

TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF FRENCH IMMERSION IN  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: A REVIEW OF  
FRENCH IMMERSION IN THE PROVINCE FROM  
1975 TO 1996

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**Twenty-One Years of French Immersion in  
Newfoundland and Labrador:  
A Review of French Immersion in the Province from 1975 to 1996**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

French immersion (FI) has existed as an alternative approach to education in the learning of a second language in Newfoundland and Labrador for over twenty years. Both Early French Immersion (EFI) and Late French Immersion (LFI) have shown significant growth since the early days of their inception to the present. Enrolments have increased, learning resources have improved, teachers have become more qualified and experienced with the French immersion situation. Results from kindergarten through grade twelve show very good progress for those who remain in the program. There are strong support groups in place throughout the province for those who need reassurance or guidance.

However, since the late 1980's enrolments have generally decreased in both entry points EFI and LFI. Factors such as family mobility, due largely to the economic state of the Province, have impacted significantly the number of students enrolling in FI; and the number leaving FI from grade to grade. Results of FI have also come under some criticism. Class size is declining; therefore, FI may not be an option in areas where numbers are too low to warrant the program.

Even though many areas of the province have worked hard to build FI in their schools and advocate it in their communities, it will take the continued support of all involved in the process to ensure that FI remains a viable option for the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Definitions .....	6
Positive Results .....	11
More Reserved Evaluations.....	13
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH IMMERSION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Student Enrolment.....	21
Characteristics of Students.....	24
Teacher Population.....	32
<b>EVALUATION RESULTS.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Results of Evaluations in the Early 1980's.....	43
Results of Evaluations in the Early 1990's.....	44
Conclusion.....	58
<b>STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Student Performance.....	63
Curriculum Resources.....	65

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Evaluation.....	71
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
A. French Immersion - Schools (1996-97).....	88
B. Students Enrolled in Early and Late French Immersion as a Percentage of the Corresponding School District Grade Totals.....	100
C. French Immersion - List of Evaluation Reports (1975-1995).....	102

# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1 French Immersion Second Language - Enrolments in Canada.....	7
2 French Immersion Options in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.....	20
3 Number of Schools and Enrolment in French Immersion, 1976-77 to 1995-96.....	23
4 Early and Late French Immersion Enrolment by Grade from 1989 to 1995....	26
5 Number of Students by Entry Point in EFI and LFI by School District 1995-96.....	31
6 Evaluation Reports by School District.....	38
7a School Districts Offering French Immersion and Corresponding School District Numbers.....	39
7b Names of Integrated School Districts Offering FI.....	40
8 Conclusions from Selected District Reports in the Early 1980's.....	43
9 District Statistics for Grade Nine School Year 1989-90.....	53
10 Reports in World Problems 3204 for French Immersion and English Students.....	54
11 Senior High Courses in French Immersion Offered in the 1996-97 School Year.....	70

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1 French Immersion- Enrolment for Selected Years 1977 to 1995.....	21
2 Provincial Enrolment K-12 in Newfoundland 1945-2000.....	24
3 National Percentile Ranking by School district for CCAT and FCT for Kindergarten Year 1989-90.....	45
4 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL 1 for Grade 1 SY 1989-90.....	46
5 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL 2 for Grade 2 SY 1989-90.....	46
6 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL 3 for Grade 3 SY 1989-90.....	47
7 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TCL 4 Tested in French for Grade 4 SY 1989-90. ....	48
8 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TCL 5 for Grade 5 SY 1989-90.....	49
9 National Percentile Ranking by School District for Mathematics Tested in French for Grade 6 SY 1989-90.....	49
10 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 for Early French Immersion in Grade 7 SY 1989-90.....	50
11 National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 for Early French Immersion in Grade 8 SY 1989-90.....	51
12 National Percentile Rankings by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 for Late French Immersion in Grade 8 SY 1989-90.....	51

## Introduction to the Study

Since its inception in St. Lambert, Quebec in 1965 to the present day, French Immersion (FI) in Canada has grown significantly. It has been the subject of much controversy and debate regarding philosophy, approach, evaluation results and enrolment. Through the programs and courses, comparative national test results, teacher qualifications, achievement in French, along with a wide variety of attitudes and opinions, FI has demonstrated both strengths and limitations. All of these factors, plus the geographical distance between schools offering FI and French-speaking milieus, have been a concern for educators across Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the main goal still exists, to provide an education program to the students that will enable them to function in French upon completion of high school, without negatively affecting their first language development.

Selected school districts prepared evaluation reports from 1977 to 1985; then there were provincial evaluations completed which documented achievement in FI dating from 1985 through 1992. These reports include an account of tests administered, test results, conclusions and recommendations for different areas of the province and for different school boards. However, there has been no synthesis developed which gives an overall picture of FI schooling in this province from its inception to 1996. Also there are many unanswered questions such as: Are EFI and LFI in this province still increasing in enrolments? Is evaluation continuing today? Have there been changes in FI or its delivery? Have there been changes in the



evaluation method? To what extent have the recommendations made about FI been followed? Have the goals of FI been achieved?

In Canada there has been much debate about the efficacy of FI and many criticisms of its effects have been raised. Several researchers and educators all across Canada such as Harley and Swain (1989) Lyster (1994), Obadia (1995), Day and Shapson (1994) are continuing to study FI and suggest changes in teaching strategies. Hallsall (1996) states that more English should be introduced at an earlier grade. However, others, such as Hammerly (1989) claim that FI has not achieved its goals. In Newfoundland and Labrador it is possible that these developments have had a negative effect on the FI options here.

1995 marked the thirtieth year of FI in Canada, while Newfoundland and Labrador celebrated twenty-one years of FI education. FI settings in Newfoundland and Labrador tend to be smaller in numbers of pupils, located in more rural areas and more isolated from a French milieu than those in other parts of Canada. In addition, it has been difficult for school boards to obtain teachers appropriately trained for French Immersion. Yet, much support has been given by parents, administrators and organizations such as Canadian Parents for French.

Evaluation is a crucial process for the growth and development of our education system. It allows a way of capitalizing on the methods that achieve expectations and a means of analyzing and improving the areas that do not. FI is an alternative approach to education in the province; therefore, during the early stages of

the implementation of FI, much attention was given to its evaluation to determine its strengths and limitations. An evaluation of the present status of FI (EFI and LFI) with regard to the current statistics on enrolments, courses, teaching units and test results from the Department of Education will show the reality of FI today, give an indication of the developments in FI and determine to what extent improvements from recommendations were realized.

In conclusion, the study will summarize the information gathered in order to examine the viability of FI and indicate if indeed it will continue to be a feasible alternative approach to education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### Definitions:

French Immersion (FI) refers to the educational alternative offered in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador whereby students follow a curriculum taught primarily in French. There are two options in FI.

Early French Immersion (EFI) begins in the kindergarten year and continues to the end of Level III (Grade 12). The percentage of instruction in French diminishes as students progress through the grades.

Late French Immersion (LFI) begins in Grade 7 and continues to the end of Level III. In the school districts where both EFI and LFI are offered students from both programs are combined in the same class from Level I (Grade 10) to Level III.

Program is used to refer to a subject area studied such as, for example, the Mathematics program, or the Français program.

Course refers to a subject area at the senior high school level, several of which comprise a program. For example, the senior high school Français Program consists of the courses: Français 1202, Français 2202 and Français 3202. This terminology is adopted in order to maintain consistency with the documents published by the Department of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Review of the Literature

Even though the teaching of a second language through an immersion approach dates back more than 5000 years (Germain, 1993), the first FI class for English speaking children in Canada began in the school year of 1965-66. It grew out of the concern of a group of Quebec anglophone parents who wanted to have their children learn English and French. In the 1960's, there was much political activity as Quebec's quiet revolution marked the political, economic and social changes in the status of French in the province of Quebec. At the same time, French became an official language in Canada. Therefore, it seemed evident that the need to communicate in French would be required by more people. Rebuffot (1993) states that middle income English Quebec parents wanted their children to experience more French in their lives. Parents envisioned a curriculum whereby 5-year-old children would attend school in which all subjects were taught in French, so that in the Fall of 1965, FI started as an experimental kindergarten class in St. Lambert, Quebec. The objective of this experimentation was to promote functional bilingualism for children by using French as the language of instruction for all, or most, of the school subjects.

FI spread quickly throughout the country such that by 1976 FI existed in the nine provinces outside of Quebec with several school districts in most provinces being involved: British Columbia (5), Alberta (8), Saskatchewan (2), Manitoba (5), Ontario (24), New Brunswick(4), Prince Edward Island (1), Nova Scotia(2), and

Newfoundland and Labrador(1). In the school year 1977-78 the total enrolment in FI in Canada was 37,835 and FI was offered in 237 schools. In 1995-96, the enrolment was 307,034 in 2,113 schools. In 1996-97, the enrolment was 312,057 in 2,146 schools. The greatest number of schools offering FI at the present time is in the province of Ontario while the least number of schools offering it, excluding the Yukon and Northwest Territories, is in Prince Edward Island. In the two regions of the far north, the population is very scattered and the enrolment under 600. The enrolments per province have grown significantly since 1977-78 while over the last two years, the enrolments have been generally stable as indicated below in Table 1 (Annual Report by the Commissioner of Official Languages, 1997).

One of the first definitions of FI describe it as, " a situation where children of average linguistic and cultural identities who have no other contact with the French language than in the school setting are placed together in a class where the second language is the language of instruction" (Cummins and Swain 1986). It was often termed "bain linguistique" or "linguistic bath." Rebuffot (1988) describes immersion as a particular type of situation in the teaching of a second language, a pedagogical regime and an innovative program of studies, and also as a new approach attempting to bring closer first and second language pedagogy. Probably the best definition of FI, which is a form of bilingual schooling, is that of Stern (1978). He defines bilingual education as "schooling provided fully or partly in a second language with the object in view of making students proficient in the second language while, at the

**Table 1**  
**Second-Language Enrolments in Canada**

		Total School Population	Total Second- Language Enrolment	French Enrolment	Immersion Schools Offering Immersion
Newfoundland	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	156,168 110,456 107,150	67,791 64,673 63,525	95 5,074 4,984	3 52 51
Prince Edward Island	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	27,628 24,422 24,433	16,495 14,683 14,683	541 3,385 3,385	7 27 27
Nova Scotia	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	198,097 163,706 163,300	88,991 93,096 93,430	127 10,916 10,957	3 105 105
New Brunswick <i>Students taking FSL</i>	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	101,550 90,708 89,281	70,629 73,181 72,589	3,179 15,880 15,751	34 114 113
Quebec <i>Students taking FSL</i>	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	248,855 99,402 100,044	17,754 35,551 35,780	17,754 35,551 35,780	n.a. 165 165
Ontario	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	1,950,308 2,115,512 2,152,930	883,269 1,165,782 1,193,883	12,764 150,005 153,741	160 1,063 1,089
Manitoba	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	221,408 195,131 194,070	85,619 96,564 97,413	1,667 18,999 19,171	13 99 100
Saskatchewan	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	216,248 197,155 198,400	53,804 108,893 109,223	407 10,404 10,418	2 79 79
Alberta	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	439,804 516,191 519,840	111,338 170,876 174,112	n.a. 26,676 27,729	n.a. 172 175
British Columbia	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	527,769 594,247 610,890	161,110 277,902 283,647	1,301 29,184 29,729	15 230 234
Yukon	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	5,394 6,122 6,247	2,285 4,062 4,220	n.a. 452 473	n.a. 3 3
Northwest Territories	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	12,717 17,470 17,890	3,200 3,381 3,465	n.a. 508 521	n.a. 4 4
Total	1977-78 1995-96 1996-97	5,178,753 5,110,466 5,160,330	2,240,949 2,713,901 2,774,218	37,835 307,034 312,057	237 2,113 2,146

same time, maintaining and developing their proficiency in the first language and fully guaranteeing their educational development" (Stern 1978). In contrast to FI, Core French or Basic French is defined in the Report of the Policy Advisory Committee on French Programs (1986) as " a program of instruction in which students study the various aspects of French language during a regularly scheduled time slot as is done in other subject areas". The Annual Report by the Commissioner of Official Languages for 1996 states that "although sometimes perceived as less glamorous than the more intensive immersion, Core French continues to be the way most young Canadians learn their second language". The Bain Linguistic :A Core French Experiment at Churchill Alternative School (1993-94) concludes that an experimental intensive Core French program improved students' listening and speaking skills markedly and their self-confidence when using their second language. However, this report also says that all FI options (EFI, LFI, MFI, etc.) consistently lead to far stronger French language proficiency than does Core or Extended French.

