibilities for the principal and puts more constraints on her time. Operating two different programs in the one school often means a duplication of efforts:

I have to have separate meetings for French immersion and for French first-language because they have different needs and different problems. You have a totally different clientele, different expectations and different goals.(principal)

Operating two programs means an increase in workload because of the need to accommodate differences between the needs of the French first-language teachers and those of the French immersion teachers:

It increases the workload. You have staff meetings but there are things that relate only to immersion and others only to French (first-language) and then you have to have another set of meetings to deal with those little things that the other group wouldn't be interested in so it's definitely more work.(principal)

With two programs, the principal must work between two groups of parents, teachers and students. If there are tensions between these groups, the principal must adopt the added role of a mediator:

I think that in a case like that, the administrator has to be like a diplomat. She has to be always in between and trying to please two groups and it's definitely putting quite a burden on the principal because there are all kinds of stress and tensions that come from that which she wouldn't have if there was only one program.(prog. coord.)



#### 4. Communication and information

Communicating with the parents of the two different programs can be a time-consuming task because, often, the information is different for one program than it is for the other. As well, when the same information goes out to parents of both groups, the letter for the French first-language parents must be translated into French:

If I send a letter home I often cannot send the same letter because some of the things I'm saying only pertain to one of the programs. On top of that, the French parents ask me to send the letters home in French which I do. That means that anything I send home has to be translated. It's fine if you've got the time but it's not as simple as just translating because you've got to get into a totally different frame of mind. You try to approach it in a different way because they're two different programs....That just takes a tremendous amount of time. (principal)

The French immersion and French first-language parents form two separate groups and often do not share ideas, concerns or information. Encouraging communication between the parents of children in the two groups can be challenging:

Communication between the two programs, French first-language and French immersion is still not good. Because of the nature of the French first-language and because of the newness as well, we haven't been able to get the parents of French first-language students dialoguing with the French immersion parents. (asst. supt.)

### Summary

An analysis of the data resulted in the organization of categories of problems in response to the first four of the study's research questions. These questions concerned problems related to: the general principalship, the French immersion program, the French minority-language program, and the combination of both the French immersion and French minority-language program in the school.

In response to the first research question, what problems are associated with the general principalship of the school, the categories of problems related to: teachers; staffing; students; parents; the role; programs, curriculum and methodology; facilities; and communication and information. Problems related to teachers pertained to such things as: teachers' expectations of the principal; motivating teachers; teacher interaction; teacher stress; and professional development. Problems often result from being understaffed for some subjects and from the fact that, in certain areas, teachers are unavailable.

Student problems relate primarily to the need for discipline and supervision. Child abuse is a growing area of concern for teachers and the administration. Problems related to parents frequently arise because of expectations which often times cannot be accommodated. The majority of problems related to the role result from lack of

uninterrupted time for completing tasks and for planning. Coordinating various school activities, although necessary, can be very time-consuming. Having to teach classes during the day puts a strain on the principal's time and energy and means that she is less available to meet with parents, teachers and students. Bookkeeping is a major problem because of the large sums of money which must be processed.

Problems related to facilities include lack of gym facilities and lunchroom space. Leaky windows result in damage to classrooms and disruption of teaching. The final, but not the least important category of problems, was that of communication and information. The teachers and the administrator can become quickly overwhelmed by the large quantities of information regarding new programs and approaches. At times, there is a breakdown in communication because of the way in which the information is communicated.

In response to the second research question, what problems are associated with the French immersion program in the school, the categories of problems related to: staffing; students; parents; the role; programs, curriculum and methodology; communication and information. Lack of guidance and support services in French causes problems because students with special learning needs cannot be accommodated. With the parents of French immersion children, expectations regarding the program are a problem. The challenge with the

French immersion program is keeping abreast of changes in the English program and adapting to the special needs of the program's changing clientele.

The problems associated with the French minority-language program in this school were grouped into categories related to: staffing; students; parents; the role; and programs, curriculum and methodology. Parents may expect the program to make their children francophone and to provide a solid culture base; however, the school is not able to do this to the full extent. The expectations of the French first-language parents concerning methodology sometimes conflict. Parents' religious preferences also cause some problems for the administration. One of the major problems related to the parents arises from the fact that they are seeking to have more control over the administration of the school. Problems also arise because of the lack of linguistic homogeneity of the students, from having to provide instruction in multigrade classrooms and from the lack of support services in French.

The categories established in response to the fourth research question which asked what problems arise as a result of combining French immersion and French minority-language instruction in one school related to: teachers; parents; the role; and communication and information. At times, there may be resentment among parents of the two

different programs because the French first-language classes benefit from a lower pupil-teacher ratio than do the French immersion classes.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE FINDINGS: NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS

The previous chapter identified the various types of problems associated with the principalship of a combined French minority-language and French immersion school. The general purpose of the present chapter is to provide insight into the characteristics of these problems and to develop an understanding of when, how and why the problems occur. The problems are also considered in relation to the background information on French minority-language and French immersion programs as presented in Chapter 2 and in relation to the review of the research and literature in Chapter 3. The research questions considered in this chapter are as follows:

5. Which of these problems are routine and which are non-routine?
6. Which of these problems are not particular to any time period but occur throughout the year?
7. What are the causes of these problems?
8. What are the implications of these problems?

This chapter is thus divided into the following sections:

- Routineness of Problems
- Problems which Occur Throughout the Year
- Causes of the Problems

- Implications of the Problems
- Relation of the Findings to the Background Information on French Immersion and French Minority-Language Education
- Relation of the Findings to the Problems Identified in the Review of the Literature

Whereas the identification of the types of problems was based primarily on data from the interviews, the interpretation of the nature of the problems draws on the researcher's observation and participation in this study. The interviewees were not directly or specifically asked to comment on the causes, routineness or implications of the problems. So many problems were identified that it would have been difficult to ask these questions about each problem. However, the interviewees were asked to discuss the causes and implications of more general problems such as those relating to the overall programs.

#### **Routineness of Problems**

Routine problems are those problems with which the principal is accustomed to dealing on a regular basis. These are the types of problems for which a solution may easily be found because they have been dealt with frequently in the past. In contrast, non-routine problems would be those with which the principal is not accustomed to dealing. Leithwood et al. (1990) posit that problems which are non-

routine require a higher level of problem-solving than do more routine problems:

Routine problems stimulate well-developed but automatic responses that place few demands on conscious thought processes. In contrast, non-routine problems demand (for example) conscious attention and reflection...In sum, they require more thought....A high proportion of non-routine problems would suggest a working environment much more cognitively demanding than would be suggested by a low proportion of such problems. (p.11)

The categories presented in the previous chapter delineate the problems but do not indicate whether or not they were routine. The daily logs, however, do indicate the routineness of the problems. They provide a record of the problems which occurred frequently during the period of observation and participation. However, the logs themselves are merely lists of problems and as such constitute raw data. For this reason, the logs need to be analyzed in conjunction with the categories of problems. The routineness of the problems can thus be considered within the context of certain categories of problems. The categories which will be considered are: teachers; staffing; students; parents; the role; curriculum and programs; facilities; communication and information.

In the category of teachers, problems present themselves everyday. Interaction between the teachers and the principal is virtually continuous since there are 14 full-time and five part-time teachers on staff. In this



respect, problems with teachers occur routinely. However, the response required to deal with problems related to teachers can often not be routine. Teachers may react differently under different situations and this reaction can often be hard to predict. As well, teachers may behave differently from each other so that whereas one teacher may respond in one way to a situation, another teacher may respond differently. Thus, although problems with teachers are frequent and occur on a daily basis, they are very often not routine and do require individual attention, close analysis and indepth reflection. A response to a particular situation may work with one teacher, but not with another.

In general, problems related to staffing tend to be routine even though they are not always problems which occur on a daily or regular basis. Recruiting teachers with the necessary training and proficiency in French is a problem which occurs each and every year. Having to deal with the shared half-time teachers presents a set of problems which do not vary greatly from one day to the next. The fact that the school does not have a special education teacher does present many problems but, again, these problems are more predictable, long-term and therefore routine.

In the category of students, many of the problems such as those pertaining to discipline, minor injuries and supervision, are routine. The one problem in this category

which is not routine is that of child abuse because one case of abuse may be very different from another. The amount of the principal's involvement in the case may also vary. Fortunately, the problem is not a frequent one with which the principal has to deal.

Interaction with parents often results in many non-routine problems for the principal. Where there are parents who believe that they should have a right to manage and control the French minority-language classes, it can be difficult to predict how they may react in certain situations or on certain occasions. They may try to organize an event such as a concert or school activity without advising the principal of their intentions. Such incidents require responses which are well thought-out, creative, and adapted to the situation.

In general, the problems related to the parents of the children in the French minority-language classes tend to be somewhat less routine than the problems related to the parents of children in the French immersion classes. Whereas the latter program has been operating for many years, the former program is only in its second year of existence in the school. Thus, there may be a period of adjustment during which time parents, teachers and the principal will have to resolve certain issues and concerns. Until this period of adjustment is complete, there will likely be many non-

routine problems with which the principal will be confronted.

Many other problems related to parents are of a more routine nature. Parent expectations, concerns, fears and demands pose problems that are often similar from one parent to the other or from one year to the next. As such, the responses to these problems are often routine.

The challenges related to the principal's role as an administrator are of a routine nature. Lack of time to complete tasks, coordinating teaching and administrative activities, and bookkeeping are some of the problems which the principal faces on a regular basis and for which solutions have often been identified.

Problems related to the French immersion program and the curriculum are routine problems for the principal. The program is adequately established and developed so that strategies have already been recognized to deal with the problems which may occur. In the case of the French minority-language program, many of the problems are not routine because the program is new.

Some of the problems relating to facilities are routine and relate to the lack of space or of a gymnasium. Other problems which are less routine are those which occur as a result of deteriorating facilities. These types of problems can require novel approaches and are, as such, not routine.

Inadequate information, information overload and complex channels of communication result in non-routine problems because they are often the source of or generate other problems such as interpersonal conflict, incongruent expectations and lack of understanding.