There are generally three options for French immersion:

(Rebuffot, 1993)

1. Advanced Immersion, which was also called long or early immersion, because it started in Kindergarten or Grade one (EFI).
2. Middle Immersion(MFI) which began after first grade but before the sixth grade.

3. Late Immersion, also called short immersion, which was offered in the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade (LFI).

Most immersion options in Canada fall into the first category EFI, while a smaller number are LFI. MFI is not widespread. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are only two options in FI. EFI, beginning at Kindergarten and LFI, beginning at Grade 7.

Genesee (1987) identifies four objectives which apply to FI in Canada:

1. To give the students a functionally competent ability in oral and written French.
2. To favor and maintain, a normal development of their first language, English.
3. To permit them, also, to learn the knowledge of their own age and at their own level in school in the other subjects.
4. To develop among themselves a respect and understanding towards French Canadian people, their language and their culture, while still preserving their own cultural identity.

These objectives generally have formed the basis for the development and evaluation of French Immersion.

Early reactions to FI were very positive while later ones have been more reserved. The first evaluations came from Cummins and Swain (1986), Genesee (1987), Lambert and Tucker (1972), Lapkin and Swain (1984), and Swain (1979). Lapkin and Swain (1984) deem FI successful since English skills are not negatively



affected, receptive skills in French are clearly native-like by the end of elementary school and immersion students studying other subjects in French perform as well as those taught these subjects in English. On measuring the level of communication of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade FI students, Genesee (1987) puts forward the fact that FI students show a high level of functional mastery in French. Generally it was felt that the objectives of FI were being met.

The negative evaluations of FI such as those of Foidart (1981), Bibeau (1991), Lyster (1987) and Hammerly (1989) focus on the French production of the students. Lyster (1987) states that by being expected to acquire implicitly the second language within learning conditions that are not entirely ideal, immersion students have indeed learned to communicate, but do so, not truly in the second language, but rather in a fossilized interlanguage. Bibeau (1984) claims that not only is the French of immersion students radically different from that of their francophone peers, it is in fact an artificial language void of cultural relevance and riddled with serious errors in syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation.

It seems that, in the beginning, many were pleased with the fact that students were communicating well orally in both languages. Listening comprehension was also high. As time went on, however, because students were attaining a much higher level of development of communication skills in French than were Core French students, comparisons with native francophones were adopted in the evaluations. Being compared to native francophone learners showed obvious differences in outcomes.

The francophone students instructed in their mother tongue were more adept in their use of French than the anglophone student who had been instructed in French as their second language. These differences caused some to claim that immersion was a flawed pedagogy (Hammerly, 1989). Other researchers have attributed these results to a number of causes including the nature of the FI classrooms, the difficulties inherent in learning a second language, the lack of a supportive cultural milieu and, as well, the need to develop a more effective pedagogy specific to the immersion classroom.

Rebuffot (1993) cites a number of studies of the capabilities of FI students in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is interesting to note that both positive and negative aspects of FI have been reported since its inception.

### Positive Results

Lambert and Tucker (1972) write of the early immersion students that their comprehension skills developed more easily than their productive skills. They could understand the language but they could not speak it well. In reading, they were as good as a control group of francophone students. Their ability seemed to be in what Lambert called "linguistic detection" and association of pictures and words. Their amount of vocabulary was good and there was no significant difference in their auditory skills. Harley and Swain (1984) record that, in 1977, grade six immersion

students had positive results in listening to texts and radio programs which indicates that students had reached a satisfactory level of language proficiency. Harley and Swain conclude that this result demonstrated that the students had reached a level of competence equal to that of francophones.

Genesee (1978) states that grade four and grade five students tended to have the same results in vocabulary as francophone students. He also found favorable results in grades four and five vocabulary and written comprehension, grade six silent reading and grades four, five and six listening skills.

In 1979, Swain reports equally favorable results. These results show the superiority of the students over those in Core French. Swain (1979) concludes that listening and speaking skills approached those of native speakers. In 1983, Genesee reports that at the end of grade six, oral and written abilities of immersion students were on par with those of francophone students in the same grade in Montreal. Lapkin and Swain (1984) say that the receptive capabilities, by the end of elementary, were almost at the level of those of francophones and that all immersion schools were more successful than dual track schools. An article about high school achievement (Cummins and Swain, 1986) reports claimed that listening skills results were exactly the same as those of francophones. Cummins and Swain suggest that it takes six or seven years to attain a mastery in French.

### More Reserved Evaluations

Foidart (1981) finds unfavorable results in FI. He says that FI students showed difficulty with understanding spoken French outside the classroom situation due to the rapidity of the language and their limited vocabulary. Academic language learning does not provide experience with the language spoken outside with francophone peers. Bibeau (1991) finds the same results. It is also reported that, for more advanced texts, FI students are not as good as francophones (Hammerly, 1989).

### Oral and Written Production

Lambert and Tucker (1972) state that in 1966 the oral production of FI students is definitely poorer than that of the control group of francophone students. This is in the areas of general expression, grammatical accuracy, liaison, rhythm, intonation and the retelling of stories orally. The same findings were reported in 1968 and at that time they added that pronunciation, such as the production of the French nasal, was problematic. In 1969, gender errors were reported as frequent, as well as errors in contractions, tense and number. Lambert and Tucker (1970) find that when using francophones as a reference, FI students are not achieving as well in oral production. In 1972, a linguistic study rated the French of FI students below the average for francophones in ease of the language, flow, grammar, rhythm, intonation

and pronunciation. However, despite their lack of language accuracy, FI students are developing reading, writing and understanding unequalled by Core French students. In their oral production, the experimental group approached the spontaneous language of francophone students. The use of French by students of FI in social situations was not readily distinguishable from that of francophones.

None the less, this analysis was not shared by all concerned. Spilka (1976) says that FI students often searched for words when putting together sentences grammatically, that they made more errors, and that their correction of errors was more noticeable. The mastery of gender did not appear to improve with time. In 1991, Rebuffot found that in oral and written production, students were experiencing difficulty with interference from English.

Some researchers have found that certain errors appear to become fossilized. Swain and Harley (1984) maintain that mistakes are not always fossilized, yet classroom lessons are not always retained either. Calvé (1986) believes that it is the lack of pedagogical follow-up that leads to fossilization. FI students produce more childlike turns of phrase. They have numerous errors of omission and addition and the interference from first language thought processes causes problems. They use standard French and not many idiomatic expressions. They do not possess linguistic maturity in French; however, this is still not a deterrent to communication. Overall, the French of francophones is more homogeneous than that of FI students who show a wide variation in production abilities (Rebuffot, 1993).

Spilka (1976) and Bibeau (1984) indicate that success in French exams does not mean that students of FI possess adequate linguistic capabilities. Lapkin, Swain and Argue (1983) determined that regular contact with francophones was necessary. FI students show gaps in their speech due to hesitation, use of stereotype phrases and stilted language with a strong foreign accent and grammatical errors. It is said that their skills go beyond the traditional French language class but are still far from those of francophone peers. FI achieves an adequate level of performance to attain employment in a francophone environment, but FI is not teaching students the sociolinguistic competence necessary for them to mix with francophone speakers (Genesee, 1987). Opinions on the abilities of FI students differ. Some say that they can communicate well in French while others concentrate on their sociolinguistic limitations (Rebuffot 1993).

#### Comparison of EFI and LFI

In comparing EFI and LFI in the areas of listening and reading, LFI appears to be inferior to EFI. LFI students possess less confidence in these areas. Overall results of research also show that EFI is globally better than LFI for developing oral comprehension skills, written comprehension and oral expression. In written production, both groups appear equal. Also, students who graduate from EFI consistently outperform students of MFI and LFI overall. Finally, students with longer

exposure to French tend to report greater self-confidence and the likelihood of using French (Swain and Lapkin, 1986). Of the three options, EFI attracts a far larger number of students, and a more socially and academically diverse student than MFI or LFI. Although at-risk students are somewhat underrepresented, many below-average students are successful in EFI, and may perform relatively better than in Core French, especially during the first years emphasizing oral communication. Later entry FI options, particularly LFI, attract an academically stronger clientele (Swain and Lapkin, 1986).

Research on the advantages of one option as compared to multiple FI options underscores the different clienteles served by each, the impossibility of serving all learner needs with one option, the sustained demand for EFI, and the need, in a diverse, highly mobile population, to offer a later entry point. However, in Newfoundland and Labrador, because of the small population choosing FI, there are currently only two of the eight school boards that offer FI which offer a choice of EFI or LFI.

According to the 1996 Annual Report by the Commissioner of Official Languages, "demand for FI is no longer growing beyond the capacity of school boards to staff and service it, but it is still enormously popular. The overwhelming boom of the 1970's and 1980's has leveled off, but has not faded". The Comparative Outcomes and Impacts of Early, Middle and Late Immersion Options: Review of Recent Research and Annotated Bibliography (1996) released by the Ottawa Board of

Education states that, "all FI options consistently lead to far stronger proficiency in French than do Core or Extended FSL programs".

While research results vary considerably in the assessment of FI, these results have been mainly based on studies involving relatively small numbers of students. The studies have mostly focused on French language production. Based on these results, it is difficult to reach a valid and absolute conclusion about the effectiveness of FI as an educational option. While the results of research reports are useful and help improve FI by identifying problems, as well as extending our knowledge of the process of second language acquisition, they do not really assess the global effects of the various FI options.

Even though there are those who are critical of FI, the criticisms have not been substantial to the point where the FI options fail to be popular. As with any educational approach there is always room for improvement, but according to the current enrollments, FI in Canada is alive and doing well. Students are able to play, sing, talk, share their feelings, get to know other people, socialize, etc. in English as well as in French. Students are happy to be able to communicate naturally in their second language and proud of achieving this (Obadia, 1995).



## The Development of French Immersion in Newfoundland and Labrador

### Historical Background

The first example of FI in this province began in 1975 on the West Coast at Cape St. George on the Port-au-Port Peninsula. This area holds the largest group of francophones as eleven percent of the peninsula's population of 5,245 claim French ancestry, having descended from French fisherman from France, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, Acadia and the Magdalen Islands. This group is the most indigenous, homogenous and stable Francophone population in the province, but also the most assimilated. Attempts at maintaining the French language and culture were hindered by the dominance of anglophone culture and institutions. For many years, not only was education available solely in English, but use of the French language was often discouraged and, at times, forbidden. The francophone community of the area, wishing to hold on to its French language and heritage, wanted French to be the language of instruction in their schools.

Initially, it was thought that FI could respond to the linguistic and cultural needs of the francophone community. However, it soon became evident that, as an educational option designed for anglophones learning a second language, immersion did not respond to the desire of the francophone community to restore its French language and heritage. Another francophone region on the peninsula, Mainland,

joined in the effort to have a more effective French education for their children, and finally, in 1987, after considerable lobbying on the part of parents from the region, and following recommendations from a study by the provincial Department of Education (Cormier, Crocker, Netten and Spain, 1985), the FI classes were converted to French First Language (FFL) classes (Netten, 1993). Certain characteristics of the Port-au-Port Peninsula made this first bilingual, education option unique in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to a certain extent, in the rest of Canada. The project is one of the few in Canada to be situated in a rural area. It was also one of the first to be initiated in an area with a francophone cultural heritage (Heffernan, 1979).