#### **Problems which Occur Throughout the Year**

An important feature to determine regarding the problems relating to the school under study is which of these problems are not particular to any time period but occur throughout the year. Knowing when the problem occurs may provide more insight into its nature and, possibly, its causes. In general, the majority of the problems are those which occur throughout the year. Those which would be particular to a specific time period are problems associated with particular events such as Kindergarten registration and orientation and Spring or Christmas concert. There are, however, certain times during the year when many of the problems may be more easy to deal with:

The hardest times I find are the couple of weeks before Christmas, the couple of weeks before Easter and the couple of weeks before June. Everybody is really tired and everyone tends to be a little bit more slack and the moment that you're slack, you're not able to cope with the problems that arise. The problems in December are no worse than the ones in September except, in September, because we're fresh out of the summer, we have more patience to deal with them. (principal)

### **Causes of the Problems**

Determining the causes of the problems related to the administration of the school under study is a difficult, if not impossible, task because of the complexity of education, of human nature and of the problems themselves. It would be somewhat simplistic to attribute any one cause to a particular problem. It is likely that many variables or causes come into play, interact and combine to produce a certain effect and create a given problem. It is possible, however, to look for links between variables, to find themes such as financial constraints or expectations, which relate data in one category to data in another. These common themes may suggest some possible causes of certain problems.

An analysis of the data reveals that certain themes are common to more than one category of problems. The themes which appear to cross over categories are the following:

1. Expectations;
2. Ambiguity of roles;
3. Financial constraints;
4. Lack of understanding; and
5. Interpersonal relations;

### 1. Expectations

Expectations is a theme which arose in many of the categories. Parents have expectations of teachers, of the principal, of what the programs should accomplish, of their children's performance, and of the school in general. Teachers have expectations of the principal, of students, of parents and of the school board. The principal has expectations of teachers, students, parents and the school board. The school board has expectations for the school, for teachers and for the principal. Problems arise because, very often, the different expectations are not congruent. Since there is often no objective or absolute definition of what the expectations for the different roles should or might be, room is left for individual interpretation and subjective evaluation and, therefore, for conflict.

### 2. Ambiguity of roles

Uncertainty about the role of the school is another issue which generates various problems. The existence of new programs and methodologies and the increase in the number of available activities and classes for children presents an "embarras du choix" or burden of choice on the principal. Teachers, parents and the administration have not decided on or come to an agreement about what the role or aim of the school should be or about what the school can be expected to

accomplish given the resources at its disposal and the type of students with which it is dealing.

Changing roles is an another important theme in the data. In the case of parents, it is clear that their role is changing; however, it is not clear exactly what their role is or should be. Nor is it altogether clear how their role relates to the principal's role. What is clear or certain is that the parents of children in this school are becoming more directly involved in the education of their children:

Parents' involvement in education is certainly increasing and their kinds of involvement are certainly changing....Parents' role is changing. No longer are they just fundraising. Now they are getting into the real heart of the matter which is the educational issues. (asst. supt.)

It is likely that the parents' involvement in the education of their children will continue to increase and to pose problems as the teachers and administrators adjust to the changes and effect which the new involvement of parents has on education and the school.

The role of the French first-language parents sometimes overlaps with that of the principal. Many of these parents expect to be involved in decision-making, in organizing, in planning, in the selection of teachers and in the development and implementation of curriculum. This makes the principal's role more ambiguous and more problematic. Until it has been decided officially how much control and

management the parents should or can have, there will be some tension and confusion over roles between the principal and the Comité des Parents.

### 3. Financial constraints

Financial constraints is another theme which figures in various categories. Problems with facilities relate largely to lack of funds. Some of the problems related to staffing are a result of lack of funds to hire full-time teachers. Lack of funds limits the number of available teaching units and result in the vice-principal having to teach full-time. As well, the principal's role is often limited because of the need to spend large amounts of time completing clerical tasks which could be completed by support personnel if money were available for their hire.

### 4. Lack of understanding

A serious problem facing the school under study is the quality of relationships between some of the French immersion and French first-language parents. As was noted in the previous chapter, the Home and School Association and the Comité des Parents function largely as two separate groups with different aims. From the perspective of the French first-language parents, there may not be a commitment towards working together because of the uncertainty of their



future role:

The parents want to have governance of the school so I think they really look at it like they are in that building right now but it's just sort of temporary and they could move out any time. So they give the impression that they don't really want to be part of the school because they feel that it's not permanent. (prog. coord.)

From the perspective of the French immersion parents, there may be the perception among some that their program has to compete with the French first-language program for resources. This perception may relate largely to a lack of understanding:

One of the biggest problems would be lack of understanding by the majority as to what the French first-language program is. There is a lack of appreciation for the rights of the minority group to have separate classes - for the rights granted to the parents under the Charter and especially for the right to have, maybe, more direct involvement in programming and in the structure of programming. (asst. supt.)

This lack of understanding may be common to the introduction of new programs in general. Individuals or groups may have the perception that the other group is being favoured:

The problems between the French first-language and French immersion in the same school are the same as we encountered when we started French immersion in the English schools and it seems that the rapport between French immersion and French first-language is similar to the rapport between French immersion and English... French immersion was a new program and the English teachers felt threatened by it and also the parents from the English stream had the feeling that the French immersion kids had it all - more than their kids...the impression was that one group had it all and the other

group was left out with nothing. I find that it's exactly the same with French immersion and French first-language. (prog. coord.)

#### 5. Interpersonal relationships

Schools are organizations in which various individuals and groups of individuals interact constantly. Teachers interact with students, parents interact with teachers, and the principal interacts with teachers, parents and students. In the school under study there are approximately 300 students, 600 parents, 20 teachers, various support personnel and one principal. The result is an exceedingly complex collage of personalities, goals, interests, expectations, motivations, and behaviours which interact constantly and which inevitably, on occasion, enter into conflict. Thus, problems with teachers, parents, and students will occur naturally and regularly in a setting such as the school under study. Interaction among teachers; disagreement among parent groups; teachers', parents' and students' personal problems; discipline problems; and stresses and tensions among individuals will be a constant source of problems confronting the principal.

#### **Implications of the Problems**

The previous chapter identified some of the problems and the previous section considered some of their possible

causes. The final perspective on the problems considers the cumulative and overall effect that some of the problems may have, either on the principal's role specifically, or in general, on the quality of education of the children served by the school.

As was previously noted, the two parents' groups do not work together. They generally have different aims and expectations. Furthermore, as the principal noted, it can be challenging to have teachers share aims and visions and to work cooperatively together. From the principal's perspective, it is not always evident what the school board's expectations are. Thus, cooperative, collective efforts are largely overshadowed by individual and small group efforts. The implications of such a situation are that energy and efforts are wasted because not all people share the same vision or have the same expectations and they do not always work as a team.

Efforts are also wasted because of financial constraints. The principal, teachers and parents lose valuable time and energy coping with the results of not having sufficient funds to effectively run the school. Instead of fundraising in order to provide extra resources to enhance instruction and to improve the quality of their children's education, parents are having to become increasingly involved in funding capital repairs and basic

necessities for the school. The principal and vice-principal have less time to engage in instructional leadership because they must teach classes. New program initiatives such as resource-based learning can only be partially implemented because money is not available for inservicing and professional development or for personnel such as a full-time learning-resource teacher. Because of lack of funds, the school must share human and physical resources with another school.

Lack of time has an effect on the principal's ability to provide instructional leadership. Mundane, clerical tasks must often take precedence over more important leadership activities. As well, lack of time means that the principal is not always able to plan and organize as well as she would if there were more time available and her role may often therefore be more reactive than proactive. As a result, lack of time and resources means that programs are not delivered as effectively as they could be and the quality of education may therefore be less than what it could be under other circumstances.

#### **Relation of the Findings to the Background Information on French Immersion and French Minority-Language Education**

The analysis of the findings in relation to the background information on French Immersion and French

minority-language education involved identifying common themes between the findings and the background information. The purpose of this identification was to gain a broader understanding of how and why some of the problems occur. The themes were considered in relation to the French immersion program and the French minority-language program.

### **The French Immersion Program**

The themes which appeared most obviously and frequently in the findings and the background information on French immersion programs were parental involvement, and program characteristics and aims. Both factors were highlighted in the background information and both result in problems for the school under study.

#### **1. Parental involvement**

In the background information on the French immersion program, the theme of parental involvement was prominent. Parents were instrumental in the establishment of programs both in Canada and Newfoundland. They themselves were convinced of the worth of the program and worked diligently to convince administrators of its "academic viability". In the school under study, the French immersion program has been in place for three years and parents are still very much involved in the school. For the principal, this

involvement can mean having to deal with very demanding parents who expect a high level of accountability. Like those parents described in the background information, the parents in the school under study are quite convinced of the worth of the program and its "academic viability". It is perhaps for this reason that they hold, what the principal termed as, "unrealistic expectations" regarding what the program can effectively achieve. In spite of parents' beliefs, according to the principal of the school under study, the French immersion program cannot make anglophone children as fluent as francophones. Nor can parents expect, in spite of the perceived success of the program, that all children will perform well and will not encounter problems. Parents' lack of knowledge and understanding about the program and its aims have actually led to many misconceptions about what French immersion can realistically achieve. These misconceptions have made the role of the principal more demanding because she must often provide extra encouragement to parents whose children are experiencing difficulty with the program.

## 2. Program characteristics and aims

In the background information, it was noted that French immersion "is an optional program to which every student has access" and that it "serves a primarily unilingual

population" (Lapkin,1984,p.4). One of its aims is "to ensure achievement in academic subjects commensurate with the students' academic ability and grade level" (Genesee, 1987,p.13). Because the program is open to all students, there is no initial selection to determine if those enrolling may later experience learning problems. Furthermore, there are no testing instruments available for this purpose. In the school under study, the fact that there is no screening actually poses problems, not only because some of the students are experiencing difficulties coping with the demands of the program, but also because there is no remediation and very few psychological or guidance support services available to help these children. Ensuring 'achievement in academic subjects commensurate with the student's academic ability and grade level' is not a realistic aim for all students in the school under study because of the lack of support services.

The fact that immersion serves an anglophone population also causes problems in the school under study because, as was noted in the findings, outside of the school, there is no French spoken. Parents usually do not speak French and are therefore not able to assist their children when they are experiencing difficulties with the program. Because of this characteristic of the program, the task of making students 'functionally competent' in French becomes more of

a challenge. The fact that immersion serves an anglophone population also complicates the role of the principal because she must administer a program the aims of which are difficult to achieve.

### **The French Minority-Language Program**

The common themes between the background information and the French minority-language program were: parental involvement and demographic trends.

#### **1. Parental involvement**

Parental involvement in French minority-language programs in Canada provided the impetus for their creation and growth. In Newfoundland, parents fought for minority-language rights and have been instrumental in the establishment of minority-language classes. In this regard, parental involvement has represented a positive force both in Canada and Newfoundland. However, in many respects, for the school under study, parental involvement is a constant source of problems for the principal. Parents have high and often conflicting expectations, place great demands on the principal and furthermore, often interfere with or override the authority of the principal. As was noted in the background information, it has been recommended that francophone parents be given the right to "decide on matters



referring to curriculum, staffing, and other pedagogical aspects of their schooling" (Province of Newfoundland, 1986,p.51). In the school under study, parents are already exercising these rights and this involvement is resulting in serious problems for the principal. A problem arises from the fact that no formal decisions have been made concerning the roles and responsibilities of the parents in relation to the principal, and so there is considerable conflict and misunderstanding between the parents and the principal. Furthermore, a greater problem arises because the parents themselves are not in agreement on many matters especially those pertaining to curriculum.

The issue of control and management has been the focus of discussion, debate and legal battles both in Newfoundland and in Canada in general. In the background information, it may appear that the debate on the question is confined to discussions at the Department of Education or the school board level; however, control and management is an issue which has serious repercussions on the present administration of the school under study and causes problems daily. Until the issue of control and management is resolved, it will continue to pose problems for the school. At the same time, once it is resolved, there may continue to be problems because, as in the school under study, there may not be complete agreement among parents about what is

required of the school. As well, problems may continue to arise because of the fact that parents' expectations may not be congruent with what can be achieved and realized.

## 2. Demographic trends

As was noted in the history of French minority-language education, the population of francophones is declining in Canada, and in Newfoundland, the numbers are now stabilizing following a decline in past years. In Newfoundland, francophones constitute a very small minority, only .05% of the total population of the province. This demographic trend is reflected in the school under study where enrolment in the French minority-language program is barely sufficient to sustain the program's existence. Low enrolment requires that students be grouped in multigrade classes and in future years, low or declining enrolments could possibly jeopardize the program's existence. Furthermore, the low number of francophones in the province makes recruiting teachers, especially specialists, an onerous, if not impossible task. The lack of qualified specialist teachers and of support services in French may lessen the quality of education received by the school's students.

The entire question of numbers and the population of francophones in Newfoundland and the low proportion of actual francophones in the classes might be considered to

have a detrimental effect on the school's ability to effectively achieve the program's intended aims and to deliver a quality education. One of the aims is to reinforce and strengthen the linguistic and cultural identity of francophones in Newfoundland. However, in the school under study, this aim is not easily achieved because of the low numbers of francophones both in the province and in the program. Even among the population of students in the school's French minority-language classes, there are a large proportion of students who have learned English as their first language, speak English in the home, and for whom one parent is an anglophone. This might not present such a problem if, outside of the school, language and culture were reinforced by the environment, but students and the school are immersed in an essentially anglophone culture. The task of reinforcing cultural and linguistic identities thus becomes very difficult for the school and creates many problems for the principal.

The decisions regarding the establishment of the classes and regarding control and management are being made in the courts, and in government offices. In the case of the minority-language classes in the school under study, the interpretation of the "where numbers warrant" provision in Section 23 of the Charter has been very liberal. Although only 34 students are enrolled, classes have been established.

In theoretical, legal and political respects, this may be a just decision. In terms of education and pedagogy, it has not, at least for the school under study, been a practical decision because of the problems which the low numbers cause. For the principal, these decisions result in problems which are beyond her control but which she must try to remedy. Because she has to spend such an inordinate amount of time dealing with these problems, she cannot concentrate on more important issues such as providing instructional leadership to the French minority-language teachers. Thus, overall, the problems can make it more difficult to provide a quality education to the students in these classes.

#### **Relation of the Findings to the Problems Cited in the Review of the Literature**

The comparison of the problems noted in the review of the literature with those uncovered in the school under study also involved identifying common themes. In general, there appeared to be many similarities between the problems uncovered in the review of the literature and the problems noted in the school under study. Where there are problems identified in the findings which were not found in the literature, these were noted.

### The General Principalship

For the general principalship, the problems which were noted in both the review of the literature and the findings related to teachers, students, parents, and the role of the principal. The two final categories, facilities, and communication and information, are included as categories although there were not specifically noted in the literature.

#### 1. Teachers

In the category of problems related to teachers, Leithwood, Cousins and Smith (1990a), Renihan (1983), and Walsh (1973) identified personal problems and professional development as being important concerns for principals. Getting teachers to adopt newer teaching techniques (Walsh, 1973) and teacher conflict (Leithwood et al., 1990a) were also identified as problems for principals. These same problems were identified in the school under study. Problems not identified in the review of the literature but which the principal of the school under study also faced related to teachers' expectations of the principal, inconsistency in teachers' approaches to discipline, and teachers as parents. Problems with staffing were so numerous and important in the school under study that these aspects were discussed in a separate category in the study. Many of these problems

related to both the French immersion and French minority-language programs and were therefore considered in the sections pertaining to problems with these programs. However, the principal of the school under study also had to cope with problems related to the need to share half-time teachers with other schools and only having a half-time learning resources teacher. The fact that the vice-principal teaches full-time caused many problems for the principal in the school under study, and yet this type of problem was not identified as a problem in the literature reviewed for this study.

## 2. Students

In the category of problems related to students, Leithwood et al. (1990a) identified child abuse, discipline, and injuries. Walsh (1973) identified supervision. These problems are very similar to those identified in the school under study.

## 3. Parents

Therrien (1984) found that parents increasingly want to influence the school life of their child. Sackney (1981) posits that parental involvement is currently "in vogue". Walsh (1973) and Ivany (1975) cited school-community relations, militant parents and reconciling controversies

between teachers and parents as problems for the principal. Leithwood et al. (1990a) identified 105 problems related to parents.

Many of the problems cited in the review of the literature were also found in the school under study. Parents' expectations about the role of the school, although not noted in the review, was an important problem noted in the findings.

#### 4. The role of the principal

Concerning problems associated with the role, there were many themes common to both the problems noted in the review of the literature and those found in the school under study. Renihan (1983) and Lyons (1990) cited increased expectations for the principal's role and ambiguity in the role as problems facing principals. Lyons (1990), Barth (1980) and Pellicer et al. (1988) found lack of uninterrupted time to be a challenge for the principal's role. Lyons also identified the challenges associated with principals' efforts to be an instructional leader.

All problems relating to the role of the principal in general and identified in the literature reviewed for this study were common to the school under study. Other problems not noted in the review of the literature but which were found in the school under study related to coping with the

implementation of new programs, coordinating school activities, setting priorities for the role, having to teach, and bookkeeping.

#### 5. Facilities

In the literature reviewed for this study, problems related to facilities were identified by many researchers in relation to financial constraints. Financial constraints was not included in the findings as a category of problems but was nonetheless a recurrent theme in the data and was included as one of the possible sources or causes of problems. Finances and aging buildings were identified by Eaton and Hills (1983) as important problems and Fris et al. (1987) noted the challenge of financial restraints. In the school under study, problems with lack of facilities and with deteriorating facilities were so numerous and troublesome that it was necessary to create a separate category in the study under which these problems could be grouped.

#### 6. Communication and information

Problems related to communication and information were not highlighted in the literature reviewed for this study. However, in the findings, problems with communication and information were numerous and varied.



### **French Immersion Programs**

In relation to problems associated with the principalship of a French immersion program, the themes which were common to both the review of the literature and this study's findings are associated with teachers, students, parents, and curriculum and instruction.

#### **1. Teachers**

In relation to problems associated with the principalship of French immersion programs, McGillivray (1979), Lemire (1989), and Tétrault (1984) identified staffing the immersion classes as a major problem for many principals. Lamarre (1990) noted that the unavailability of French immersion teachers often forces principals and administrators to choose between hiring a teacher who is proficient in the French language and one who may be less proficient but who is trained in pedagogy. These problems were also noted in the school under study.

A problem not identified in the literature review but which was noted in the school under study involved the difficulty recruiting specialist teachers and special services personnel, such as psychologists and guidance counsellors, who are competent in French. Substitute and replacement teachers for French immersion as well as teachers trained in primary and elementary methods who speak

French are also hard to recruit. The fact that the school does not have a special education or remedial teacher also poses serious problems for the school and its principal.

### 3. Students

In the literature reviewed for this study, no problems were identified related to students in the French immersion program. The problems posed by the changing clientele in the immersion classes were not identified in the literature and research consulted for this study, yet it does represent a serious concern for the principal. As well, children with special learning needs and transferring students out of the immersion program were identified as problems in the study's findings.

### 3. Parents

Lamarre (1989) noted in her study that immersion parents are demanding and often need reassuring. McGillivray (1979) argues that immersion parents take up a lot of the principal's time. Dagenais (1990) concluded that French immersion parents demand a high level of accountability. In the school under study, these same problems are common and frequent. Problems with parents' expectations and parents' concerns about the program, although not identified in the review, were identified in the school under study.

#### 4. The role of the principal

Lemire (1989) identified the heavy workload, extra meetings, obtaining support services in French, and operating a dual-track school as challenges for French immersion principals. The inability to provide leadership in French immersion programs was identified by Guttman (1983) and Lamarre (1989). For the principal of the school under study, these were also important problems. An additional problem faced by the principal of the school under study is that she must serve as a remediation/special education teacher because the school does not have such a teacher on staff.

#### 5. Curriculum

Lack of resource materials was a problem identified in the school under study and in the review of literature (Lamarre, 1989 and Tétrault, 1984). Keeping abreast of changes in the English program and encouraging teachers to adopt resource-based learning were problems noted in the findings but not in the review of the literature.