The next area of the province to begin FI was St. John's, this province's capital city. These bilingual education options marked the real beginning of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador. The students of these beginning immersion classes were primarily anglophones who did not have linguistic or cultural ties to the French language, and who were generally children of professionals who worked either in the schools, the university, or in government. It was because the children of these professionals attended the first immersion classes that FI was considered to be for the elite. In 1977, the former Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's began the first EFI class. In 1979, the St. John's Avalon Consolidated School Board began implementing LFI and in 1981, EFI began. It was not until 1988 that the R.C. Board for St. John's introduced LFI.

These French options quickly started to spread to other parts of the province.

EFI in Gander in the Terra Nova Integrated School District was established in 1978.

In the early 1980's, five more school boards implemented FI ; another four school boards joined in from 1985 to 1989 as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2

French Immersion Options in The Province Of Newfoundland And Labrador

SCHOOL BOARD	DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
1. PORT AU PORT R.C.	1975
2. ST. JOHN'S R.C.	1977 (EARLY) 1988 (LATE)
3. TERRA NOVA INT.	1978(EARLY)
4. AVALON CONSOLIDATED	1979 (LATE) 1981 (EARLY)
5. LABRADOR R.C.	1981 (EARLY) 1984 (LATE)
6. HUMBER-ST. BARBE R.C.	1982 (EARLY)
7. * LABRADOR WEST INT.	1983 (EARLY)
8. BAY OF ISLANDS INT.	1984 (EARLY)
9. LABRADOR EAST INT.	1984(EARLY) 1986 (LATE)
10. EXPLOITS VALLEY INT.	1985(EARLY)
11. BURIN PENINSULA R.C.	1986 (EARLY)
12. AVALON NORTH INT.	1986 (EARLY)
13. CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH INT.	1989 (EARLY)

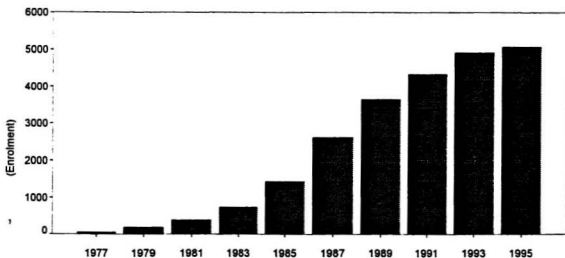
\*This school district also experimented with MFI for short time.

### Student Enrolment

The number of students entering FI started to slowly climb in the late 1970's. In the early 1980's, over one hundred students were joining FI each year (See Table 3). The number of students entering FI continued to climb and peaked in the 1986-87 school year with the addition of 606 new students. The increase in total annual enrolment by selected years can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

French Immersion Enrolment Selected Years 1977 to 1995



After 1987, the total annual numbers of students in EFI and LFI were still large, but were starting to decline such that the lowest increase since 1976 occurred in the school year 1993-94 with only 54 more students in the program. In the 1995-96 school year, there was an overall decrease of 44 students from the previous year. In 1996-97 there was an overall decrease of 141 (See Table 3, page 23). However, the first decrease in total enrolments in FI occurred from 1994-95 to the 1995-96 school year, from 5,066 to 5,022 students. This drop still only represents a 1% decrease.

The reason for the large number of students entering FI in the 1986-87 school year may be largely attributed to its high popularity. EFI and LFI had been well established, and teachers were better qualified and more experienced in teaching FI. Parents, teachers, students and administrators were generally very positive about FI and satisfied with the results. The decline in numbers more recently is due in part to the economic state of the province over the past few years which has led to a decline in the total population of Newfoundland and Labrador; therefore it stands to reason that the schools would reflect this decline as well (See Figure 2, page 23). Since 1993, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador has been declining and currently stands at 570,711 which is 2.3% below the 1993 level of 584,203. The Province's school population has been in decline since the 1971-72 school year and is dropping by about 3% or by approximately 3,500 students per year (Profile '96-Educational Indicators, 1996). The less positive attitude towards the results of FI and the polemic created by the

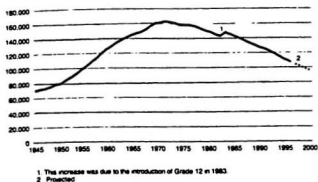
Table 3

Number of Schools and Enrolment in French Immersion, 1976-77 to 1995-96

Year	No. of Schools	Enrolment	Increase
1976-77	1	56	
1977-78	3	95	39
1978-79	5	193	98
1979-80	6	279	86
1980-81	5	392	113
1981-82	7	551	159
1982-83	10	742	191
1983-84	11	970	228
1984-85	16	1,437	467
1985-86	26	2,015	578
1986-87	29	2,621	606
1987-88	29	3,060	439
1988-89	32	3,641	581
1989-90	34	3,980	239
1990-91	34	4,328	348
1991-92	40	4,636	308
1992-93	43	4,911	275
1993-94	44	4,965	54
1994-95	49	5,066	101
1995-96	52	5,022	-44
1996-97	49	4,881	-141

conflicting views of researchers has no doubt had a negative effect on its growth.

Figure 2: Provincial Enrolment K-12,  
Newfoundland, 1945-2000



## Profile'96- Educational Indicators

### Characteristics of Students

French Immersion has been criticized as being elitist because, among other reasons, children in EFI and LFI tend to come from high income and above average educated parents (Obadia, 1995). This was the case in Newfoundland and Labrador when FI first began, as the children of professors, doctors and teachers were among those registered. These were children selected by their parents because they felt that they were capable of succeeding in FI. The Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT)

placed the average EFI students in the province in the 70<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile range. As FI expanded, it attracted students from a wider range of socio-economic background. The average CCAT scores for EFI students since 1985 have been in the 60<sup>th</sup> to 65<sup>th</sup> percentile range. Cognitive abilities however, remain slightly above average. Since 1992 there has not been any provincial administration of CCAT to students in FI.

It is to be noted that there has never been a provincial selection procedure for admission to FI. The purpose of the CCAT was to monitor the cognitive abilities level of the population entering EFI and LFI. This type of monitoring is important because the ability level of the population is an important factor in determining the types of programs and services that are needed within French Immersion (FI Evaluation Report, Netten, 1993). However, some school districts have adopted policies for advising parents by creating a more restrictive admissions policy as to whether their child is suitable for admission to FI, thus further reducing initial enrolment at the official entry points of kindergarten and grade 7.

LFI followed the same pattern. Initially, students were highly selected cognitively; however, the average CCAT verbal score for students in this province entering LFI in 1990 is at the 66<sup>th</sup> percentile. None the less, LFI tends to attract students who are strongly motivated and have a strong commitment from both parents and children. (Canadian Education Association, 1992). It also attracts students who achieve well in school. While surveys conducted by the Canadian Education Association suggest that there is a higher student retention factor in LFI than in EFI,



this does not appear to be case, however, in Newfoundland and Labrador nor in some other jurisdictions. Attrition for former LFI students is higher than for EFI students in the Ottawa area (Carleton Board of Education, 1989).

### Attrition

A considerable number of students leave FI from grade to grade in Newfoundland and Labrador. From kindergarten to grade three, a large number of children leave FI as can be seen in table 4, about 30-40 pupils at the end of kindergarten and slightly fewer at the end of grades 1 and 2. Retention beyond grade three improves but attrition continues throughout FI to grade 12.

Table 4

Early and Late French Immersion Enrolment by Grade, 1989-1995

Year		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1989	Early	546	473	445	462	426	315	213	150	83	55	49	45	17	3,279
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	190	156	126	124	56	49	701
1990	Early	490	505	440	421	451	388	308	203	144	66	52	44	37	3,549
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	191	172	153	110	104	49	779
1991	Early	487	455	478	413	418	426	379	290	198	142	64	45	37	3,832
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	157	170	158	133	94	92	804
1992	Early	473	453	429	454	398	400	399	370	283	186	134	90	39	4,108
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	169	148	169	139	90	88	803
1993	Early	458	448	417	399	427	364	331	338	307	278	164	101	56	4,088
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	163	146	127	168	161	112	877
1994	Early	426	416	386	381	368	398	330	359	370	334	253	148	94	4,263
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	188	138	135	109	119	114	803
1995	Early	404	370	366	353	358	340	374	315	351	343	307	209	139	4,229
	Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	192	165	126	128	88	94	793

While attrition in FI is not unique to this province, there is limited research available on FI attrition in other provinces. Attrition from different FI options deals only with attrition from secondary school bilingual programs. According to the Educational Indicators Profile for 1993 for Newfoundland and Labrador, attrition in FI has traditionally been high both provincially and nationally. For example, the provincial cohort of EFI students entering kindergarten in the 1980-81 school year consisted of 88 students. By grade seven, 62 of these students were still in the EFI. Only 39 students from the original cohort remained in EFI in the 1992-93 school year at grade twelve, about 44% of the original group. Similarly, comparison of the enrolment in LFI shows that 143 students entered as grade sevens in 1987-88 and 88 students (62%) of this group were still enrolled as grade twelves in 1992-93. Table 4 above shows a more recent indication of attrition in EFI from kindergarten to grade six. The 1989-90 kindergarten provincial total EFI population was 546. This population decreased approximately 5% each year until the original group reached grade six with 374 students, 68% of the kindergarten cohort. LFI experienced attrition as well with 114 of the grade 7 enrolment of 190 students in 1989-90 school year remaining in the 1994-95 school year, a drop of 60%.

A number of reasons may be advanced for this attrition. Often, families with young children are among those that either move to other areas of the province or outside the province for economic reasons. FI may not be offered in the schools at their destination. Some students find that FI is too difficult for them due to various

learning problems. If learning problems are apparent, there may be little or no means to address them in French in the province. Often, at the grade six level, students feel that this is the time to leave FI. Students must change schools because the school does not offer the subsequent grades and some students do not wish to leave their community. Some students and/or their parents feel that they have developed adequate French skills at this point. The students at this age often make their own decision as to the degree of French language proficiency they want. At grade nine, students leave FI as well. It is at this level that students start to choose the high school courses that best interest them and that they feel will benefit them in a post-secondary education. If French does not fit into their schedule or their future outlook, then they leave it out. Marks are an important factor for entry to university. If marks are lower in FI than they might be in the regular English stream, students will generally leave FI. There is also the limitation of what courses are available at the higher grade levels which may be forcing a number of students to opt out of FI. Another aspect, that of family mobility, may have contributed to the high attrition. Educators report there to be higher mobility among families of FI students. This factor may also account for the higher attrition rate in EFI in this province than in other parts of Canada. The population selecting the EFI option, which spans all levels of learning readiness and includes a wide range of academic abilities, possesses a greater risk factor for success than does the selection of LFI. LFI students are generally high achievers and do not risk failure. The population selecting LFI in this province may be a more indigenous

one. In addition, in Newfoundland and Labrador, there is little encouragement to retain children having difficulty in EFI. Remediation services in French are generally not provided, and the advice given to parents is generally to place their child in the English stream where learning assistance is more readily available.

### Comparison with other Canadian Provinces

According to the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Official Languages (1997), by the year 1977, all ten provinces were offering FI in some of their schools except Alberta, Yukon and Northwest Territories who introduced FI later. The greatest growth in FI enrolments seems to be in the larger provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Of the Atlantic provinces, New Brunswick has seen the largest increase in numbers, followed by Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island (Refer to Table 1, page 7). New Brunswick has a strong French population; therefore, explaining the need for students to avail of two languages in their schools. From reports done in Ontario as indicated in the Comparative Outcomes and Impacts of Early, Middle and Late Entry French Immersion Options: Review of Recent Research and Annotated Bibliography (1996) on enrolments, it seems that the ever-increasing enrolment in EFI through to 1987 has been followed by a gradual leveling off to the present. Overall, in Canada in the 1900's, the enormous growth of the eighties in French second language enrolments at the elementary level, and notably in

FI, has stabilized. Overall enrolments in FI remain high as the children of the peak enrolment years continue to make their way through the system.

In Canada today, much emphasis has been placed on the most effective starting point for FI. According to the Comparative Outcomes and Impacts of early, middle and late entry French immersion options: Review of Recent research and Annotated Bibliography (1996), EFI is the most widespread option and attracts substantially higher enrolments wherever several options are offered (Canadian Education Assoc., 1992). In this province it is rare for a school district to offer more than one option because of the small numbers of students choosing FI. In the two school districts offering both EFI and LFI, a greater number of students have chosen EFI over LFI as indicated in Table 5 below. The percentage of students enrolled in EFI and LFI by corresponding school district is found in Appendix B.