#### **French Minority-Language Programs**

In the area of French minority-language education, the only literature uncovered which related to problems in the administration of these programs was a study by Canale et

al. (1987) which concluded that the presence of anglophone students could slow the learning of French by the francophone students. The lack of linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the student population was identified as a problem in the school under study where, in some cases, the quality of French normally spoken by francophone students is being adversely affected by the presence of students in the program whose first language is English.

Many other problems relating to the French minority-language program were identified in the study. These were associated with staffing, students, parents, the role, and programs, curriculum and methodology.

No literature was found pertaining to problems which result from having both a French immersion and French minority-language program in one school; however, for the school under study many problems were identified in this area.

### **Summary**

This chapter considered the characteristics of many of the problems noted in the previous chapter. It considered the problems in respect to their routineness, when they occur throughout the year, their possible causes, and their implications. The problems were also considered in relation to the background information on French immersion and French

minority-language education in Canada as outlined in Chapter 2 of this study and in relation to the review of the literature as outlined in Chapter 3.

In relation to the routineness of the problems, problems with teachers, parents and communication are very often not routine. Except for problems related to child abuse, problems with students are, for the most part, routine. The challenges related to the principal's role as an administrator and problems related to staffing and to the French immersion program are routine problems for the principal. In the case of the French minority-language program, many of the problems are not routine. Some of the problems relating to facilities are routine whereas problems with deteriorating facilities are less routine.

In general, the majority of the problems are those which occur throughout the year. Those which would be particular to a specific time period are problems associated with particular events such as Kindergarten registration and orientation and Spring or Christmas concert.

An analysis of the data revealed that certain themes are common to more than one category of problems. These themes may suggest some possible causes of certain problems. The themes which appear to cross over categories are the following: expectations, ambiguity of roles, financial constraints, lack of understanding, and interpersonal

relations.

The implication of the problems considers the cumulative and overall effect that some of the problems may have, either on the principal's role specifically, or in general, on the quality of education of the children served by the school. Energy and efforts are wasted because not all people share the same vision or have the same expectations and they do not work as a team. Efforts are also wasted because of financial constraints. Lack of time and resources means that programs are not delivered as effectively as they could be and the quality of education may therefore be less than what it might be under different circumstances.

The analysis of the findings in relation to the background information on French immersion and French minority-language education involved identifying common themes between the findings and the background information. The themes which appeared most obviously and frequently in the findings and the background information on French immersion programs were parental involvement, and program characteristics and aims. Both factors were highlighted in the background information and both result in problems for the school under study. The themes common to both the background information and the French minority-language program were parental involvement and demographic trends.

In general, there appear to be many similarities

between the problems uncovered in the review of the literature and the problems noted in the school under study. However, many problems were found in the school under study which were not identified in the literature which was reviewed. Only one study pertaining to French minority-language education was identified in the literature. Yet, in the school under study, many other problems were found to exist with this program. Similarly, no studies were identified pertaining to problems resulting from housing both French immersion and French minority-language education in one school; however, in the school under study, many problems were found to exist as a result of combining these two programs.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SUMMARY, METHODOLOGICAL NOTES, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides a summary of the study, its purpose, methodology and its findings. It also includes a summary of the background information on French immersion and French minority-language education and of the review of the literature. Following the summary is a brief commentary on the methodology used in the study. The section on the discussion considers the findings, their implications and their relation to broader issues. Finally, general conclusions are presented along with suggestions for further research.

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Statement of the Problem**

French immersion has become one of Canada's most researched educational innovations. Much of this research, however, has focused on student evaluation and program outcomes and has relied largely on a quantitative approach to collecting, analyzing and reporting data. Ethnographic studies which focus on the administrative aspects of French immersion are necessary in order to gain a more holistic view of the processes involved in this approach to language



teaching. In the case of French minority-language education, much of the research thus far has focused primarily on legal aspects of access to programs and management and control of this type of education. The present study considers the problems related to the administration of a school offering both a French immersion and a French first-language program.

### **Background Information**

French immersion began in Newfoundland in 1975 and, since that time, has grown from one school and 56 students to 4,328 students in 1990-91. What distinguishes immersion programs from other second-language programs is the emphasis on teaching in French as opposed to teaching French itself. French minority-language education in Newfoundland is concentrated in St. John's, Labrador City and on the Port-au-Port Peninsula with a total provincial enrolment of 268 students. In St. John's, the first French school opened in 1990 after a long period of lobbying by the Comité des Parents. An important aim of the French school is to promote the linguistic and cultural identity of the francophone minority.

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature on problems related to the role of the principal in general identified problems related to

teachers, parents and the community, students, general administration, and senior administrators. Problems associated with the principalship of schools offering French immersion programs were organized into categories related to the role of the principal, teachers, parents, and curriculum and instruction. Only one study was found dealing with administrative problems relating to the French minority-language programs. The study in question noted the problem of the presence of students enrolled in French minority-language classes whose first language is English and who, therefore, may slow the learning of French by francophone pupils.

### **Methodology**

The present study relied on the use of ethnographic research methods. The primary techniques used were semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and participant observation of one month's duration. The research setting was a combined primary and elementary immersion centre and French minority-language school. The aim of the study was to uncover an idiosyncratic knowledge of the professional problems encountered by the principal and the contexts in which these problems occur.

## **The Findings: Types of Problems**

### **1. Problems Associated with the General Principalship**

Challenges relating to teachers included reconciling teachers' expectations for the principal's role, motivating teachers, resolving conflicts between teachers, assisting teachers with personal problems, managing teacher stress, assuring professional development for teachers, and dealing with teachers who are parents of children in the school. Staffing problems related to sharing teachers with other schools.

In the category of problems related to children, attending to children's injuries, child abuse, discipline and supervision were identified as challenges facing the principal. Problems with parents arise because their expectations about what the school should or could be doing are often beyond what it can effectively deliver.

Problems related to the role result from lack of uninterrupted time and time taken away from administrative duties because of the principal's teaching responsibilities. In general, providing leadership and setting priorities can present certain challenges for the principal in that she must make important but sometimes difficult decisions about the role of the school, its main aims and its mission.

Problems related to facilities are associated with their availability and their condition. The facilities of

the school under study are old and in need of repair but the school board does not have the necessary money to pay for these repairs.

Problems with communication and information include ineffective communication and information overload.

## 2. Problems Associated with the French Immersion Program in this School.

Finding substitute, replacement and specialist teachers for the French immersion classes presents a challenge to the administration. In the area of special education or remediation, the school does not have a teacher although many of the French immersion students have special learning needs. For French immersion students in need of services from a guidance counsellor, a speech pathologist or an educational psychologist, there are no services available in French. In more recent years, the French immersion program in the school under study has been attracting a much broader group of students, some of whom are experiencing learning problems and who may have difficulty coping with the demands of the program.

In the category of parents, problems result from the fact that many parents are very demanding and expect a high level of accountability from the administration. Parents often also have unrealistic expectations about the degree of

fluency that their children will achieve in the immersion program, or concerns about the performance of their children in the program.

With teachers, the challenges relate to encouraging them to adopt new approaches such as resource-based learning.

### 3. Problems Associated with the French Minority-Language Program in this School.

Specialist teachers in the areas of music, physical education and learning resources can be hard to recruit because there is a need to have teachers who are qualified in these areas but who are also francophone.

Problems arise with the French minority-language students due to the lack of linguistic, cultural and cognitive homogeneity.

With the French minority-language parents, a problem arises because of the fact that there are different groups of parents and, therefore, different and sometimes conflicting expectations. The primary authority in the French school rests with the principal but the Comité des Parents may, at times, compromise the authority of the principal. At other times, the principal may need to act as a mediator between the different groups of parents. An additional problem associated with the French minority-

language parents relates to religion because parents who opt to enrol their children in the French minority-language school must enrol them in a Catholic school system whether they are Catholic or not. In addition, the program could be facing serious problems if the enrolment does not increase. Multigrade classes present an additional problem to the principal not only in terms of scheduling but also in terms of the strain that they create for teachers.

4. Problems Arising as a Result of Combining French Immersion and French Minority-Language Instruction in One school.

A frequent challenge to the principal involves ensuring cooperative and friendly relations between the teachers of the school's two different programs, French immersion and French minority-language. As well, some French immersion parents may feel that they have to compete with the French minority-language program for educational resources. Operating two different programs in the one school often means a duplication of efforts and an increase in workload. Encouraging communication between the parents of children in the two groups can be challenging.

## **The Findings: Nature of the Problems**

### **Routineness of Problems**

Those problems which tend to be routine related to: staffing; student problems such as discipline, minor injuries and supervision; the principal's role; the French immersion curriculum; and lack of facilities. Non-routine problems included those related to teachers, child abuse, parents, the French minority-language program, deteriorating facilities, and information and communication.

### **Problems Which Occur Throughout the Year**

In general, the majority of the problems identified in the school under study are those which occur throughout the year. Those which would be particular to a specific time period are problems associated with particular events such as Kindergarten registration and orientation, and Spring or Christmas concerts. There are, however, certain times during the year when it may be easier to deal with many of the problems.

### **Causes of the Problems**

Expectations is a theme which arose in many of the categories. Parents, teachers, students, the principal and school board members all have expectations of each other, of what the programs should accomplish, and of the school in

general. Problems arise because, very often, the different expectations are not congruent.

Uncertainty about the role of the school is another issue which generates various problems. Teachers, parents and the administration have not decided on or come to an agreement about what the role or aim of the school should be or about what the school can be expected to accomplish given the resources at its disposal and the type of students with whom it is dealing. In the case of parents, it is clear that their role is changing and that the parents of children in this school are becoming more directly involved in the education of their children.

Financial constraints is another theme which figures in various categories. Problems with facilities and certain problems with staffing relate largely to lack of funds.

From the perspective of the French immersion parents, there may be the perception among some that their program has to compete with the French minority-language program for resources. This perception may relate largely to a lack of understanding of the implementation and maintenance of programs and may be common to the introduction of new programs in general.

Other sources of problems facing the principal include interaction among teachers, disagreement among parent groups, teachers', parents' and students' personal problems,



and discipline.

#### Implications of the Problems

Energy and efforts are wasted because not all people share the same vision or have the same expectations and they do not always work as a team. Efforts are also wasted because of problems with lack of money. Lack of time has an effect on the principal's ability to provide instructional leadership and often results in her role being more reactive than proactive.

#### Relation of the Findings to the Background Information on French Immersion and French Minority-Language Education

Common themes between the findings and the background information on the French immersion program include parental involvement, and program characteristics and aims. Like those parents described in the background information, the parents of the school under study are quite convinced of the worth of the program and hold unrealistic expectations regarding what the program can effectively achieve. Because French immersion is a program to which every student has access, there is no initial selection to determine if those enrolling may later experience learning problems. Some of the students are experiencing difficulties coping with the demands of the program, but there is no remediation and very

few psychological or guidance support services available to help these children. The fact that immersion serves an anglophone population means that the task of making students 'functionally competent' in French becomes more of a challenge and complicates the role of the principal.

The common themes between the background information and the French minority-language program were parental involvement and demographic trends. In Newfoundland, parents fought for minority-language rights and have been instrumental in the establishment of minority-language classes. Parents have high and often conflicting expectations, place great demands on the principal and furthermore, often interfere with or override the authority of the principal. A greater problem arises because the parents among themselves are not in agreement on many matters especially those pertaining to curriculum.

The issue of control and management is also an issue which has serious repercussions on the present administration of the school under study. Even when the issue is resolved, there may continue to be problems because, as in the school under study, there may not be complete agreement among parents about what is expected of the school and because parents' expectations may not be congruent with what can be achieved and realized.

In Newfoundland, francophones constitute only .05% of

the total population of the province. This demographic trend is reflected in the school under study where enrolment in the French minority-language program is barely sufficient to sustain the program's existence. Low enrolment requires that students be grouped in multigrade classes and, in future years, low or declining enrolments could possibly jeopardize the program's existence. Students and the school are immersed in an essentially anglophone culture. The task of reinforcing cultural and linguistic identities thus becomes very difficult for the school and creates many problems for the principal.

#### Relation of the Findings to the Problems Cited in the Review of the Literature

For the principalship in general, the problems which were noted in both the review of the literature and the findings related to teachers, students, parents, and the role of the principal. Many of the problems cited in the review of the literature were also found in the school under study. Parents' expectations about the role of the school, although not noted in the review of the literature, was an important problem noted in the findings.

In relation to problems associated with the principalship of a French immersion program, the themes which were common to both the review of the literature and

this study's findings were associated with teachers, students, parents, and curriculum and instruction. Many of the problems found in the school under study were not identified in the literature reviewed for this study. Some of these problems included the following: difficulty recruiting specialist teachers and special services personnel; the changing clientele in the immersion classes accommodating children with special learning needs; parents' expectations and concerns about the program; and keeping abreast of changes in the English program.

In the area of French minority-language education, the presence of pupils less proficient in French slowing the learning of French by francophone students was a theme common to both the school under study and to the review of the literature. Other problems not reported in the literature were also identified.

No literature was found pertaining to problems which result from having both a French immersion and French minority-language program in one school; however, for the school under study many problems were identified.

#### **METHODOLOGICAL NOTES**

In the present ethnographic study, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations were the primary techniques used to gather

data. If this study had relied solely on interviews as a means of gathering data, the findings would not have been as complete. The participation provided the researcher with the opportunity to obtain a first-hand account of the problems faced in the principalship of a school such as the one under study. There were many problems noted after only the first day of observation which had not been mentioned in the interviews. The interviewees may not have intended to deliberately conceal information; rather, only a limited amount of information can be provided in an interview and the interviewee may unconsciously overlook many details. Furthermore, certain situations may not be perceived by the interviewee as being a problem. Thus, the use of participant observation techniques afforded the researcher with the opportunity to formulate new questions and test answers as the research progressed.

In spite of the appropriateness of the method, there were nonetheless inconveniences or disadvantages. One of these was the problem of the researcher's role in the research setting. As time went on during the period of participant observation, the researcher became increasingly familiar with the school, its staff and its routines, and the principal gradually felt more confident about assigning administrative duties to her. The researcher fulfilled these duties without really having a role, as she did not work in

the school, nor was she being paid by the school board. The researcher actually had no official position in the school and her activities likely did not correspond to people's preconceptions of what a researcher actually does.

Eventually, the researcher became so involved in the administrative activities of the school that she became truly acculturated. The acculturation provided the opportunity to adopt the perspective of the principal actors, to develop an empathy for the problems they faced, and to know and experience these problems personally.

## DISCUSSION

The three elements comprising this study included problems, the principalship, and French immersion and French minority-language education. In this section of the study, the three elements are considered separately in terms of the issues and questions which they raised. The purpose of this discussion is to gain a broader perspective on the findings and to consider their implications.

### Problems

By its very nature and definition, the word problem suggests an abnormality and an undesirable situation. In the school under study, problems are legion and ubiquitous. It thus becomes important to ask to what extent the school is

adversely affected by the presence of so many problems and whether or not this quantity of problems is natural in an organization of such complexity. Other questions generated by the presence of the problems include: Do these problems represent only a negative force or is it possible that, in some respects, they actually play a positive role? Would it be possible to eliminate or solve many of them?

This study focuses on one school only. Thus, no comparisons could be made with other such organizations. However, as was noted in the previous chapter and in the review of the literature and research, in general, principals do face many problems and many of these are similar to those identified in the school under study. In terms of the quantity of problems noted, it would seem that, for the principal of the school under study, the number of problems relating to the principalship in general are similar to those that other principals might encounter. On the other hand, this school may differ from other schools in that the model of organization is complicated by the existence of two relatively new educational programs. As a result, the principal is faced with problems relating to the principalship in general, problems relating to each program and, as well, problems that result from combining the two programs in one school. The quantity and the complexity of problems is, therefore, significantly increased. As a

consequence, and as was noted in the previous chapter, the principal is faced with a large number of non-routine problems which are more cognitively demanding than routine problems. Judging only on the basis of this particular school, one might conclude that, as the organization becomes more complex, the number of problems increases. As well, one might conclude that combining two relatively new programs in one administrative unit presents an exceptionally demanding and challenging situation for the principal.

On the other hand, one could not expect a school to exist without problems. Problems are part of the process of change (Fullan, 1982) and are therefore natural in the school setting. As part of the process of change, they can also represent a positive element in the school. As solutions to problems are found, the school should move towards greater efficiency.

Finding solutions to problems is a requisite task for the principal. Unfortunately, solutions cannot be found for all problems:

Some problems are so complex that in the final analysis and final action they are not amenable to solution....some social problems in a complex diverse society contain innumerable interacting 'causes' which cannot be fully understood. Nor can we necessarily change those factors which we do not understand as causes....with complex social problems the total number of variables (and their interactive, changing nature) is so large that it is logistically infeasible to obtain all the necessary information, and cognitively impossible for individuals to comprehend



the total picture even if it is available. (Fullan, 1982, p.84)

In the school under study, certain problems can only be solved by action at the level of the school board or provincial Department of Education. Problems which arise because of issues such as control and management, funding, and lack of qualified teachers have repercussions on the principal's role but are essentially beyond her control.

### **The Principalship**

During the period of research, an interviewee noted, regarding one of the problems related to the administration of the school, that the particular problem was part of the role of the principal. Certainly, this observation could be made of many of the problems identified in this study. In fact, one of the most significant conclusions that might be drawn from this study is, as Sergiovanni (1987) noted, that the principalship is "a logical process of problem-solving" (p.xiii).

However, the principal is expected to be a leader and not only a problem-solver. Yet, according to House and Lapan (1978), the two roles are often not compatible:

The principal has no set of priorities except to keep small problems from becoming big ones. His is a continuous task of crisis management. He responds to emergencies daily. He is always on call. All problems are seen as important. The global response to any and all concerns means he never has the time, energy, or

inclination to develop or carry out a set of premeditated plans of his own. Containment of all problems is his theme. The principal cannot be a... leader under these circumstances (p.145)

For the principal of the school under study, her role was essentially that of a problem-solver and not that of a leader. She was, as Fullan (1982) describes the principal, the person in the middle: in between teachers, students and parents' groups and the school board and Department of Education. Because of her position and because of the need to deal with so many problems, her role appeared to be primarily reactive and not proactive to the extent that this would be desirable for leadership.

Little information is available about the principalship of schools offering French immersion and French minority-language programs. Each program brings its own unique set of problems. In the present study, the principalship of a school combining these two programs was shown to be extremely demanding and complex because of the interaction between the two programs. As is indicated in the next section, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect one person to cope with the demands of a school offering these two types of programs particularly when at least one of the programs is, as yet, not well defined or developed.

### **French Immersion and French Minority-Language Education**

As was noted in the introduction to this study, French immersion is a highly complex educational innovation which alters the entire ecology of schools (Burns, 1986; Olson & Burns, 1981). For the school under study, the immersion program was only one of two educational innovations, the other being French minority-language education. The problems noted in this study which pertained to the latter program are proof of the fact that, for the school under study, French minority-language education is at least as complex as French immersion, if not more so. Both programs raise many questions and issues not only for the school under study but for education in general.

As was noted in the background information on French immersion and French minority-language education programs in Chapter 2, parents provided the initial impetus for the introduction of both programs. Parents fought, organized, pressured and lobbied until they were successful in convincing those in power to offer French immersion and French minority-language classes. However, parents' commitment to getting the programs in place may have had unintended consequences. In the case of French minority-language education, lobbying has resulted in the establishment of programs, the implications of which may not yet be altogether understood. Ironically, commitment can

often, as Fullan (1982) argues, have detrimental effects on the success of programs:

Commitment to a particular program makes it less likely that they [the planners] will set up the necessary time-consuming procedures for implementation, less likely that they will be open to the transformation of their cherished program and tolerant of the delays which will inevitably occur when other people begin to work with it. (p.85)

For French immersion and French minority-language education, classes have been established even though teachers with appropriate qualifications and linguistic proficiency are not always readily available to deliver the programs. Special services', substitute and replacement, music and physical education teachers proficient in French are very difficult to recruit as are teachers trained in primary and elementary methods. Furthermore, for those teachers presently in place, little professional development is available even though teachers must cope with the demands of new programs and, particularly in the case of French immersion, keep abreast of changes and innovations in the English program.