Table 5

Number of Students by Options in EFI and LFI by School District, 1995-96

## Enrolment

District	EFI K-12	LFI 7-12	Total
105 Exploit's Valley Integrated	226 (K-10)	-	226
107 Nova Consolidated	274 (K-12)	-	274
110 Avalon North Integrated	-	242 (7-12)	242
115 Western Integrated	237 (K-11)	-	237
117 Labrador East Integrated	147 (K-11)	-	147
118 Labrador West Integrated	209 (K-12)	11 (12)	220
129 Conception Bay South Integrated	-	132 (7-11)	132
502 Burin Peninsula R.C.	154 (K-9)	-	154
508 Humber-St. Barbe R.C.	248 (K-12)	-	248
510 Labrador R.C.	179 (3-12)	-	179
512 Appalachia R.C.	266 (K-11)	-	266
514 St. John's R.C.	1,380 (K-12)	70 (8-12)	1450
111 Avalon Consolidated	898 (K-12)	338 (7-12)	1236
508 Gander-Bonavista-Connaigre R.C.	11 (8&9)	-	11
Total Province	4,229	793	5038

A current list of schools offering FI can be found in Appendix A.

### Teacher Population

There are currently (1996-97) one hundred and ninety-four teachers teaching in FI in this province, one hundred and seventy-three in EFI and twenty-one in LFI (Personal Communication, Department of Education, Summer, 1997). Most teachers are of Newfoundland origin; the proportion of francophones is only about twenty percent.

The Directors of Education encourage the school boards to hire Newfoundlanders as much as possible. Furthermore, school districts do not wish to hire a teacher who cannot be transferred to teaching in the English stream classes, should the need arise. Consequently, they prefer that teachers in FI possess a knowledge of the strategies and pedagogical resources used in English stream classes in the province. This knowledge is important for two reasons. First, programs or courses taught in FI have the same outcomes and content as the corresponding courses or programs taught in the English stream. Secondly, teachers would probably stay in the same school board even though FI might decline in importance. Expectations are such that it is necessary to possess a good knowledge of English in order to be adequately prepared to teach in all types of classroom situations, and to interact satisfactorily with parents and other teachers.

In addition, francophone teachers of FI in the schools of this province face certain challenges. Because the francophone population in Newfoundland and

Labrador is about only one percent of the total population, there may not be a supportive environment for francophones. Generally, francophones who come from outside the province are used to teaching French as a native language, and so there is difficulty in adapting methods of teaching appropriate in French first language classrooms to the teaching of French as a second language as in FI. Francophone teachers who come to this province often do not stay a long time especially in the smaller communities. Also, there is always a period of adjustment for new teachers.

In this province, seventy percent of the teachers in FI have degrees from Memorial University of Newfoundland, the only institution which offers professional preparation in the province. The majority have completed a specialization in French second language and have studied at least three semesters in a francophone milieu. Moreover, there is a fairly good proportion, around half, who has been teaching in French Immersion since graduation and therefore has more than five years teaching experience in FI (See Netten, 1993).

Since 1980, Memorial University has put in place a specialization in French immersion teaching for students wishing to teach in FI. There are two specialized methodology courses, one for primary/elementary teachers and one for secondary school teachers. This preparation accompanies the high school and the primary/elementary B.ED. degree programs in education. Both programs require a concentration (at least 8 courses) in French as a second language and three semesters of study in a French University. In addition, it was in the mid-1980's that school



boards, in conjunction with Memorial University of Newfoundland, began to offer in-services and institutes for FI teachers in the methodology connected with the teaching of children in the primary/elementary grades. Before this effort of improving the teaching of curriculum areas in FI, there were high school trained teachers hired to teach primary children who were not familiar with the needs of the child, their affective and social development, nor with teaching strategies appropriate to this level. Also, teachers were not trained to teach language arts, only Core French at the high school level. These deficiencies showed some negative effects on the initial results of the program, but results improved dramatically with the initiation of in-service ( Netten, 1993). Unfortunately, these institutes were discontinued up to 1996.

The Department of Education has also contributed to the professional preparation of the teachers by the appointment of two consultants to oversee the development of programs and the identification of appropriate learning resources. These consultants are regularly engaged in in-service activities with the FI teachers to initiate implementation of new programs and learning resources.

#### Canadian Parents for French

The history of the development of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador would not be complete without reference to the organization, Canadian Parents for French. Twenty years ago, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) was founded in Canada. In

1977, thirty-six people banded together to form CPF because they believed Canadian children should have the opportunity to learn French and become bilingual (CPF National Newsletter, 1996). The word soon spread to this province and in 1983 CPF was established. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are currently nine chapters of CPF. Their mandate is to ensure that every young Canadian has the opportunity to learn and use French. CPF has been a driving force in supporting and encouraging French second language opportunities both in the school system and outside of it.

While CPF is not a part of the education system, it has been a positive influence in both FI and Core French for the children of this province. In 1996, CPF, in cooperation with the Department of Education embarked on a student motivational project. The aim of this endeavor is to challenge students, parents, educators and the wider community to reflect upon the value of second language learning. The objectives, which are for intermediate and senior high Core French students, are threefold: to increase awareness of the connection between study of the French language and the future career patterns, to offer information on enrichment activities in French language learning, and to curb attrition from French courses (Levels I-III). The project is a three-year program, which begins in Central Newfoundland and on the Northeast Coast, then moves to Corner Brook, Labrador West, and then to St John's, Northeast Avalon, Conception Bay and Burin Peninsula. Even though language arts, math, science, and social studies have been promoted as the core curriculum for the future prosperity of our society, students are encouraged to take advantage of French

programs to the end of high school, since it is often difficult to include this marketable skill in post-secondary training (CPF Newsletter, 1996). Other school projects include 'concours d'art oratoire' (public speaking) for intermediate and senior high school students, 'rendez-vous' for grades seven and eight, and a creative writing challenge. Outside the classroom, CPF is involved with French summer camps, crafts, adult literacy classes, parent information nights, French story hour and Winter Carnival in conjunction with French week.

CPF has regularly given support to FI in the province. According to CPF, "the FI phenomenon has been studied from coast to coast, and with one or two notorious exceptions, has received high grades. While it is not for every child, and while it may not produce perfectly bilingual speakers, for the vast majority of young people who take French Immersion, it is a highly effective educational experience. Students emerge from it with the ability to communicate in their second language and to take on more of life's challenges" (CPF Winter Newsletter, 1997).

### Conclusion

To summarize developments in Newfoundland and Labrador it would appear that;

- 1) while the total provincial FI enrolment is not increasing, there are approximately 5000 students in FI;

2) the former thirteen school districts offering FI, now within eight new district boundaries, are still offering it; and

3) the support groups continue to encourage and advocate FI.

The areas of principal concern in Canada, and especially in Newfoundland and Labrador in FI seem to be 1) decreasing enrolment ; 2) blending of LFI and EFI students in secondary school; 3) insufficient student enrolment at the secondary level to keep FI in all schools; and 4) the real and/or perceived impacts of FI on the system as a whole. There is also, more particularly in this province the concern of multi-grading in FI at all levels as classes become smaller.

FI has accepted its share of challenges and changes. At the same time, considerable progress has been made, in the design, development, and delivery of FI over the years. FI has a solid foothold in the landscape of education in this province. "In spite of all its growing pains, FI is here to stay because it has undeniably met with success and increasing popularity" (Murphy and Netten, 1993).

### Evaluation Results

From 1976 to 1984, evaluations of FI were undertaken by participating school districts in Newfoundland and Labrador (See table 6). These evaluations were conducted in co-operation with the Institute for Educational Research and Development of Memorial University of Newfoundland. In 1985, a province-wide evaluation was required by the Department of Education, and these provincial evaluations were continued until 1992. The evaluation reports, as completed under district jurisdiction, are listed in the following table:

Table 6  
Evaluation Reports by School District

School District	Evaluation Reports by School Years
Labrador R.C.	1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84
Labrador West Integrated	1983-84
Port-au-Port R.C.	1975-76, 1977-78, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84
Humber St. Barbe R.C.	1982-83, 1983-84
Terra Nova Integrated	1982-83, 1983-84
Avalon Consolidated	1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84
St. John's R.C.	1977-78, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84

A list of all evaluation reports completed may be found in Appendix C.

In order to correlate this information with the new administrative organization of the province, information about the consolidation of school districts is given in Tables 7a and 7b.

**Table 7a**  
School Districts offering French Immersion and Corresponding School District Numbers.

<b>Integrated School Boards</b>		<b>Roman Catholic School Boards</b>	
105	Exploit's Valley	502	Burin Peninsula
107	Nova Consolidated*	509	Humber-St. Barbe
110	Avalon North	510	Labrador
111	Avalon Consolidated	512	Appalachia**
115	Western	514	St. John's
117	Labrador East		
118	Labrador West		
129	Conception Bay South		

\*The Terra Nova Integrated School District joined other surrounding districts and was renamed Nova Consolidated School District.

\*\* The Port-au-Port Roman Catholic School District was incorporated into surrounding districts and renamed Appalachia School District.

In 1997, with the reduction of twenty-seven school boards to ten in this province, the thirteen of these school boards offering French Immersion were reduced to eight as indicated in the table below.

**Table 7b**  
**Names of Amalgamated School Districts offering FI**

<b>School Districts Offering FI</b>	<b>Includes Former School Districts</b>
1. Labrador	Labrador/Labrador East and West
2. Corner Brook/Deer Lake/St. Barbe South	Humber-St. Barbe
3. Stephenville/Port aux Basques	Appalachia
4. Baie Verte/Central/Connaigre	Exploits Valley
5. Lewisporte/Gander	Nova Consolidated
6. Burin	Burin
7. Avalon West	Avalon North/Western Avalon/ Conception Bay South
8. Avalon East	Avalon Consolidated/St. John's R.C.

Evaluations were undertaken in order to monitor the results of EFI and LFI in Newfoundland and Labrador. While evaluations of FI had been undertaken in some other provinces (eg. Ontario, New Brunswick), it was not known to what extent results of the immersion experience would be similar in Newfoundland. It was felt that the isolation of this province from a French milieu, and the fact that several schools with FI were in rural areas, might have a negative effect on FI results. There were also other factors, such as the lack of qualified teachers, the lack of suitably trained native francophone teachers, inexperience with the immersion approach, and the lack of curriculum guides and learning resources which could negatively influence learning outcomes. In addition, administrators were concerned about English language

development as the province had traditionally experienced major difficulties in teaching reading, particularly in rural environments.

Evaluations were initially modeled on those which had been conducted in other provinces. Where possible, the same tests were used in order to make comparisons with mainland norms. However, it became evident that valid comparisons were rarely possible due to the variety of tests and procedures used. Consequently, the evaluations conducted in this province became based principally on a cognitive ability measure, a measure of French reading skills, and a measure of achievement in Mathematics. The results of these tests were used as general indicators of whether students in FI were achieving at levels which might be deemed to be commensurate with their abilities and were learning the subject matter of academic areas other than French adequately. In addition to these three areas, English language development was also observed in grade three and in the elementary grades.

#### Results of Evaluations in the Early 1980's

The major characteristics of the evaluations results was their low validity. In the early 1980's, many school districts reported satisfactory results while some school boards in the province were reporting results below expectations. For example, the Terra Nova Integrated School Board reported lower levels of achievement than most other districts in the province as indicated by their reports to the Department of



Education (See Table 8 below). The findings in both the primary and elementary grades suggested that instruction in EFI was creating results for the pupils which were not like those which were normally found in other school districts with EFI. The findings implied that the pupils were not achieving in FI in a manner commensurate with their academic ability. These variations in the effects of FI led the Department of Education to undertake a provincial-wide evaluation of programs.