For the French minority-language program, questions of control and management and of parental participation in decision-making have not yet been answered. Many concerns related to curriculum and methodology, particularly in the case of the French minority-language program, are yet unresolved. One might ask if more attention should not have

been paid to resolving some of these issues before the programs were implemented.

One of the recommendations of the province's Royal Commission on Education (Province of Newfoundland, 1992) is that parents, through the establishment of School Councils, become more involved in school governance:

Within the proposed model, parents and others from the community at large, would see their role expanded, formalized and given a genuine authority within the structure of the school government through the development of school councils at the school level. (p.11)

Parental involvement in the school under study specifically and in the establishment of the French immersion and French minority language program in general are perhaps examples of the types of activities in which parents might be engaged. The efforts of the French minority-language parents to be involved in the governance of the school are also, perhaps, indicative of the future role of parents in the administration of schools as recommended by the Commission. However, the problems which arose in the school under study as a result of parental participation could lead one to ask to what extent parents really should participate in school administration and governance. Fullan (1982) posits regarding parental involvement that it is not

free from danger. Some situations of involvement may turn out to have harmful consequences if they result in

endless conflict, lowered morale and the like. As with other educational reforms, the implementation of involvement programs should be carefully carried out and monitored as to problems and impact. (p.210)

Is the involvement of parents in the establishment of French immersion and French minority-language classes a model for future School Councils? Is this involvement a precursor to future parental involvement in schools in Newfoundland in general? If so, then principals must be prepared to deal with the many problems that such involvement could entail. They must be prepared for the fact that, as in the school under study, parents may disagree among themselves about what they feel the school should and can be doing. They must be prepared for the fact that this may result in parents lobbying for their own interests and wanting their own brands of pedagogy, curriculum, and their own preferred teachers and textbooks.

As was previously noted in this study, the French minority-language program is presently benefiting from a larger share of educational resources than is the French immersion program in this school. At the same time, compared with the regular English program, the immersion program also benefitted from a larger share of resources during the first years of implementation. Both in the past and at present, this perceived inequity has caused resentment among groups of parents and raises the issue of equity and of equality of

educational opportunity. The perceived inequity also leads one to ask how an equitable and efficient distribution of and access to limited educational resources can be assured. For the school under study, the distribution of resources such as time and teachers was problematic and complicated the role of the principal.

In Chapter 2, it was noted that many individuals believed that the immersion program would contribute to better understanding between English and French speaking Canadians:

Some parents as well as government agencies saw immersion as a uniquely Canadian vehicle through which to produce social interaction and communication between francophones and anglophones, thus leading ultimately to a greater empathy and understanding between the two linguistic and cultural communities. (Carey, 1984, p. 246)

It is ironic that, in the school under study, where these two groups, English and French speaking Canadians, are present, there appeared to be limited social interaction, communication and understanding. The fact that the English students in the school's French immersion program have learned French has not yet had the effect of bridging the gap between the two groups. This present situation may suggest that linguistic ties may not be sufficient to ensure a bond or strengthening of relationships between Canada's two cultural groups particularly at the level of the individual school.

The existence of French immersion and French minority-language programs also raises questions about the role of schools and their aims. One of the aims of the French minority-language program is to reinforce and strengthen the cultural and linguistic identity of this group. In the case of French immersion, an important aim is enable students to function in French. However, as the principal of the school under study commented during the interviews conducted with her, it may not be possible to achieve these aims easily in an essentially anglophone society.

Even if it were possible to achieve these aims, one must ask whether or not this should be the role of schools. Can or should schools be responsible for correcting social and political inequities? Can schools improve the social and political situation of linguistic, cultural, racial or religious minority groups? Should the role of the school be to reinforce cultural identities? It is not the purpose of the present study to address these questions; however, the study's findings indicate that the aims of the French immersion and French minority-language programs may not be easily achieved and that, furthermore, trying to achieve them presents problems for the school's administrators.

The findings of this study also raise complex questions about the relationship of school and society. As society changes, so do and must schools. But which one changes



which? Does the school change society or is it that society changes the school? In relation to the French minority-language program, the school under study has become the focus of efforts to secure social, political and cultural rights. The issues are not solely educational; rather they are only superficially related to education and merely a manifestation of a more complex struggle for a degree of political and social recognition and autonomy. If parents are successful in their efforts to gain control and management of the French minority-language classes, they will have gained both educational and social rights.

The school under study represents a very complex organization because of the existence of two different programs each with its own aims and its own parent groups. As the principal maintained, essentially there are two schools in one building. Initially, the school had a French immersion and an English program with only one principal for the school under study and for the school with which it was affiliated at the time. In 1989, the French immersion program was allotted its own principal. However, one year later, when the French minority-language program was introduced in the school, the principal was given the responsibility of administering both programs.

The study's findings would indicate that housing both programs in one school with one administrator places great

demands on the principal's role in general and on her time and energy specifically. In the future, as French minority-language programs become better understood, administrators will need to address questions relating to the best way in which to organize facilities for this type of program. In the meantime, this study suggests that it is not only the number of students being administered that should determine the need for one or more principals but also the complexity and age of the programs being administered.

#### CONCLUSION

This study identified the problems related to the principalship of a combined French immersion and French minority-language school as seen from the perspective of the principal of the school. The study provides initial information about administrative problems related to French minority-language education in Newfoundland. As well, it provides a contribution to the body of research on the administrative processes associated with French immersion.

As both the French immersion and French minority-language programs evolve and grow, researchers will need to continue to chart the progress of these educational endeavors from various perspectives. Students' progress will continue to be evaluated by researchers; however, it will also be necessary to monitor the administrative aspects of

the programs and the effects that these have on the delivery of programs in general and on students' performance in particular.

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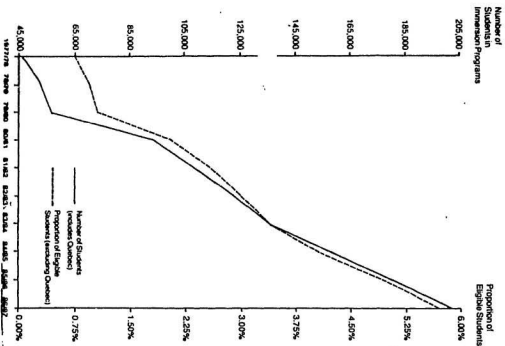
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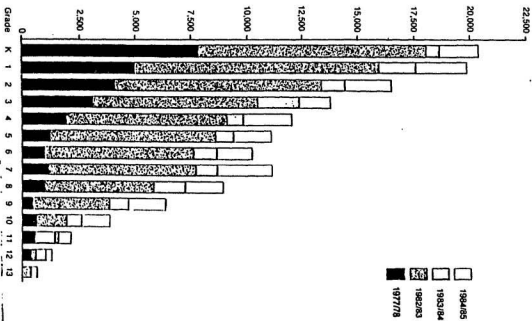
APPENDIX A  
GROWTH OF FRENCH IMMERSION IN CANADA

SOURCE: GIBSON (1987)

## THE GROWTH OF FRENCH IMMERSION IN CANADA



## FRENCH IMMERSION ENROLMENTS BY GRADE







APPENDIX B

IMMERSION ENROLMENTS  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

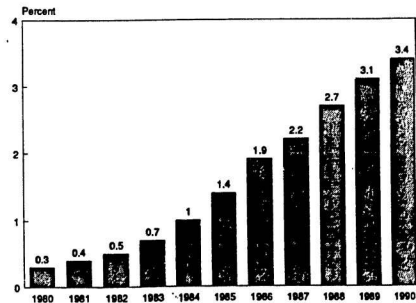
SOURCE: PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR(1991b)

Number of Schools and Enrolment in Core/Extended Core French, French Immersion, and French First Language, 1976-77 to 1990-91

212

Year	Core/Extended Core French(1)		French Immersion(1)		French First Language(1)	
	No. of Schools	Enrolment	No. of Schools	Enrolment	No. of Schools	Enrolment
1976-77	366	67,196	1	56	3	200
1977-78	407	67,696	3	95	3	180
1978-79	406	69,009	5	193	3	208
1979-80	430	71,273	6	279	2	164
1980-81	447	71,524	5	392	2	225
1981-82	477	71,749	7	551	2	127
1982-83	482	71,975	10	742	2	125
1983-84	484	74,086	11	970	2	103
1984-85	497	74,880	16	1,437	2	84
1985-86	491	74,379	26	2,015	2	81
1986-87	488	73,671	29	2,621	2	74
1987-88	485	74,166	29	3,060	3	117
1988-89	485	74,230	32	3,641	4	230
1989-90	480	72,061	34	3,980	4	234
1990-91	469	69,625	34	4,328	5	267

Participation\* in French Immersion, 1980 to 1990



\* Students enrolled in French Immersion as a percentage of total enrolment.

Early and Late French Immersion(1) Enrolment by School District by Grade, 1990-91

School District		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
105 Exploits Valley	Early	28	28	14	28	20	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135
107 Terra Nova Cape Freels	Early	29	31	23	23	30	25	31	30	21	21	13	14	15	356
110 Avalon North	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	28	17	24	23	-	131
111 Avalon Consolidated	Early	87	110	91	84	87	77	55	48	39	27	-	-	-	705
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	56	61	45	44	34	307
115 Bay of Is.-St. G./Burgoe/Rames	Early	30	23	19	23	26	22	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	172
117 Labrador East	Early	23	18	20	16	25	13	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	128
118 Labrador West	Early	21	17	20	18	20	19	33	15	-	-	-	-	-	163
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	30	26	20	22	-	124
129 Conception Bay South	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	31	-	-	-	-	61
502 Burn Peninsula R.C.	Early	18	18	19	15	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
509 Humber-St. Barbe	Early	26	23	21	20	24	29	18	24	26	-	-	-	-	211
510 Labrador	Early	23	23	25	20	31	33	27	21	20	-	-	-	-	223
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	21	15	15	75
512 Appalache	Early	25	27	26	25	33	23	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	185
514 St. John's	Early	180	187	162	149	140	130	76	65	38	18	39	30	22	1,236
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	27	25	-	-	-	81
Total Province	Early	490	505	440	421	451	388	308	200	144	66	52	44	37	3,348
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	181	172	153	110	104	49	779

APPENDIX C

SECTION 23 OF THE  
CHARTER OF RIGHTS OF CANADA, 1982

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is contained in part one of the Constitution Act of 1982. Section 23 of the Charter, outlines Minority Education Rights:

23 (1) Citizens of Canada

- a) Whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or
  - b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority of the province have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.
- (2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.
- (3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children

receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province.