**Table 8**  
**Conclusions from Selected District Reports in the Early 1980's**

Districts	Cognitive Input	English Language	Mathematics	French Language
111 Avalon Consolidated EFI	Variation of cognitive input from year to year.			Progressing adequately, tests scores above national norms.
111 Avalon Consolidated LFI	Wide range of abilities, extremely able group.	Similar to English stream peers.	Similar to English stream when tested in English but below when tested in French.	Skills in listening and reading comprehension similar to those in previous years, similar to mainland pupils.
508 Humber-St. Barbe R.C.				Similar or slightly above those achieved nationally, achieving in upper ranges provincially.
510 Labrador R.C.	More able group than those in English stream.	No detrimental effects upon the acquisition of English vocabulary.	Learning content as well as English stream peers, consistent with other FI options in the province.	Some problems in reading skills in grade 1, considerable degree of success in kindergarten and grade 2, scoring significantly higher than mainland peers.
118 Labrador West Integrated	Achieving well in relation to cognitive abilities, highly able group academically.			Aural communication skills commensurate with their abilities.
514 St John's R.C.	Achieving adequately but may be capable of higher levels of achievement given cognitive ability.			
107 Terra Nova Integrated		Low performance in English and in content areas.	Performance lower than provincial averages.	Lower than expected for ability.
512 Port-au Port R.C.			Satisfactory progress	Satisfactory progress

### Results of Evaluations in the Early 1990's

While the initial evaluations in FI were very extensive, the provincial evaluations were more limited in scope. This change was due to the adoption of different objectives for the evaluation. The evaluations of the 1980's had established that, despite many differences in location and milieu, the outcomes of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador were similar to those in the rest of Canada. As a result, evaluations were undertaken in order to monitor FI results by several districts to ensure that achievement levels remained satisfactory.

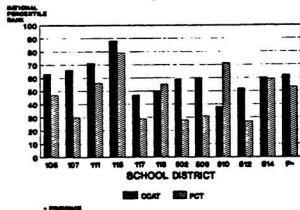
#### Kindergarten

There were two measures used for the evaluation for kindergarten children. They were the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) and the French Comprehension Test (FCT). The CCAT measured the initial abilities of the students in English. The FCT was a measure of aural comprehension in French. Overall results of this testing were satisfactory, although there was considerable variability among school districts as may be seen in Figure 3.

It is to be noted that despite many difficulties in location and milieu, the outcomes of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador were similar to those in the rest of Canada. As a result, evaluations were undertaken in order to monitor FI by school

district to ensure that achievement levels remained satisfactory. Figures 3-12 are from the FI Evaluation Report (Netten, 1991) for the school year 1989-1990.

Figure 3



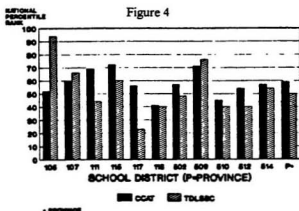
**National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and FCT for Kindergarten year.**

#### Primary (Grades 1-3)

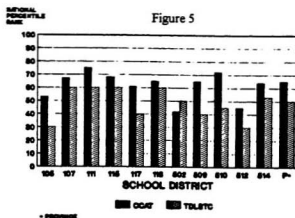
For the primary grades, evaluation was reduced to a measure of French reading skills (TDL) and a cognitive ability measure (CCAT). In grades one to three, cognitive comparisons were made with the scores of the children from the previous year.

The considerable variety between the results of different school boards across Newfoundland and Labrador at the primary level can be seen in Figures 4, 5 and 6. In earlier testing, an English reading test was given in grade three. Then the results were

compared to see if FI students were achieving as well in English as their counterparts in the English stream. Overall, while there was a lag in English reading skills at grade three, by grade six the children were at the level of their English counterparts in English skills. Since this result was deemed satisfactory, the English language testing was discontinued.

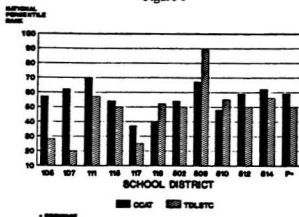


National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL1 for Grade 1.



National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL 2 for Grade 2.

Figure 6



**National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TDL 3 for Grade 3.**

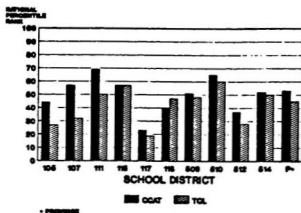
Elementary (Grades 4-6)

As mentioned previously, in the beginning, there were English reading tests given to determine the level of achievement by the time the students had reached the elementary school level in EFI. However, by grade six, the children were at the level of their English stream counterparts in English reading, and it was determined that there was no need for concern about the development of English skills for EFI students. Consequently, this aspect of the testing was dropped.

Three measures were undertaken at this level. The administration of CCAT was retained in grades four and six. A measure of French reading skills (TCL) at each grade was administered and also used until 1992. The Mathematics section of the

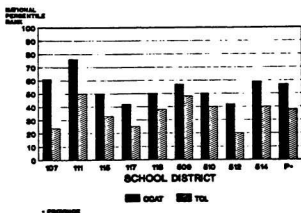
Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), translated and administered in split halves with half of the FI students being tested in English and the other half in French were also administered. The general results continued to show considerable variation between districts. Mathematics skills were similar to as those in English stream classes. Problem-solving in French was an area of weakness because of the necessity to read problems in French at this level. French reading scores were becoming lower each year. The lower achievement levels at the elementary grades may be seen in Figures 7 and 8. In Figure 9, it may be noted that the learning of new concepts in Mathematics appeared satisfactory, but more difficulty was experienced with problem solving.

Figure 7



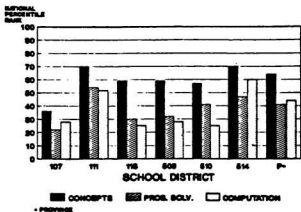
National Percentile Rankings by School District for CCAT and TCL 4 for Grade 4.

Figure 8



National Percentile Rankings by School District for CCAT and TCL 5 for Grade 5.

Figure 9



National Percentile Ranking by School District for Mathematics Tested in French for Grade 6.

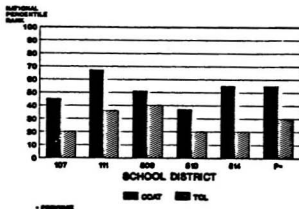


### Intermediate (Grades 7 and 8)

Testing in the intermediate grades did not begin until later due to the growth pattern of EFI and LFI. There were not sufficient students in FI in these grades to be able to carry out any formal evaluation until the 1990's. When evaluation was done, the CCAT, the measure of French reading skills, plus some mathematics testing were undertaken.

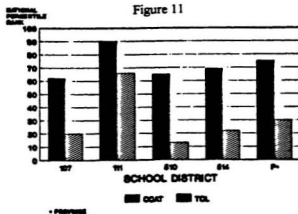
Cognitive abilities for LFI students, as measured by the CCAT, tended to be higher than those of EFI students. This result suggests that students in LFI tend to be more highly selected and academically able than students in EFI. Despite these characteristics, overall, EFI students were found to outperform LFI students in French reading comprehension. However, as may be seen from Figures 10, 11 and 12, French language reading skills were lower than desired for both EFI and LFI students.

Figure 10



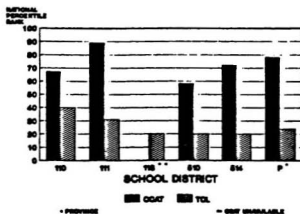
National Percentile Rankings by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 for Early Immersion Students in Grade 7.

Figure 11



National Percentile Ranking by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 for Early Immersion Students in Grade 8.

Figure 12



National Percentile Rankings by School District for CCAT and TCL 7/8 Late Immersion Students in Grade 8.

### Intermediate (Grade 9)

Grade 9 students were tested using the International Education Association Reading test for level 4 (IEA4S). A summary of the provincial statistics for grade 9 is given below in Table 9. Scores on the CCAT Verbal Subtest suggest that there is a difference between EFI and LFI students at this grade level. The mean score for EFI is at approximately the 58<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally, while the LFI group is at about the 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile. Based on these measures, students in EFI would be expected to perform at somewhat above average levels due to the length of time in the program, while those in LFI would be expected to perform at above average levels due to being a more cognitively selected group. Results of the IEA4S suggest that students in EFI have developed a higher level of reading comprehension skill in French than that of LFI students by the end of grade 9. District results can be seen in table 9. Levels of performance appear to be comparable to cognitive abilities in most instances. However, no interpretation about the overall level of achievement can be made. (Table 9 is from the FI Evaluation Report (Netten, 1993) of 1989-90.)

**Table 9**  
**District Statistics for Grade Nine School Year 1989-90**

<b>Tests</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>NPR</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>CCAT</b>				
<b>EFI</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59.4<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>58</b>	<b>14.4</b>
<b>LFI</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>65.0<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>73</b>	<b>13.6</b>
<b>IEA4S</b>				
<b>EFI</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19.9<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>-*</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>LFI</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>15.2<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4.6</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Total Score = 100

<sup>(2)</sup> Total Score = 36

\* NPR unavailable for this test

#### Senior High School (Grades 10-12)

There has been no provincial testing in FI at the senior high level. The numbers in FI in senior high are relatively very small. Mathematics is studied in English at the senior high level, and comparison of French language skills have not been undertaken. However, some comparisons have been made with the provincial leaving exams in World Problems 3204 (i.e., *Problèmes mondiaux* 3234 in FI).

As may be seen from table 10 below, results in World Problems 3204 are similar to or better than those of the students in the English stream. Students in FI, it may be hypothesized, are more able than the larger comparison group; therefore, it would be anticipated that average results would be higher. Consequently, it is very difficult to make valid comparisons from the data available. As a result, little analysis

of the effects of FI at the senior high school level has been undertaken. In particular, there is no provincial assessment of the French language skill development.

Table 10  
Results in World Problems 3204 for French Immersion and English Stream Students.

No. of Candidates			Mean		Percentage of Passes	
	FI	English Stream	FI	English Stream	FI	English Stream
<b>1992</b>						
June	134	1968	76	65	97	89
November	2	66	55	56	50	70
<b>1993</b>						
June	129	2036	81	66	100	87
November	0	74	0	46	0	41
<b>1995</b>						
June	141	1616	79	66	98	82
November	2	53	37	37	0	23

The November results are for the supplemental exams.

## Overall Assessment and Discussion

### Primary Grades

The results of EFL for children in the primary grades in the province have been generally very satisfactory. EFL at the primary level appears to be effective. These results may be due to many factors. There is an excellent curriculum in place, the teachers are well-qualified, enthusiastic and experienced, and there has been the development of a whole language teaching methodology which supports second language learning.

### Elementary Grades

In the elementary grades, while the results of EFL have been generally satisfactory, there is a decline in the level of achievement in French reading skills. There is a solid curriculum in place and teachers are qualified and experienced: there is a higher percentage of instruction in English. There may also be a change in the interest and attitude of the pupils towards FL, as English becomes more dominant in their lives. These factors may affect French achievement.

### Intermediate Grades

In the intermediate grades, the level of achievement in French reading skills continues to decline. The main problem areas seem to be the higher percentage of instruction in English and the lack of motivation. In addition, an emphasis on the learning of subject area content and grammatical accuracy in French may be inhibiting the use of communicative teaching strategies shown to enhance the development of FSL skills.

### Senior High Grades

The senior high grades have proven to be successful for those who remain in FI, as they are usually a highly motivated and cognitively able group who are capable of successfully completing the senior high school curriculum. Students in FI who graduate from senior high school generally achieve well in all courses.

### Other Findings

There has been a wide variation between school boards in achievement results. This finding may be due to a number of factors. Teaching strategies used is an

important factor. Variations in teacher qualifications and experience could also be a factor. Administrative and community support play an important role in contributing to the success of FI, and it may be that, in some districts, schools operate in a much more supportive atmosphere than schools in other districts.

Where average results in French language reading skills fall below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, reading comprehension in French becomes an area of concern for those pupils who are scoring below the class average. Therefore, some students could be at risk in the program, especially weaker students who are not receiving remedial assistance in districts with lower results. It is important to note that lower levels of reading comprehension in French will affect achievement in all the content areas taught in French.

#### Rural/Urban Differences

These differences have been present since the beginning of FI. It is harder to attract and retain teachers for rural areas of the province than for the urban centers. Often, FI in the urban areas benefits from teachers who began teaching in FI situated in a rural area. It is not unusual for FI students in rural areas to have a beginning FI teacher in every grade. Lower achievement scores in the rural areas are characteristic of the educational system in Newfoundland and Labrador in the English stream as well as in FI.



### Remedial Assistance

Results of the testing indicate that the provision of remedial assistance is a necessity for some students. However, the provision of remedial assistance for students performing well below average levels in French reading has never been widely undertaken. If those students are to profit from FI, their achievement levels have to be raised. The only other alternative is to transfer out to the English stream (FI Evaluation Report, Netten, 1993). The lack of remedial services for FI students probably does have a negative effect on retention rates.

### Conclusion

It was originally assumed that the effects of FI for pupils in this province might not be the same as those for pupils on the mainland of Canada for the following reasons:

1. There is not a strong support milieu due to a considerable isolation from a French milieu.
2. With the exception of the St. John's area, all FI schools may be described as spread out in rural areas.
3. Problems in English language development particularly in the area of

reading skills are widespread throughout the province.

In general, the effects of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador have been similar to those elsewhere in Canada. French language reading skills are similar to those of mainland peers, and the lag and catch-up period in the English skills seems to be the same as elsewhere. Reading levels similar to those of students in the English stream are achieved generally between grades four and six. With the exception of reading skills, attempts to compare the results of FI in this province with results achieved on the mainland have not been undertaken. However, Mathematics testing in other provinces, as for example, Alberta, has given results similar to those documented here. The report of the Future Directions-French Immersion Evaluation Review Committee established in 1992 to review the evaluation of FI in the province recommended the reduction of evaluation in the primary and elementary grades to a monitoring procedure. Evaluation in the upper grades, however, was recommended in order to develop an understanding of FI at the high school level. Unfortunately, the recommendations of this committee were never implemented. The position of evaluation consultant for FI was discontinued in 1992, and the evaluations of FI overall for the province were also abandoned all this time.

Nonetheless, some perspective on the results of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador may be developed in the light of Genesee's original criteria (1987) for FI. There are increased communication skills in FI over those developed in Core French. Lag in English skills disappears as students move through the system. The

achievement in the other subject areas such as Mathematics is similar to that of students in the English stream. Additionally, although information in this area is limited, attitudes towards FI and francophones seem to be generally positive.

## Strengths and Limitations of FI in Newfoundland and Labrador

The strengths and limitations of FI can be examined in these eight major areas: growth in enrolment, student characteristics, retention, student performance, goals of FI, curriculum resources, teaching, and parental involvement.

### Growth in Enrolment

FI enrolment increased steadily in the early 1980's, after which time a leveling off of enrolment appears to have occurred. This finding would suggest that FI is an alternative which appeals to only a limited population. In Newfoundland and Labrador, approximately 5000 FI students, less than ten percent of the total student population, is served by this option. It is suggested that only about ten percent of the population in Canada will be interested in FI. Immersion enrolments in other provinces appear to be stabilizing.

EFI and LFI population in Newfoundland and Labrador may be starting to decline. This apparent decline may be attributed to both economic conditions and a less positive view of the effects of FI. One example of decline in FI is in Torbay, where the kindergarten class could not be offered for the 1996-97 school year because of low enrolment at registration. However, both the school and the school board affirmed their commitment to FI, and said that it would be re-instated the following

year if the numbers warranted (CPF Fall Newsletter, 1996). It is to be noted, however, that the percentage decline in FI is less than that for Grade 6, French or for the education system as a whole. On the other hand, initial enrolments are declining more markedly.

### Student Characteristics

FI has often been thought of as an option only for the child with the higher cognitive ability. Overall, in Newfoundland and Labrador, however, EFI and LFI have attracted a fairly wide range of students. The cognitive abilities in both EFI and LFI are at about the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile. The Department of Education, through curriculum development, has provided a wide variety of learning resources in a range of programs and courses. This initiative has tended to enable all interested students to participate in FI. However, some school districts have tended to retain only students who are expected to achieve well. Policies which select only certain students for admission or encourage weaker students to withdraw from FI limit the accessibility of FI. The lack of remedial assistance also limits accessibility.

### Retention

The rate of attrition from FI is high, and this trend appears to be encouraged by school board policies which encourage weaker students to withdraw, and do not support the provision of remedial assistance.

### Student Performance

Overall, FI appears to be highly successful. In general, research has shown that FI students develop a high level of French proficiency at no cost to their English proficiency or to their achievement in other academic areas such as Mathematics and Science (Obadia, 1995).

FI has been shown to be very effective at the primary level. Students achieve at average or above average levels in French, when compared to other students in Canada.

At the elementary level, even though students fall slightly behind national averages in French reading achievement at grade five and again at grade six, on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills in Vocabulary, Reading, Language and Work Study and Mathematics, performance of students in FI was above average, and was much stronger than that of the overall grade six population in the province.

At the intermediate level, grades seven and eight French comprehension is

below average when compared to the norming group for the test. Studies have shown that the oral skills of pupils at this level are also developing more slowly than is the case for the primary and elementary grades (Netten, Noonan, O'Reilly and Tapp, 1996). However, there are many factors which influence these results, such as motivation, peer pressure, adolescent English culture, school atmosphere, and emphasis on learning subject area content. Overall, the results for students at this level are satisfactory; subject area content is learned and French skills are continuing to develop, albeit slowly.

While no formal assessment of FI has been undertaken at the senior high level, FI students achieve as well or better than their peers in the English stream in provincial examinations. Students are more motivated, and the anecdotal data from teachers suggests that students' French skills are at a reasonably high level.

#### Goals of FI

Up until 1996-97, the overall intent or goals for this province were stated in the Program of Studies, an annual publication of the Department of Education. This publication stated the overall intent was "to provide students with an educational program that will enable them to function in French upon completion of high school. EFI and LFI operate with the same basic outcomes and content as the English program at each grade level" (Program of Studies, 1996-97). With respect to these

outcomes, it appears that FI is reaching its goals.

The goals for French language proficiency might be stated more clearly and realistically. The assumption held by some critics that FI students would be able to use the French language without errors had no effect on what might be realistically achieved in a school situation and have contributed to considerable negative criticism about FI. While research studies compare the French language proficiency of students in FI with that of native francophones, there is no expectation that students in FI will achieve native-like accuracy in the school system alone.

#### Curriculum Resources

In FI, curriculum guides for French Language Arts are developed by the Language Programs Section of the Department of Education, and curriculum guides for other subjects are developed by the Curriculum Section of the Department. Learning resources for programs and courses taught in French are listed in the Program of Studies, and parallel as much as possible those prescribed for the corresponding programs and courses taught in English. In FI Language Arts, excellent curriculum guides have been developed for kindergarten (1992), for the primary grades (1992), for the elementary grades (1994) and for each of the intermediate and senior high levels in 1997. Interim guides for the latter two levels were introduced in 1995. These guides assist teachers to adopt a holistic view of language teaching for FI



which, research indicates, contributes much to the development of language proficiency (Personal Communication, Department of Education, Summer, 1997).

### Kindergarten to Grade Six

According to the provincial primary/elementary program development specialist, there are strong language arts and mathematics programs in place at the present time in FI. Communication skills are stressed to encourage children to speak French as much as possible. Programs such as the new primary health program require much more discussion by the student than did the traditional health programs. However, the vocabulary of the very young FI student is often quite limited. The science program in FI is the same as the science program taught in English but has a different text. However, as the Atlantic provinces put in place a program with the same texts, this province will be included in this endeavor. Implementation is possible for September of 1998. A new language arts program was introduced in grades four, five and six in September 1996. A new mathematics resource is currently being piloted for the grades one, two and three levels. There will be a new kindergarten mathematics program piloted in September of 1998 (Personal Communication, Department of Education, Summer, 1997).

Attention in choosing resources is given to the overall goals of education as defined by the Essential Graduation Learnings for this province. The resources for FI

are chosen so as to encourage children to be creative, adaptable, willing to take risks, uninhibited by errors, confident and outgoing. They are exposed to a greater amount of reading experiences in both French and English and are therefore more exposed to a variety of literature. The four capabilities of listening, speaking, reading and writing are stressed in the early years of a communicative approach. Instructional strategies include those recommended for programs and courses taught in English. Research projects are challenging at this level in FI because generally, on a given topic, there are considerably fewer reference books in French than in English. Also, if the one book available in French is not at the correct reading level for the age of children working on the research project, teachers use numerous approaches to try to give pupils exposure to all types of learning experiences ( Personal Communication, Department of Education, Summer, 1997).

There is always room for more evaluation and assessment of FI in an effort to ensure that children have the same opportunities and learning experiences as the child in the programs taught in English and still learn French as a second language. With resource based learning still very much in vogue, students need to have a wide range of resources to accomplish the expectations of the unit being studied. This may include a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, videos and audio cassettes, computer software, visual displays and thematic workbooks. All of this is necessary for the students in the school system today, and is being provided in FI.

### Grade Seven to Grade Twelve

According to the program development specialist at the Department of Education, 1997, for grades seven to grade twelve, FI, while considered to be challenging by many students, those who complete successfully the provincial graduation requirements, including the twelve credits for courses taught in French, can function in French. Also, learning resources are more appropriate than ever before. When a new program or course is introduced in English, a greater effort is made to translate into French the program's prescribed texts. This may cause a one year lag in implementing the program. Programs in FI parallel the English stream programs as much as possible, so that all students would be achieving the same Essential Graduation Learnings(Personal communication, Department of Education, Summer, 1997).

FI programs have also benefitted from the implementation of the French-first-language curriculum for this province. This has made more courses available for FI as can be seen in the list of courses in Table 11 below. There are now twelve content areas available for instruction in French at the Senior High School level. This change enables school districts to offer a higher percentage of instruction in French than was possible. A few years ago, only French and World Problems 3204 were offered in French at the senior high school level.

Over the years, FI has also improved as more texts are now available at different reading levels. Resources are evaluated on a regular basis in an effort to identify those that best meet the needs of all learners in FI. For example, in senior high French Language Arts, a choice in texts is given to provide students of differing needs and interests the best possible means for achievement.

The provincial curriculum guides are organized in a more coherent fashion, and are more user friendly with the inclusion of more comprehensive and precise descriptions of curriculum outcomes for each grade and many suggested teaching and evaluation techniques. This attention is given for the encouragement of appropriate teaching strategies to accompany the learning resources.

Table 11

Senior High School Courses in French Immersion Offered in the 1996-97 School Year

Subject	Provincial Designation
Français	1202
Français	2202
Français	3212 (second year pilot)
Affaires et entrepreneuriat	1130
Mathématiques	1330
Mathématiques	2230
Mathématiques	3230
L'Ancien Testament	2139
Biologie	2231
Biologie	3231
Sciences de l'environnement	3235
Démocratie	2132
Economie	2133
Droit canadien	2134
Histoire mondiale	2236
Économie mondiale	3143 (first year pilot)
Problemes mondiaux	3234

Recently, there has been a move toward a common curriculum for the Atlantic region. The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation comprises the four Atlantic provinces whose Departments of Education are currently elaborating a common curriculum in Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. This will place the students in this province at the same level of learning expectations as the other students in Atlantic Canada.

Even though programs and resources have changed for the better, there is always room for improvement. Due to the fact that all students do not always learn in the same way and have different learning abilities, resources can still be developed to meet the learning needs of all learning challenged FI students. In the past, FI was unable to accommodate the average and/or slightly below average learner due to the unavailability of qualified remediation personnel. It may have been due to popular perception that only the more intelligent student could accomplish the whole FI curriculum. However, the new programs and resources, are to accommodate all learners eligible for FI.

In the senior high school, new programs for FI such as career education and global education are being considered for implementation in the near future. Again, these programs are to parallel their English version and to broaden the course selections and career goals of the senior high school population.