- a) applies whenever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and
- b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.

APPENDIX D

ENROLMENT IN MINORITY-LANGUAGE EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS IN CANADA

SOURCE: COMMISSIONER (1990)



Second-Language Enrolment  
and Minority Language Education Statistics

# MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Enrolment in programs designed to provide education in their mother tongue (English in Quebec and French elsewhere) to members of the official language minority groups, grades in which offered and number of schools where offered, for each province and territory, 1970-71, 1989-90 and 1990-91

		Enrolment	Grades	Number of schools
Newfoundland	1970-71	185	k to 10	1
	1989-90	234	k to 12	4
	1990-91*	240	k to 12	4
Prince Edward Island	1970-71	796	1 to 12	7
	1989-90	542	1 to 12	2
	1990-91*	540	1 to 12	2
Nova Scotia	1970-71	7,388	p to 12	32
	1989-90	2,800	p to 12	18
	1990-91*	2,580	p to 12	17
New Brunswick	1970-71	60,679	k to 12	196
	1989-90	44,943	k to 12	150
	1990-91*	44,700	k to 12	148
Quebec	1970-71	248,855	k to 11	519
	1989-90	102,843	k to 11	360
	1990-91*	100,000	k to 11	355
Ontario	1970-71	115,869	k to 13	381
	1989-90	95,800	k to 13	395
	1990-91*	96,700	k to 13	400
Manitoba	1970-71	10,405	k to 12	49
	1989-90	5,304	k to 12	30
	1990-91*	5,240	k to 12	30
Saskatchewan	1970-71	765	k to 12	12
	1989-90	1,073	k to 10	10
	1990-91*	980	k to 10	10

**Second-Language Enrolment  
and Minority Language Education Statistics**

Continued

		Enrolment	Grades	Number of schools
Alberta	1970-71	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	1989-90*	2,329	k to 12	19
	1990-91*	2,540	k to 12	19
British Columbia	1970-71	-	-	-
	1989-90*	2,090	k to 12	42
	1990-91*	2,220	k to 12	42
Yukon	1970-71	-	-	-
	1989-90*	40	k to 8	1
	1990-91*	40	k to 8	1
Northwest Territories	1970-71	-	-	-
	1989-90*	30	k to 6	1
	1990-91*	30	k to 6	1
TOTAL	1970-71	444,942		1,197(1)
	1989-90*	258,028		1,032
	1990-91*	255,810		1,029

\* Statistics Canada estimate.

\* Figures revised since publication of the Annual Report 1989.

n.a. No figures available.

- nil

(1) Excludes Alberta, for which no figures are available.

Source: Statistics Canada, Elementary and Secondary Education.

## APPENDIX E

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## THE FIRST SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL

The following questions are those which were prepared in advance of the first interview with the principal and in advance of the period of observation. These questions served as a guide and other questions arose out of the interview itself.

1. What sort of problems do you face as a principal?
2. What problems come from the fact that two programs, French immersion and French minority-language instruction are combined in one school?
3. What problems relate only to the French immersion program in this school?
4. What problems relate only to the French minority-language program?

## THE SECOND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL

The following questions are those which were prepared in advance of the second interview with the principal. They are based on one week of observation and participation. These questions served as a guide and other questions arose out of the interview itself.

1. What about problems with finding teachers for French immersion and for French first-language? Is it difficult to recruit teachers in these areas?
2. Does teacher stress present problems for you?
3. How do teacher expectations affect you?
4. Do you find that teachers expect you to be available for a lot of the time?
5. What about having teachers as parents of children in the school. Does that pose problems?
6. What problems does the issue of religion cause for you?
7. Do the cutbacks to substitute days cause a problem?
8. Is it hard to communicate your expectations to teachers.
9. Is it hard to motivate them?
10. What role do extracurricular programs play in school life and how easy or difficult is it to get teachers to be involved?

11. Does having only a part-time teacher for Phys. ed. and for music pose any problems?
12. What about not having a special ed. teacher? Does that cause any problems?
13. How does lack of money pose a problem for the administration of the school?

## THE THIRD SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL

The following questions are those which were prepared in advance of the third interview with the principal. They are based on two weeks of observation and participation. These questions served as a guide and other questions arose out of the interview itself.

1. Why is there a need for professional development?
2. How do the expectations of teachers pose problems for you?
3. Do you find that you have to spend time helping the FFL teachers.
4. What about remediation? Is it necessary? Does it cause problems that there is not remediation now? How is it different for the two programs?
5. What about filling in for other teachers? Why do you have to do it? How frequently do you have to do it and what problems does it cause?
6. Does the fact that the vice-principal must teach all day cause problems for you? Would it be better if she only had to teach for part of the day?
7. What about detention and discipline? What kind of problems does this issue cause?

8. What about the fact that there is no bussing? Does this cause problems?
9. What about dropouts from the program? Are there many and does this cause a problem?
10. What about scheduling meetings? Do you find it difficult to keep track of them all? Do you find that you have the time to attend them all? What kind of meetings do you have to schedule usually?
11. What about duplication of events because of the two programs? You have to organize two concerts. What problems does this cause? How often do you have to duplicate efforts because you have the two programs in one school?
12. What about coordinating the efforts of all the different people such as the secretary, parent volunteers, teachers, teacher aids, student interns?
13. What about students' minor injuries? How frequent are they and what problems do they cause?
14. What about dealing with support personnel? Is it sometimes difficult to get them to do what you would like them to do?
15. What about having to communicate with teachers every day and with parents? Do you find that you have to write a lot of letters?



16. What about the board and board money. Is it hard to get money from them?
17. What about computer resources and keeping up with technology?

THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE ASSISTANT  
SUPERINTENDENT AND THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The following questions are those which were prepared in advance of each interview with the assistant superintendent and the program coordinator. They are based on four weeks of observation and participation and on three interviews with the principal. These questions served as a guide and other questions arose out of the interview itself.

1. In general, if you had to hire a new principal for this school for next year and you wanted to tell him/her about challenges or problems which he/she might have to face, what ones would you identify?

More specifically:

1. What problems arise from having the two programs:  
French first-language and French immersion in one school?
2. What problems are related to the French first-language program in this school?
3. What problems are related to the French immersion program in this school?

4. What would you identify as the primary causes of problems in the French first-language program and the French immersion program in this school?
5. What would identify as the implications or effects of the problems?

## APPENDIX F

## SAMPLE DAILY LOG

## RESEARCHER'S DAILY LOG

DATE: MAY 7th, 1992.

NO. OF PAGES = 2

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PROBLEMS NOTED BY THE RESEARCHER DURING THE OBSERVATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ IS SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE FOR TIMEOUT BECAUSE HE CANNOT GET ALONG IN THE CLASSROOM SITUATION. TEACHER DOES NOT HAVE TIME TO DEAL WITH HIM ALONE. NO SPECIAL ED. TEACHER TO HELP HIM. SPENT ONE HALF HOUR IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE FOR HELP WITH HIS WORK BUT THE PRINCIPAL DOES NOT HAVE THE TIME TO DEAL WITH HIM.
- BOYS ON THE PLAYGROUND THROWING CHEESE AT THE SCHOOL DURING THEIR LUNCH HOUR. THEY ARE SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE FOR DISCIPLINING. LETTER MUST BE WRITTEN TO PARENTS ABOUT THESE STUDENTS. TEACHER MUST BE MADE AWARE. RECORD MUST BE KEPT IN THE OFFICE.
- DIVORCING PARENTS AND CUSTODY BATTLES. TEACHER IS DISTURBED BY PARENT INVOLVED IN CUSTODY BATTLE. PARENT IS MAKING ACCUSATIONS ABOUT TEACHER WHICH TEACHER FEELS ARE UNFOUNDED. PRINCIPAL HAS TO TALK TO TEACHER.
- NEED TO TRANSLATE MEMO FOR FRENCH FIRST-LANGUAGE TEACHER WHO DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH.
- NEED TO ARRANGE TIMES FOR SWIMMING, BOOK GYM FOR SPRING CONCERT, CHANGE GYM DAYS. OTHER SCHOOL MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE REQUEST.
- ASSISTING, ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM PARENT VOLUNTEERS, TEACHERS, SECRETARY, PARENTS, CLEANERS. HELPING NEW SUBSTITUTE.
- NEED TO FILL IN FOR TEACHER WHO IS COORDINATING AN OUTSIDE EVENT.
- TIME -LACK OF UNINTERRUPTED TIME. NO TIME FOR LUNCH
- NEED TO DEVELOP POLICIES SUCH AS A DISCIPLINE POLICY

- EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS. SEEING PRINCIPAL AS A TROUBLE SHOOTER - AS A SORT OF FAIRY GODMOTHER WHO MAKES THINGS RIGHT. TEACHERS EXPECT THE PRINCIPAL TO BE AVAILABLE ALL THE TIME TO DEAL WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS BUT SHE CANNOT ALWAYS BE THERE. TEACHERS WANTING TO TALK WITH PRINCIPAL BUT SHE IS BUSY WITH A PARENT.
- DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS. TEACHER WHO THOUGHT THAT THE PRINCIPAL SHOULD BE CALLING HOME ABOUT DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS WHEREAS THE PRINCIPAL FELT THAT THE TEACHER SHOULD BE DOING IT.
- TEACHER WHO FELT THAT IT WAS THE PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THAT SHE COULD ATTEND A CONFERENCE OR A WORKSHOP. YET THE BOARD DID NOT HAVE ANY SUBSTITUTE DAYS AVAILABLE.
- OVERHEATING FURNACE. NEED TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL BOARD TO TURN OFF FURNACE. FACILITIES' PROBLEM.
- DEALING WITH TEACHERS AS PARENTS. TEACHERS WHO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL WHO MUST BE DISCIPLINED.
- DISCIPLINE PROBLEM: CHILD MAKES RACIST COMMENTS ABOUT A FELLOW STUDENT ON PLAYGROUND DURING THE LUNCH HOUR.
- COUNTING MONEY FROM TEACHERS FOR SYMPHONY CONCERT. TRYING TO KEEP TRACK OF IT WITH INTERRUPTIONS
- FRENCH IMMERSION MEETING AT SCHOOL BOARD - NECESSARY TO DEFEND ORGANIZATION OF FRENCH IMMERSION CENTRE. PRINCIPAL HAS TO BE A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE PROGRAM AND ITS ORGANIZATION. ANOTHER MEETING SCHEDULED FOR THIS EVENING.
- FRENCH FIRST-LANGUAGE PARENTS APPROACH THE TEACHERS DIRECTLY ABOUT ORGANIZING THE SPRING CONCERT INSTEAD OF TALKING TO THE PRINCIPAL FIRST. PARENTS COMPROMISE THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRINCIPAL.