### Evaluation

According to the Future Directions- Report of the French Immersion Evaluation Review Committee, April, 1992, several recommendations were made for the continued evaluation of FI. Modifications were suggested for the evaluation in the primary grades to reduce it to a minimal monitoring of FI. These included:

- 1) That annual evaluation of language skills in FI at each grade level (K-3) be

replaced by periodic monitoring where every grade would not undergo language testing every year;

- 2) That cognitive abilities testing be carried out periodically at only one of the primary grade levels (Grade 1);
- 3) That Kindergarten testing be eliminated completely;
- 4) That the testing program be changed to incorporate the evaluation of all four language skills.

Testing at the elementary grade levels was also to be reduced, while evaluations at the intermediate and senior high school levels were to be expanded in order to assess the French language proficiency and the results in other subject areas. An evaluation of the oral skills of students was also recommended. However, the Department of Education did not fill the vacant position of French evaluation consultant in 1992, and no further annual evaluations have been undertaken to date.

If the same type of evaluation of FI were administered today as was done in the early years, it is not clear that results would be the same. Considerable changes in student characteristics, curriculum resources and teaching strategies have occurred since the 1980's. It would, however, be valuable to have a more recent assessment of the effects of FI at the primary, elementary and intermediate levels. The effects of FI at the senior high school level have never really been assessed.

## Teaching

Twenty-two years ago when FI began in this province, teachers were teaching FI for the very first time. There was no teacher preparation available for FI and no one had experience teaching it. Francophones were employed as well as anglophones with degrees in French to accommodate the children that were registered in FI at the time. The drawbacks were that the Francophones generally had no previous second language pedagogical training to deliver FI effectively, and anglophone teachers, who were often high school trained, were expected to teach five and six year old children. On realizing these problems, teacher workshops and in-services were set up in the mid 1980's to develop a pedagogy specific to FI.

Today, one can say that many teachers have both the qualifications and teaching experience to deliver sound instruction to all children registered in EFI and LFI. Their many years of experience have been a source of local support for the newer teachers on staff. It has been said that francophone teachers are an important asset in each school as they give linguistic reference, cultural input and an authenticity to the students, to the atmosphere of the classroom and to the whole school. School boards tend to attract some francophone teachers to FI. For teachers who wish to seek improvement of their French language skills, there are summer language bursary programs offered in French areas of Canada, and supported by bilateral provincial/federal government agreements. Teachers attend workshops when offered



by the school board, and the program development specialists at the Department of Education are available to visit districts and schools on request to assist with curriculum issues or concerns in FI. More recently, the Professional Development Centre concept has begun offering summer institutes to teachers wishing to improve their French proficiency or to explore strategies relevant to FI instruction.

#### Parental Involvement

A good rapport with parents is a crucial element for effective teaching and learning in FI. In many cases, parents have little or no background in the French language nor understanding of second language learning. Teachers have to be aware that home projects in FI must be within the limits of the child's understanding, as parents would find it very difficult to help other than offering a general interest and support in their homework endeavors. Canadian Parents for French (CPF) and some schools in St. John's have put in place a support system for parents helping their children with homework.

It was the parents of St. Lambert in Quebec who fought for the FI alternative for their children back in 1965, and it is the interest and determination of the parents in Newfoundland and Labrador that are major factors in sustaining FI today. Parents are said to be supportive and interested in the education of their children, and are always ready to interact with teachers for the benefit of their children and the school system.

A sound communication with parents is one of the mainstays of FI.

However, many parents now feel that FI is established in the school system. Therefore, there is less need for them to be concerned about the program. Consequently, sometimes the impression is created that parents are no longer interested in FI. Organizations such as Canadian Parents for French do not receive as much support as formerly.

### Conclusion

As FI has evolved over the years, considerable success can be attributed to it. While the pressure to ensure an adequate FI curriculum is still important, a good solid foundation has been laid over the past twenty-one years. With improvements at all levels, FI is better than ever before. There is a strong curriculum, qualified and experienced teachers and support from the Language Programs Section of the Division of Program Development. French Immersion is no longer looked upon by society as something new and different, but as a viable educational alternative that offers programs and courses in French as well as in English. It is no longer approached with as much ambiguity but as a learning alternative that is familiar to everyone to some degree. It is still an option in the education system, but one that has more information, background and support than in the early years following its inception. Overall, EFI and LFI work satisfactorily and improvements are constantly being made. Research

into FI has helped to define an immersion pedagogy that has improved outcomes.

On the negative side, perceptions of FI may not be as positive as they should be. Little has been done to redress the unfounded criticisms or explain results. These negative effects seem to contribute to the problem of maintaining interest in the program. Recruiting new students to enter at Kindergarten and Grade 7 presents a problem to the continuation of FI. With a decreasing student population in all areas of the curriculum and in all areas of the province, small class size is indeed a challenge in many schools. Student registration in FI is relatively small in many schools. English stream classes, on the other hand, are becoming larger as cutbacks have forced two-stream grades to become one. This, though often out of the control of the school administrators, has caused concern among teachers. As the province is faced with more and more downsizing and more school closures, this situation may become more evident in the future. On the other hand, FI may see the introduction of multi-grade or multi-level classes. In some areas of the province, this may be the only way that FI will continue to exist in the schools.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

By reviewing the French immersion options in Newfoundland and Labrador, one can put the concept in perspective by showing the similarities to and differences from that of other provinces in Canada. The programs and courses are similar in many

ways. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a strong curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve. The quality of texts and of subject matter is comparable to that in other provinces. The curriculum is constantly being evaluated, developed and/or revised and implemented. There are qualified and experienced teachers whose teaching strategies are suitable to FI. FI has produced academic results commensurate with those in other provinces for those who have remained in FI. Problem areas, such as the attrition rate, also exist in other provinces. Enrolments everywhere in Canada are leveling off. Canadian Parents for French continue to support and encourage FI throughout the province. Thus, FI in Newfoundland and Labrador appears to be developing in ways similar to of other parts of Canada.

How FI differs in Newfoundland and Labrador can be seen by looking at the geographical location of the province itself, the areas in which FI is being taught, the economic situation and society as a whole. The fact that the island portion of this province is at some distance from any French milieu and that it possesses a relatively homogenous anglophone population may have a negative effect on the learning of a second language. There is a sense of isolation and aloneness for both teachers and students, and the concept of French being involved in the lives of the students outside the classroom situation is very difficult to develop. Lack of motivation may be especially felt in the rural areas. In the urban areas of this province, such as St. John's and Labrador City, due to employment opportunities and services, there are somewhat

more francophone people, and more use of the language. However, in all areas in this province motivation and interest are difficult to maintain, particularly in the upper grade levels as is indicated by the concerns of teachers at workshops.

Consequently, while the rest of Canada may be experiencing stabilization in the growth of FI, in Newfoundland and Labrador student population may be on the verge of decline. Due to the economic situation of the province, family mobility is increasing. More and more families leave every year in search of work and to provide a better life for their children. It is often a one way street. This factor causes a more serious drop in the overall provincial student population and in FI entry point enrolments. Also, many of the families that remain in the province do not have the resources to send their children to a French milieu such as Quebec or St. Pierre for further advancement in French language learning. Federal and provincial agreements have also reduced funding for such purposes. Except for areas such as the Port-au-Port peninsula, French background does not exist for the majority of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador. Unlike other areas which have French roots, this province claims primarily English, Irish and Scottish ancestry. This could lead, to some extent, to a society somewhat less sympathetic to the learning of French at least in some areas of the province. In addition, the current political situation in Quebec may reduce the desire to learn French. In the areas that offer French Immersion, the programs have achieved a measure of success. However, the present economic difficulties affecting all areas of the province's educational system appear to make

French Immersion a less viable option. It would be unfortunate to lose such an effort in providing second language learning to so many children.

In response to the questions posed in Chapter 1; the following statements may be made.

1. The enrolments in both EFI and LFI appear to have stabilized. There is a tendency to a decline in actual numbers, but this trend is in part a reflection of the declining enrolment in the school system.
2. Provincial evaluation of the programs is not being undertaken at the present time.
3. There have been no major changes in the conceptual framework of FI since its inception, although curriculum materials and teaching strategies have improved considerably. In addition, because of a wider variety of possible course offerings due primarily to the implementation of a French first language program in the province, more subject areas can be offered in French. Thus, some school districts have increased the percentage of instruction in French, particularly in the higher grade levels.
4. The method of evaluating FI options was reduced from the comprehensive testing undertaken in the 1980's to a monitoring of French language skills in the 1990's.

5. Many of the recommendations made about FI have been followed. These include, for example, the preparation of comprehensive curriculum guides for the Français program and the identification of learning resources for students of a wider range of abilities.

Recommendations for the evaluation of FI have not been followed as the evaluation was discontinued in 1992.

Some recommendations still require further implementation or study particularly at the school district level, such as the provision of remedial assistance.

6. The goals of FI, as stated in the Provincial Program of Studies and in other documents, as for example Genessee (1987), have been achieved.

It is interesting to note that in Canada the rate of unemployment for bilinguals is lower than that for monolinguals.

It may be suggested that:

- a) More support be given at the intermediate and senior high school level to encourage students to remain in FI.
- b) Rural areas be given close attention by school boards and the Department of Education to ensure the continuation of FI.
- c) More positive attitudes be generated throughout the provinces about the outcomes of FI through parent meetings and additional information to

encourage new enrolments at kindergarten and grade 7.

In a time of financial restraint and changing of priorities, alternatives, such as FI, will continue only as long as numbers warrant.



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### Personal Interviews

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Margaret Wakeham. Program Development Specialist for French Immersion (Kindergarten-Grade 6). Department of Education, Language Programs. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## APPENDIX A

**Labrador School Board**  
P.O. Box 1810, Stn. B  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, LB  
A0P 1E0  
Tel: (709) 896-4097  
Fax: (709) 896-9638  
Director: Mr. Calvin Patey

***Peacock Elementary School (Early Immersion)***  
P.O. Box 3008, Stn. B  
Happy Valley, LB  
A0P 1E0  
Principal: Ms. Janice Kennedy  
Tel: (709) 896-3896  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***Robert Leckie Intermediate (Early Immersion)***  
P.O. Box 3028, Stn. B  
Happy Valley, LB  
A0P 1E0  
Principal: Mr. James Wiseman  
Tel: (709) 896-8193 Fax: (709) 896-4708  
Grades 7 - 9

***Goose High (Early Immersion)***  
P. O. Box 492, Stn. C  
Goose Bay, LB  
A0P 1C0  
Principal: Mr. Bruce Vey  
Tel: (709) 896-3366 Fax: (709) 896-4684  
Level I -III

***Notre Dame Academy (Early Immersion)***  
Matthew Avenue  
Labrador City, LB  
A2V 2L7  
Principal: Mr. George Emberley  
Tel: (709) 944-5107 Fax: (709) 944-2696  
Grades 5 - 6

***Labrador City Collegiate (Early Immersion)***  
213 Matthew Avenue  
Labrador City, LB  
A2V 2J9  
Principal: Mr. Gerald Pickett  
Tel: (709) 944-2232 Fax: (709) 944-2652  
Grade 7 - Level III

***A. P. Low Elementary School (Early Immersion)***  
600 Bartlett Drive  
Labrador City, LB  
A2V 1G6  
Principal: Mr. John Eric Hart  
Tel: (709) 944-5231 Fax: (709) 944-5580  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***Menihek Integrated High School (Early Immersion)***  
613 Lakeside Drive  
Labrador City, LB  
A2V 2W9  
Principal: Mr. Leland B. Mercer  
Tel: (709) 944-7731 Fax: (709) 944-6834  
Grades 7 - Level III (Late Immersion)



**Corner Brook/Deer Lake/St. Barbe South School Board**  
P.O. Box 368  
10 Wellington Street  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 6G9  
Tel: (709) 637-4000  
Fax: (709) 634-1828  
Director: Mr. Tony Genge

90

***Presentation Junior High School (Early Immersion)***  
21 Mount Bernard Avenue  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 6K7  
Principal: Ms. Marguerite Noonan  
Tel: (709) 634-7616 Fax: (709) 634-0690  
Grades 7 - 9

***All Hallows Elementary (Early Immersion)***  
112 Humber Road  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 1E8  
Principal: Mr. Michael Luedee  
Tel: (709) 634-5005 Fax: (709) 634-1687  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***Regina High School (Early Immersion)***  
11 Mount Bernard Avenue  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 6K6  
Principal: Mr. Edward Buckle  
Tel: (709) 634-5258 Fax: (709) 634-8964  
Level I - III

***C.C. Loughlin Elementary School (Early Immersion)***  
Citadel Drive  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 5M4  
Principal: Mrs. Gail MacDonald  
Tel: (709) 639-8988/8989 Fax: (709) 639-1496  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***G. C. Rowe Junior High School (Early Immersion)***  
St. John's Avenue  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 2E5  
Principal: Mr. Gary Perry  
Tel: (709) 639-9541/9581 Fax: (709) 639-9551  
Grades 7 - 9

***Herdman Collegiate (Early Immersion)***  
University Drive  
Corner Brook, NF  
A2H 6E3  
Principal: Dr. Cluney Vincent  
Tel: (709) 634-6837/5828 Fax: (709) 634-4762  
Level I - III

**Stephenville/Port aux Basques School Board**  
Box 5600  
Stephenville, NF  
A2N 3P5  
Tel: (709) 643-9121  
Fax: (709) 643-9235

91

***St. Stephen's Primary School (Early Immersion)***  
P.O. Box 5500  
Stephenville, NF  
A2N 3P5  
Principal: Ms. Ann Marie Boudreau  
Tel: (709) 643-2331/3442      Fax: (709) 643-2331  
Kindergarten - Grade 4

***St. Stephen's Elementary School (Early Immersion)***  
P.O. Box 5300  
Stephenville, NF  
A2N 3M8  
Principal: Mr. Donald Gaie  
Tel: (709) 643-2927      Fax: (709) 643-6120  
Grades 5 - 7

***St. Stephen's High (Early Immersion)***  
P.O. Box 5100  
Stephenville, NF  
A2N 3M6  
Principal: Mr. Gregory Penney  
Tel: (709) 643-9672      Fax: (709) 643-5044  
Grades 8 - Level III

**Baie Verte/Central/Connaigre School Board**  
P.O. Box 70  
Grand Falls-Windsor, NF  
A2A 2J3  
Tel: (709) 489-2168  
Fax: (709) 489-6585  
Director: Ms. Dominio Wilkins

92

***Grand Falls Academy Primary (Early Immersion)***

18A St. Catherine Street  
Grand Falls/Windsor, NF  
A2A 1V8  
Principal: Ms. Judy King  
Tel: (709) 489-4373 Fax: (709) 489-1025  
Kindergarten - Grade 3

***Grand Falls Academy Elementary (Early Immersion)***

78A Lincoln Road  
Grand Falls, NF  
A2A 1N2  
Principal: Ms. Bev Butler  
Tel: (709) 489-3520 Fax: (709) 489-1425  
Grades 4 - 6

***Windsor Collegiate (Early Immersion)***

Box 20005  
Windsor Postal Outlet  
Grand Falls-Windsor, NF  
A2B 1K2  
Principal: Mr. Dean Roop  
Tel: (709) 489-3704 Fax: (709) 489-1557  
Grades 7 - 9

***Grand Falls Academy High School (Early Immersion)***

1 Maple Street  
Grand Falls-Windsor, NF  
A2A 1T6  
Principal: Dr. Brian Taylor  
Tel: (709) 489-4340 Fax: (709) 489-1477  
Levels I - II

**Lewisporte/Gander School Board**  
Box 416  
3 Bell Place, 3rd floor  
Gander, NF  
A1B 1W8  
Tel: (709) 256-2547  
Fax: (709) 651-3044  
Director: Mr. Randell Mercer

93

***Gander Academy (Early Immersion)***  
55 Fraser Road  
Gander, NF  
A1V 1K8  
Principal: Mr. Wayne Witherall  
Tel: (709) 256-8531 Fax: (709) 256-8551  
Kindergarten - Grade 5

***Gander Middle School (Early Immersion)***  
209 Elizabeth Drive  
Gander, NF  
A1V 1H6  
Principal: Mr. Clarence Tucker  
Tel: (709) 256-3875 Fax: (709) 256-3895  
Grades 6 - 7

***St. Paul's Intermediate School (Early Immersion)***  
5 Gander Bay Road  
Gander, NF  
A1V 1W1  
Principal: Mr. Kevin Foley  
Tel: (709) 256-8404 Fax: (709) 256-8793  
Grades 8 - 9

***Gander Collegiate (Early Immersion)***  
3 Gander Bay Road  
Gander, NF  
A1V 1W1  
Principal: Mr. James Pittman  
Tel: (709) 256-2581 Fax: (709) 651-2986  
Level I - Level III

**Avalon West School Board**  
P.O. Box 500  
Bay Roberts, NF  
A0A 1G0  
Tel: (709) 786-7182  
Fax: (709) 786-7040  
Director: Mr. David Rideout

95

***Amalgamated Academy (Late Immersion)***

P.O. Box 460  
Bay Roberts, NF  
A0A 1G0  
Principal: Ms. Bertha S. Taylor  
Tel: (709) 786-0280 Fax: (709) 786-1243  
Grades 7 - 9

***Holy Redeemer Elementary School (Late Immersion)***

Box 890  
Spaniards Bay, NF  
A0A 3X0  
Principal: Mr. Robert Lundrigan  
Tel: (709) 786-9056 Fax: (709) 786-6017  
Grades 7 - 9

***Ascension Collegiate (Late Immersion)***

P.O. Box 370  
Bay Roberts, NF  
A0A 1G0  
Principal: Mr. Hayward Blake  
Tel: (709) 786-3400 Fax: (709) 786-0660  
Levels I - III

**Avalon East School Board**  
Suite 601, Atlantic Place  
215 Water Street  
St. John's, NF  
A1C 6C9  
Tel: (709) 758-2372  
Fax: (709) 758-2386

96

***Bishop Feild Elementary (Early Immersion)***

44 Bond Street  
St. John's, NF  
A1C 1S6  
Principal: Ms. Judy Gard-Puddester  
Tel: 722-3103 Fax: 722-1058  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***Vanier Elementary (Early Immersion)***

Ennis Avenue  
St. John's, NF  
A1A 1Y7  
Principal: Ms. Gloria Taylor  
Tel: 754-2440 Fax: 754-1805  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***Park Avenue Elementary (Early Immersion)***

166 Park Avenue  
Mount Pearl, NF  
A1N 1K8  
Principal: Mr. Don White  
Tel: 368-0100 Fax: 368-2330  
Kindergarten - Grade 6

***MacDonald Drive Junior High (Early Immersion)***

152 MacDonald Drive  
St. John's, NF  
A1B 3K6  
Principal: Mr. Hubert Hillier  
Tel: 753-8240 Fax: 753-1243  
Grades 7 - 9

***Prince of Wales Collegiate (Early Immersion)***

Paton Street  
St. John's, NF  
A1B 3E7  
Principal: Mr. Allister Dyke  
Tel: 576-4061 Fax: 576-4920  
Levels I - III

***Mount Pearl Junior High (Early Immersion)***

46 Ruth Avenue  
Mount Pearl, NF  
A1N 2H5  
Principal: Mr. Scott Crocker  
Tel: 364-1433 Fax: 364-1871  
Grades 7 - 9

**Mount Pearl Senior High (Early Immersion)**

50 Ruth Avenue  
 Mount Pearl, NF  
 A1N 2H5  
 Principal: Mr. Gerald Coombs  
 Tel: 364-8456 Fax: 364-7744  
 Level I

**MacPherson Junior High (Late Immersion)**

40 Newtown Road  
 St. John's, NF  
 A1C 4E1  
 Principal: Mr. George Mayo  
 Tel: 579-7191 Fax: 579-5019  
 Grades 7 - 9

**Bishops College (Late Immersion)**

196 Pennywell Road  
 St. John's, NF  
 A1C 2L6  
 Principal: Mr. Ed Arnott (Acting Principal)  
 Tel: 579-4107 Fax: 579-4109  
 Levels I - III

**I.J. Samson Junior High (Late Immersion)**

50 Bennett Avenue  
 St. John's, NF  
 A1E 2Y8  
 Principal: Mr. Donald Vokey  
 Tel: 579-4934/7670 Fax: 579-4767  
 Grades 7 - 8

**Frank Roberts Intermediate School (Late Immersion)**

P.O. Box 203  
 Foxtrap, NF  
 A0A 2J0  
 Principal: Mr. Luke Barfitt  
 Tel: 834-8002 Fax: 834-6069  
 Grades 7 - 9

**Queen Elizabeth Regional High (Late Immersion)**

P.O. Box 160  
 Foxtrap, NF  
 A0A 2J0  
 Principal: Mr. Richard Harvey  
 Tel: 834-2081/2082 Fax: 834-7121  
 Level I - III

**Ecole St. Patrick (Early and Late Immersion)**

6 Merrymeeting Road  
 St. John's, NF  
 A1E 6K8  
 Principal: Ms. Evelyn Whiffen  
 Tel: 754-1135 Fax: 754-4442  
 Grades 6 - 8 (Early Immersion)  
 Grade 7 (Late Immersion)

***Holy Trinity Elementary (Early Immersion)***

1240 Torbay Road

Torbay, NF

A1K 1A6

Principal: Ms. Yvonne Hepditch

Tel: 437-8433

Fax: 437-1134

Grades 1 - 8

***St. Peter's Primary (Early Immersion)***

110 Ashford Drive

Newtown

Mount Pearl, NF

A1N 3L6

Principal: Ms. Noreen Myrick-Flynn

Tel: 368-7002

Fax: 364-1533

Kindergarten - Grade 4

***St. Peter's Elementary (Early Immersion)***

Munden Drive

Newtown

Mount Pearl, NF

A1N 2T5

Principal: Mr. René Estrada

Tel: 368-0189

Fax: 368-4806

Grades 5 - 8

***Ecole St. Gérard (Early Immersion)***

145 St. Clare Avenue

St. John's, NF

A1C 2J9

Principal: Ms. Susan Forward

Tel: 579-4131

Fax: 579-2267

Grades 3 - 5

***Holy Trinity High School (Early Immersion)***

23 Lynch's Lane

Torbay, NF

A1K 1A6

Principal: Mr. William Hogan

Tel: 437-5563

Fax: 437-5707

Grade 9 - Level II

***O'Donel High***

P.O. Box 578

Mount Pearl, NF

A1N 2W4

Principal: Mr. John Walsh

Tel: 364-5305

Fax: 364-5317

Grade 9 - Level II

***Holy Heart of Mary Regional High (Early and Late Immersion)***

Bonaventure Avenue

St. John's, NF

A1C 3Z3

Principal: Mr. Reg Farrell

Tel: 754-1600

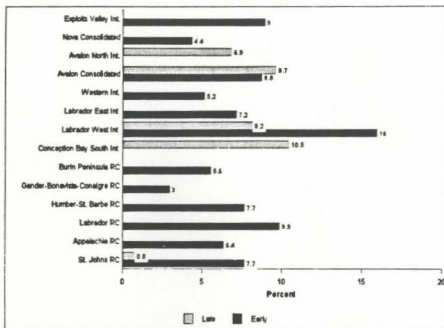
Fax: 754-0855

Grade 9 - Level III (Early Immersion) - Grade 9 (Late Immersion)



## APPENDIX B

Participation\* in Early and Late French Immersion by School District, 1995



\* Students enrolled in early and late French Immersion as a percentage of the corresponding school district grade totals.

## APPENDIX C

### ***Evaluation Reports (French Immersion)***

- Netten, Joan (1993). *Report on the Evaluation of French Immersion Programs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, School Year 1991-92: Kindergarten to Grade Nine*. Department of Education, Division of Evaluation and High School Certification.
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