## APPENDIX G

## LETTERS OF CONSENT

112 Circular Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 2Z5  
April 15th, 1992

Mr. Brian Shortall  
Superintendent  
Roman Catholic School Board  
for St. John's  
Belvedere  
Bonaventure Avenue  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 3Z4

Dear Mr. Shortall,

The purpose of this letter is to request approval to conduct a research project at \_\_\_\_\_ during the month of May, 1992. The research will form the basis of my thesis which is part of the requirements for the Master of Education program (Educational Administration) at Memorial University.

The research proposal has been approved by a university committee consisting of Dr. Austin Harte, Professor Joan Netten and Dr. Wilfred Martin and by the Ethics Review Committee chaired by Dr. George Hickman.

The aim of the study is to identify the administrative problems related to the principalship of a school combining French immersion and French first-language classes. The focus of the study would be \_\_\_\_\_. However, the name of the school would not be used in the research report.

Much of the research conducted on immersion programs has tended to focus on outcomes and student evaluation. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted in other provinces of Canada related to the concerns or experiences of principals with French immersion programs, no such studies have been conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As an immersion teacher and Department Head, I am familiar with the immersion program and have myself experienced some of the problems involved in its administration. I recognize the importance of focusing attention on the administrative aspects of French immersion



and French first-language programs as a means of understanding how the programs work and of identifying ways in which to improve them.

The research procedure would involve five interviews, and participant observation by me, the researcher, of one month's duration. Three interviews of approximately two and a half hour's duration each would be conducted with the principal and one, one and on half hour interview each, with the program coordinator, \_\_\_\_\_ and with assistant superintendent, \_\_\_\_\_.

The participant observation would involve the researcher 'shadowing' the principal much like a student intern. I am aware of the heavy workload of principals and would attempt to determine with the principal a means by which I might be of some assistance to her in the administration of her daily duties.

Letters of consent will be requested of the participants, \_\_\_\_\_. The school will not be identified in the study nor will the names of any individuals involved. As superintendent, you would reserve the right to view the findings and research report before its submission to the thesis committee. Any information which the board felt should be kept confidential would be deleted. A copy of the thesis would be made available to the school board.

Your consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Murphy

I \_\_\_\_\_ give permission to Elizabeth Murphy to conduct a study at \_\_\_\_\_ as described in her letter dated April 15th. The school board will reserve the right to view the study before its publication and to indicate if any of the findings should remain confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

112 Circular Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 2Z5  
April 27th, 1992

Program Coordinator  
(French immersion, French  
first-language)  
Roman Catholic School Board  
for St. John's  
Belvedere  
Bonaventure Avenue  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 3Z4

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The purpose of this letter is to request your consent to participate in a research project. The research will form the basis of my thesis which is part of the requirements for the Master of Education program (Educational Administration) at Memorial University.

The research proposal has been approved by a university committee consisting of Dr. Austin Harte, Professor Joan Netten and Dr. Wilfred Martin and by the Ethics Review Committee chaired by Dr. George Hickman. As well, the school board has granted approval for the study to be undertaken.

The aim of the study is to identify the administrative problems related to the principalship of a school combining French immersion and French first-language classes. The focus of the study would be \_\_\_\_\_. However, the name of the school would not be identified in the research report.

Much of the research conducted on immersion programs has tended to focus on outcomes and student evaluation. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted in other provinces of Canada related to the concerns or experiences of principals with French immersion programs, no such studies have been conducted in Newfoundland or Labrador.

As an immersion teacher and Department Head, I am familiar with the immersion program and have myself

experienced some of the problems involved in its administration. I recognize the importance of focusing attention on the administrative aspects of French immersion and French first-language programs as a means of understanding how the programs work and of identifying ways in which to improve them.

Your participation would involve one interview of approximately one hour's duration at the end of May, 1992. This interview will be semistructured meaning that, although there will be specific questions to which answers will be sought, many of the questions will arise out of the conversation of the interview. For the sake of convenience, and with your permission, I would like to record the interview on an audio cassette which would be erased once the study is completed.

Your name will not be identified in the study; however certain comments may be attributed to the "program coordinator". You would reserve the right to view the findings and research report before its submission to the thesis committee. Any information which you would have provided in the interview and which you felt should be kept confidential would be deleted. I would provide you with a copy of the thesis upon its completion.

Your consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Murphy

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to an interview with Elizabeth Murphy as part of her study at \_\_\_\_\_ as described in her letter dated April 27th, 1992. I understand that my name will not be used in the publication of any material gathered. I reserve the right to disallow the publication of any information which I might reveal to the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

112 Circular Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 2Z5  
April 27th, 1992

Assistant Superintendent  
(Curriculum)  
Roman Catholic School Board  
for St. John's  
Belvedere  
Bonaventure Avenue  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 3Z4

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The purpose of this letter is to request your consent to participate in a research project. The research will form the basis of my thesis which is part of the requirements for the Master of Education program (Educational Administration) at Memorial University.

The research proposal has been approved by a university committee consisting of Dr. Austin Harte, Professor Joan Netten and Dr. Wilfred Martin and by the Ethics Review Committee chaired by Dr. George Hickman.

The aim of the study is to identify the administrative problems related to the principalship of a school combining French immersion and French first-language classes. The focus of the study would be \_\_\_\_\_. However, the name of the school would not be identified in the research report.

Much of the research conducted on immersion programs has tended to focus on outcomes and student evaluation. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted in other provinces of Canada related to the concerns or experiences of principals with French immersion programs, no such studies have been conducted in Newfoundland or Labrador.

As an immersion teacher and Department Head, I am familiar with the immersion program and have myself experienced some of the problems involved in its administration. I recognize the importance of focusing

attention on the administrative aspects of French immersion and French first-language programs as a means of understanding how the programs work and of identifying ways in which to improve them.

Your participation would involve one interview of approximately one and one half hour's duration at the end of May, 1992. This interview will be semistructured meaning that, although there will be specific questions to which answers will be sought, many of the questions will arise out of the conversation of the interview. For the sake of convenience, and with your permission, I would like to record the interview on an audio cassette which would be erased once the study is completed.

Your name will not be identified in the study; however, certain comments may be attributed to the "assistant superintendent". You would reserve the right to view the findings and research report before its submission to the thesis committee. Any information which you would have provided in the interview and which you felt should be kept confidential would be deleted. I would provide you with a copy of the thesis upon its completion.

Your consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Murphy

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to an interview with Elizabeth Murphy as part of her study at \_\_\_\_\_ as described in her letter dated April 27th, 1992. I understand that my name will not be used in the publication of any material gathered. I reserve the right to disallow the publication of any information which I might reveal to the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



112 Circular Road  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 2Z5  
April 27th, 1992

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this letter is to request your consent to participate in a research project. The research will form the basis of my thesis which is part of the requirements for the Master of Education program (Educational Administration) at Memorial University.

The research proposal has been approved by a university committee consisting of Dr. Austin Harte, Professor Joan Netten and Dr. Wilfred Martin and by the Ethics Review Committee chaired by Dr. George Hickman. As well, school board approval has been granted for the study to be undertaken.

The aim of the study is to identify the administrative problems related to the principalship of a school combining French immersion and French first-language classes. The focus of the study is \_\_\_\_\_. However, the name of the school would not be used in the thesis.

Much of the research conducted on immersion programs has tended to focus on outcomes and student evaluation. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted in other provinces of Canada related to the concerns or experiences of principals with French immersion programs, no such studies have been conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As an immersion teacher and Department Head, I am familiar with the immersion program and have myself experienced some of the problems involved in its administration. I recognize the importance of focusing attention on the administrative aspects of French immersion and French first-language programs as a means of understanding how the programs work and of identifying ways in which to improve them.

An important aspect of the study involves participant observation by the researcher whereby I would be present in the school for the month of May during which time I would "shadow" you and participate where possible in some of the

duties in which you engage daily. As such, my role would be similar to that of a student intern. I recognize the responsibilities and workload that principals face and would thus attempt, where possible, to be of some assistance to you as I participate in the activities of the principal.

Your participation would also involve three formal semistructured interviews. The first interview would take place at the beginning of May, 1992 (i.e. before the first week of observation and participation. The second interview would be at the end of the first week of observation and participation and the third interview would take place at the end of the third week. The interviews would be semistructured meaning that, although there would be specific questions to which answers would be sought, many of the questions would arise out of the conversation of the interview. For the sake of convenience, and with your permission, I would like to record the interviews on an audio cassette which would be erased once the study is completed.

Your name would not be used in the study; however certain comments might be attributed to the "principal". You would reserve the right to view the findings and research report before its submission to the thesis committee. Any information which you would have provided in the interview or during the course of the study and which you felt should be kept confidential would be deleted. I would provide you with a copy of the thesis upon its completion.

Your consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Murphy

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in a research study to be conducted at \_\_\_\_\_ by Elizabeth Murphy as described in her letter dated April 27th, 1992. My participation would involve three interviews as well as agreement to the observation by Elizabeth Murphy at the school and to some participation in the school's and principal's activities.

I understand that my name will not be used in the publication of any material gathered. I reserve the right to disallow the publication of any information which I might reveal to the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature







