

FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN CANADA

A PRESENTATION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE
FUNCTIONING OF FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN CANADA

By

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ABSTRACT

Three chapters comprise this project. The first chapter deals with French immersion programs, the objectives of French immersion teachers and a description of French core programs. The second chapter discusses French language achievements and proficiency in French immersion programs. The third chapter is a study on the requirements to become a French immersion teacher and pre-service training.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1976 an amendment to the Education Act of 1974 gave boards of education in Canada the discretion to "establish for English-speaking pupils programs involving varying degrees of the use of French language instruction, provided that the programs in which English is the language of instruction are made available to pupils whose parents desire such programs for their children".¹ It is the document "Education in Primary and Junior Divisions" in a section entitled "Learning a Second Language"² that recognizes the existence of different types of French programs, and French immersion programs are included in this document.

In every province of Canada, with the exception of Ontario, in order to be qualified to teach French as a second language, the candidate needs only a regular teaching certificate. No mention is made of the actual fluency in French of the candidate and his or her capacities for teaching the program.³ Only British Columbia and Saskatchewan claim to be studying the situation. In the provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec it is possible to obtain a French immersion specialization that can be indicated on the teaching certificate. However, the holder of such a certificate is not restricted to teaching only in immersion. The province of British Columbia mentions in the teaching certificate "For teaching in French only" or "French immersion". This occurs only when the holder of such a certificate does not possess an adequate level of fluency in English and consequently is not qualified to teach in

English. The restriction is removed when the teacher can demonstrate a satisfactory level of fluency following university-level language courses.

It is clear that, in general, at the provincial level, the issuing of French teaching certificates shows little if any difference from the certification of other teachers. The province of Ontario issues a "French As a Second Language" certificate called "French as a Second Language Part One". This certificate is a prerequisite for a teacher who wishes to teach in a French as a second-language program. However, there is one uniformity that can be found regarding the issuing of French teaching certificates, and that is their transferability between provinces.

In January 1982, the Ministries of Education agreed to apply the principle of transferability of teaching certificates between provinces. This concerned candidates having a valid teaching certificate issued by a provincial or territorial government and a degree attesting to three or four years of study in a provincially-approved university and a one-year teacher training course or its equivalent, completed successfully and certified by a teacher/training institution which is approved by a provincial or territorial government. These regulations also pertained to teachers of French as a second language.

Although the recommendations set out by the Ministries of Education are adhered to by all the boards in Canada, some of them require additional conditions, and in so doing, make the principle of transferability advocated by the Ministries of Education more difficult. The boards in Newfoundland, for example, stipulate that the candidate must

also be recommended by the appropriate examining committee of the school board in question. New Brunswick boards ratify the transferability of teaching certificates, subject to the normal permanent certification procedures in that province. The Northwest Territories' boards approve of the basic measure established by the Ministries, but at the same time express the reservations of its teachers' association regarding the lack of uniformity of certification criteria in the different territories and provinces. "In the province of Ontario, the French certificate "French as a Second Language Part One" is required as well as a certain level of fluency in French tested by qualified personnel from the boards of education for which the candidates would like to teach."

The responsibility of evaluating the competence and the qualifications of candidates for teaching French as a second language falls, for the most part, not on the ministries of education, but rather on the school boards who actually hire the teachers. There is a lack of uniformity and specification of criteria between provinces with respect to French teacher certification. However, it should be pointed out that, despite this lack of consensus between provinces, French immersion programs in Canada are successful and will probably keep on increasing in popularity in coming years. "French immersion enrolment in Canada was 17,763 in 1976-77. This number has steadily increased and was 102,168 in 1982/83."⁴ According to University of Southern California linguist, Stephen B. Kracher, "...for more than 115,000 students across Canada ... French has become something of a way of life. These are the students who are learning French through immersion..." Canadian

French immersion is the most successful program ever recorded in the professional language teaching literature."⁵ W

The purpose of this study is to describe certain aspects of the functioning of French immersion programs in Canada. Although particular emphasis will be given to French immersion programs, French core programs will be referred to in order to better understand the functioning of immersion programs. I will then make suggestions that might help to identify the possible ways of improving the quality of education in French immersion programs. This will be done at the level of preparing the student-teachers to become French immersion teachers and also at the level of the need for uniformity and specification of criteria with respect to French teacher certification.

REFERENCES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Bill 87. An Act to Amend the Education Act 1974, Canada, 1976.
2. Ministry of Education, "Learning as a Second Language", Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions, Ontario, 1975, pp. 59-60.
3. E. Brook Rideout, "Policy Changes of the Ten Canadian Provinces between 1967 and 1976 with respect to Second Language Learning and Regulations, Directives, Memoranda and Policy Statements of Provincial Departments and Ministries of Education", Requirements for Teaching Certificates in Canada, Canadian Education Association, September 1982.
4. For more details see Appendix 1, p. 42.
5. J. Pegis and D. Handler, "French immersion's first wave", The Toronto Star, (Sunday, June 16, 1985), p. 1.

CHAPTER ONE

FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS AND THE TEACHERS

I. A Description of French Immersion Programs¹

A French immersion program is one in which 70 per cent or more of the total instructional time is in French during at least the first year of the program. It is designed for students whose first language is not French. Although some French programs begin in Grades 6, 7 and 8, most begin at the kindergarten level.*

We can distinguish three basic types of French immersion programs which aim to develop a high level of bilingualism: Early Total Immersion, Early Partial Immersion and Late Immersion.² Let us consider each one of them.

1. Early Total Immersion

The usual pattern of early total immersion is one where kindergarten and grade 1 are totally taught in French. One period of English-language arts is introduced in Grade 2, 3 or 4, depending on the boards of education, leading to approximately 50 per cent of the time taught in English by Grade 5 or 6. Reading is introduced through French. As an example, we can use the North York, Ontario program which begins in senior kindergarten and has the following distribution of time between English and French instruction.

Senior Kindergarten	- 100% French (half-day)
Grade 1	- 100% French
Grade 2	- 100% French
Grade 3	- 80% French, 20% English
Grade 4	- 80% French, 20% English
Grade 5 and up	- 50% French, 50% English

2. Early Partial Immersion

Kindergarten is usually taught in French, Grades 1 to 6 are 50 per cent French and 50 per cent English. Reading is introduced in English.

3. Late Immersion

Into this category can be grouped a variety of immersion programs which begin after the initial grades of elementary school (i.e. anywhere from Grade 3 to Grade 12). Children may or may not have taken French core before entry.

In addition to the aims of the regular program given in English, immersion programs, and especially early total immersion, give the opportunity to students to become highly proficient in the French language while, at the same time, maintaining and improving their knowledge of the English language. Obviously, early total immersion is better equipped than the other immersion programs to respond to those aims. To be more specific, in this program, students are given the opportunities to be able by the end of high school studies to:

- (a) continue their university studies in French: this would mean understanding lectures, writing papers, and participating in class discussions, all of this using the French language as a means of communication;
- (b) have a job where French would be the main language used for communication;

- (c) live in a "francophone" community"; and
- (d) understand and appreciate the social behaviours and values of a "francophone" community.

II. Objectives of French Immersion Teachers

When French immersion first started in 1965 in St. Lambert, a suburb of Montreal, and for quite a few years following this date, teachers were put in front of classes without receiving any precise pedagogical direction or specialized training. Their main concern was the groups of children they had to teach. However, the questions were how should they proceed? What tools would they use? Should they rely on the program and manuals of the French schools in Quebec, or on those of French core classes in which Anglophone children spent only between 15 and 30 minutes a day learning French? The first approach appeared too difficult, the second was not appropriate for the teaching of French in a situation where French is not only a subject to be taught, but also a means of communication to teach a subject such as mathematics, sciences and physical education. Consequently, the solution was to create a new program. Teachers had to determine, sometimes with the help of program leaders, how to teach the subject they were expected to cover during the school year. A great deal of their time had to be spent establishing goals and objectives, setting up a program for long-range and daily planning. At the same time, school boards equipped with a coordinator, or a counsellor, carried out a great amount of work researching and writing to produce a curriculum outline. School boards in Montreal and Ottawa-Carleton were the pioneers in the field.

The boards today have volumes of teaching guides with practical suggestions to be used by immersion teachers. Publishing houses began to show interest in the growth of bilingualism in early French immersion programs. The professional journals began to advertise publications (books and textbooks) that could be used in immersion classes. Increasingly, the publications that focussed on immersion classes had to draw inspiration directly from the experience of this type of schooling instead of borrowing ideas from materials designed for francophone students or French core students. It became apparent that the language needs and difficulties in immersion classes could not be compared with any other program teaching French. French immersion teachers are doing very similar work to that of regular teachers, with the difference that they teach in a language that is a second language to the students. They work with approximately 30 pupils for the entire day or half a day, depending on the levels taught. Their objective goes beyond teaching the French language, and includes such subjects as science, mathematics, history, geography, and so on. The second language becomes the natural vehicle of communication for the entire day and for all activities. Pupils very quickly realize they can use another language without too much difficulty and that they are expanding and improving their knowledge quite rapidly. In this language, they are able to learn algebraic equations, the history of confederation and the geography of Canada. It becomes a working tool based on subject content rather than being merely a language. The student learns to master the language while the teacher gradually forgets that he/she is speaking French to Anglophones.

The linguistic results obtained in an immersion class are more tangible and, therefore, more satisfying and encouraging for the teacher and pupil than those obtained in a traditional French core class. This becomes rather obvious after studying certain aspects describing the functioning of the French core program.

III. A Description of the French Core Program³

It is the aim of the French core program to provide opportunities for students to develop communication skills in French, an understanding of how language functions, a sensitivity to culture and to people. However, it is important to realize that the French core program is not designed to make students fully bilingual. Rather, it offers students an educational experience and the opportunity to develop a basic command of the language. Boards of Education in Canada may choose to begin this program in any grade from kindergarten to Grade 9 and usually provide, in kindergarten to Grade 8, from 60 to 120 hours of instruction per year. Usually, French is taught every day for a period of 40 minutes. Each school board determines a common starting point and time allotment for the French core program for all students in its jurisdiction.

The principal aim of the French core program is to develop communication skills in both the receptive and expressive aspects of language. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are developed gradually and naturally in the program through the interaction of speaker, listener, writer, and reader. In doing so, the basics of communication skills are taught.

When French core is started in kindergarten, listening and speaking skills have priority in the Primary and Junior divisions. However, in Grade 3 and after, the program is not entirely restricted to those skills. Reading and writing skills are also gradually developed. "Students beginning French in the Junior and Intermediate divisions are given opportunities to read and write the very first year they start studying French." However, emphasis is given to the oral part of the program.

In 15 to 40-minute daily periods, French core teachers teach the rudiments of the language to seven or eight classes which total approximately 300 pupils per day. Their purpose is to teach them to communicate in French and, to a lesser extent, to read and write the language. They create situations in which the pupil is asked to use a relatively limited number of structures and as functional a vocabulary as possible. The rhythm of the lesson and the motivation and attention of pupils have to be maintained at all times. Variety is a key element and teachers are constantly the focal point of such classes. They must be careful how they use language, and the vocabulary must remain within the scope of the pupils. They must also be realistic about the language objectives they can attain.

"French immersion programs are unique; in certain ways, they can be compared to French core programs only because they also teach French to students whose first language is other than French. They can be compared to regular programs to the extent that they teach every subject the way regular programs do." We have seen in our introduction the very encouraging increasing enrolment that French

immersion schools have experienced since 1976. French immersion programs work well. By the end of Grade 5 or 6, the students' performance in the English language is comparable to the performance of students belonging to the regular English program.⁴ In the following pages, I will describe the rather amazing achievements in the French language attained by French immersion students.

REFERENCES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. James Cummins, A Parents' Guide, Research Findings from French Immersion Programs Across Canada, 1978. The following description does not come entirely from this reference, since changes have occurred since 1978. I am also using my personal experience in the field of French immersion.
2. For complementary details, see Appendix 2, p. 43.
3. Ontario Ministry of Education, "French Core Program 1980", Curriculum Guideline for the Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Divisions.
4. Jim Cummins, "Report on English Language Arts Introduction", A Parents' Guide, Research Findings from French Immersion Programs Across Canada, 1980, APINY (North York Teachers Association). Report submitted to North York Board of Education in 1981. This report was based on the findings of Merrill Swain in The Canadian Modern Language Review (May 1980).

CHAPTER TWO

FRENCH-LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROFICIENCIES
IN FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS

I. Introduction

French-language achievements and proficiency of pupils in immersion programs are superior to those of pupils following a French core program of instruction. This view is usually accepted by most scholars familiar with the issue. "Immersion programs were prompted by the hope and expectation that they would make children 'bilingual', in any case that they would lead to a much more substantial knowledge of French than was achieved in conventional programs. This hope has been met. Ordinary classroom observation and extensive testing programs show that the immersed student knows more French than students in other types of programs."¹

Although children in all three types of immersion programs gain much greater mastery of French than children in core programs, as one might expect, those in early total immersion programs develop the greatest degree of fluency in French." By the end of elementary school, early total immersion students approach "native-like" levels in French listening, comprehension and reading skills, although they are still clearly distinguishable from native francophones in speaking and writing skills. Consequently, in order to determine the actual level of fluency of children belonging to immersion programs, we must compare them

with native francophones and not with students of core programs.

Researchers at the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education have been working with a theoretical framework in which several components of language proficiency are distinguished. Those components were used in a number of studies involving immersion programs. They have been labelled in the following way: "grammatical competence", "discourse competence", "sociolinguistic competence" and "strategic competence". Prior to using those components in an attempt to determine the fluence of the pupils in French immersion programs, we should define them briefly.²

- (a) Grammatical Competence: refers to knowledge of the rules of work and sentence formation in a language.
- (b) Discourse Competence: refers to the ability to produce and interpret logically coherent discourse and text.
- (c) Sociolinguistic Competence: refers to the ability to vary the use of the language studied in a socially appropriate manner, depending on the topic being used or the relative formality of the situation.
- (d) Strategic Competence: refers to the ability to cope and avoid communication breakdown, when there are gaps in one's knowledge of a language with respect to the other components.

The identification of these various components of fluency leads to the fact that estimation of knowledge of the language will vary depending on which component is used. Even within components, results will be different according to the kinds of tasks students are asked

to perform. Indeed, in some cases, pupils can rely at least partly on the context to interpret or express a message. In other cases, where there is little or no contextual support available in the immediate situation, the students must rely more heavily on their internalized knowledge of the language for successful performance.

For my attempt to determine the French fluency of immersion students, I will use the Grade 5 and 6 levels in total French immersion as a reference point. The two main reasons for choosing these school levels are that most studies on the subject have been done before the students have reached Grade 7 and because I have been teaching Grades 5 and 6 total immersion for several years.

II. Grammatical Competence

Immersion students' competence in French grammar is of importance for grammatical knowledge is central to language proficiency. It is indeed difficult to imagine a high level of discourse competence without any grammatical understanding of the language concerned. From the tests of various kinds that have been administered to total immersion students, some of the results have been the following.

In Grades 5 and 6, pupils have reached a fairly high level in grammatical competence although they still make a number of grammatical errors in speaking French which distinguishes them from native speakers of their own age. To give some indication, when assessed on a conversational interview for their use of syntax (rules of sentence formation), prepositions and verbs (use of future forms, the "imparfait", "conditional", and "passe compose"), the average score for about 700

Grade 6 immersion students was 81.3 per cent correct for syntax, 80.5 per cent correct for prepositions, and 57 per cent correct for verb forms. In comparison, a small group of Grade 6 native-French speakers who were also interviewed, scored between 96 and 100 per cent.³ It is apparent that verbs are a difficult area of study for immersion students. For grammatical competence, Grade 6 immersion students were also tested on written compositions involving telling stories and writing letters. The students were scored for syntax, prepositions, verb, and gender. It was found that immersion students were more likely to make errors with verb-spelling and gender than syntax and prepositions. Although immersion students at these levels are able to produce many forms which are grammatically correct in French, they still make quite a number of errors which distinguish them from native speakers of their own age.

III. Discourse Competence

In early total immersion, students rapidly gain enough knowledge of the French language to be able to learn subjects such as mathematics and science in French. When they reach the Grade 5 level, they are competent enough in the use of French that their performance on the subject matter tests is no different from that of children in a regular English program. By the time they reach the Grade 6 level, the same students perform at native or near-native levels on tests of French listening and reading comprehension, respectively. The tests involved authentic samples of French-language use, such as taped radio broadcasts, reproductions of newspaper articles, advertisements, etc.

The students were also rated on their ability to retell the story of a movie coherently and put forward logical arguments in spoken French. They scored almost, but not quite as high as the native speakers. In writing stories and letters of persuasion, both native speakers and immersion students received an average rating of 1.5 out of a maximum of 2.⁴

IV. Sociolinguistic Competence

The ability to vary one's level of language in accordance with social demands is not well developed by Grade 5 and 6 immersion students. For example, immersion students have a tendency not to distinguish between the formal "vous" and informal "tu". They have a tendency to use the informal "tu" even when writing a formal request letter to a stranger. While the native speakers would often use conditional verb forms to express politeness, the immersion students would rather use the more direct present tense instead.

These sociolinguistic inadequacies can be related to some of the grammatical problems students have. They could also be related to the fact that immersion children's social interaction with native French speakers is in general extremely limited. However, at Grade 5 and 6 levels, immersion students are able to recognize fairly easily the appropriate sentence to make in a given social situation. They are more able to recognize than to produce a socially appropriate sentence in French.

V. Strategic Competence

Immersion students quickly develop strategies that enable them

to communicate in a language with which they are initially not familiar. When Grade 1 pupils do not know a word they would like to use, they rapidly learn to control the situation by using gestures, trying an English word with French pronunciation or using a more general term or a circumlocution in order to get the message across. This technique is used quite frequently by immersion students regardless of the grade level they belong to. We can see an interesting connection between the communication strategies used by immersion students and the grammatical errors they produce. For instance, at the Grade 5 and 6 levels, instead of the conditional tense, students will use the present tense with the adverb "perhaps". The strategic competence of immersion students is also well developed when they need to use the future tense in written work. Instead of the regular future tense, they will use "aller" + infinitive which is the "ing" form in the English language. For instance, "you will go to Europe" (Tu iras en Europe) is changed to "you are going to go to Europe" (Tu vas aller en Europe). However, this approach cannot really be seen as being a grammatical error. Indeed, this structure is frequently used in spoken language. It is actually an approach to the future often presented by teachers when the students already know the verb "aller" (to go).

The spontaneity with which immersion children express themselves in French, despite their grammatical errors, is an interesting contrast with students belonging to more traditional teaching, whose main concern is to avoid errors at all costs. However, when the immersion student reaches Grade 5, this asset can be perceived as a handicap for the further development of the students' grammatical

competence. Indeed, students find it difficult to see the necessity of trying to write without grammatical errors, since they know that despite their mistakes, the reader usually understands well the message they are communicating.

In summary, we can say that immersion students' competence in various components of language proficiency presents some outstanding strengths, but also some weaknesses. Their ability to comprehend spoken and written discourse in French is very encouraging. Their weaknesses in grammatical and sociolinguistic competence could be enhanced by creating more opportunities for immersion students to interact with native speakers of French outside the classroom. This is already done by some Grade 6 teachers who take their class on an exchange trip with a class from the province of Quebec. There is also a need to consider what else could be done in the classroom context to increase the students' competence in French.

The weaknesses that are found in the level of French-language achievement and proficiency of French immersion students could be partially overcome by preparing teachers of French immersion programs in a more efficient way than is done at present. As mentioned earlier, in every province of Canada with the exception of Ontario, in order to be qualified to teach French as a second language, the candidate needs only a regular teaching certificate. No mention is made of the candidate's actual fluency in French or his or her ability to teach the program. Although the province of Ontario issues a French as a Second Language certificate, it is important to notice that this certificate is the only prerequisite required by the province of Ontario.

Consequently, there is no distinction made in qualification between teaching French core or French immersion.

REFERENCES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. H.H. Stern, "French Immersion in Canada: Achievements and Directions", The Canadian Modern Language Review, Vol. 34, No. 5 (May 1978), p. 846.
2. These components are from the article: B. Harley, "How Good Is Their French", Language and Society, No. 12, 1984, p. 55. The tests mentioned in the following pages are being used to sustain various findings on language achievements and proficiencies in French immersion programs which were made between 1980 and 1983 by Dr. B. Harley, a researcher in Applied Linguistics with the Modern Language Centre of OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).
3. Ibid., p. 58.
4. Ibid., p. 59.

CHAPTER THREE

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHER
AND PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

In the following pages, I will attempt to demonstrate that the evaluation of the competence in French language fluency of candidates for teaching in immersion programs is generally well assumed by school boards hiring teachers. However, I will also attempt to demonstrate that there is a need in Canada as a whole for improving the preparation of teachers of French immersion programs in order to help obtain better results from the students in these programs.

Boards of education assume the responsibility of testing the French fluency of candidates wishing to teach in French immersion programs. There is no official testing followed by every board in Canada to evaluate the candidates. However, as a result of my personal studies and information obtained from educators, I am able to present the following criteria as being generally used by boards of education for the testing of French immersion teacher candidates.

According to the study entitled "National Study of French Immersion Teacher Training and Professional Development",¹ boards of education across Canada use at least one of the following criteria to determine the degree of French fluency of candidates: oral testing, French schooling, university French, written testing and provincial proficiency tests. More than 70 per cent of these institutions

use written tests and/or oral tests. The expectations of the boards of education when giving oral or written tests are presented in the following pages.

I. Level of Proficiency Expected To Become a Teacher of French Immersion Programs

1. Listening

The candidate should be able:

- (a) to understand virtually all forms of speech normally understood by native French speakers;
- (b) to understand French voices which are transmitted via telephone or media;
- (c) to detect emotional overtones and understand "between the lines" during a conversation.

The candidate should have to ask only very rarely for explanation, unless addressed very quickly in non-standard dialect or slang.

2. Speaking

The candidate should:

- (a) have accent, intonation and usage of the language almost always equivalent to those of a native speaker;
- (b) have the ability to give effective oral presentations in both formal and information settings.

The difference from a native speaker should be limited to rare grammatical misjudgements, light traces of first-language accent and extremely occasional errors of lexical or stylistic selection.

3. Reading

The candidate should be able:

- (a) to read newspaper and technical material at a normal rate of speed;
- (b) to read novels, drama, poetry and other literature written for the general public;
- (c) to interpret opinions and conjectures.

4. Writing

The candidate should be able:

- (a) to use the written language accurately in formal and informal exchanges on practical and professional topics;
- (b) to write memos, business letters, research papers;
- (c) to adjust writing style from formal to informal;
- (d) to possess a wide range of vocabulary and flexibility in the use of linguistic structures.

The candidate should be different from native speakers only by very occasional lexical and stylistic mistakes.

Provided that the preceding criteria are scrupulously followed by boards of education, it is reasonable to believe that teachers in French immersion programs are quite capable of handling the French language when addressing themselves to a class of French immersion students. However, being able to speak and write in French does not mean being able to teach all the subjects a French immersion teacher is expected to cover when teaching his/her class. ^{//} Competence in methodology and techniques on how to teach are as important as being fluent

in French. The question that remains to be answered is whether candidates are competent enough in teaching methodology and techniques to be able to teach in French immersion programs.

The province of Ontario requires from its candidates the certificate "French as a Second Language Part One". Let us see whether this course is sufficient to prepare candidates for French immersion programs.

II. A Description of the Course Training French as a Second Language Part One²

This course is offered in every Faculty of Education in the province of Ontario.

1. Goal of French as a Second Language Part One

It is to introduce candidates to the theory and practice of teaching and learning French as a Second Language in a core program in the Primary, Junior and Intermediate Divisions.

2. Objectives of French as a Second Language Part One

- (a) Candidates will acquire a basic knowledge of the theories of second-language teaching and learning.
- (b) Candidates will acquire practical skills for the application of the theories of second-language teaching and learning in a core program setting.
- (c) Candidates will acquire practical skills in the effective development and use of audio-visual materials in the language classroom.
- (d) Candidates will study commercially available as well as ministry textual materials and discuss their

applicability to the different divisions.

- (e) Candidates will familiarize themselves with the most useful bibliography of the teaching and learning of French as a Second Language.

This course is clearly intended to help candidates become teachers of French core programs. Teachers taking this course are actually told that the course they are about to take will not be dealing with French immersion for it is intended for the French core program. They are told also that there is another course that can be taken after this one which is meant for teachers who want to become teachers in French immersion. This course is called "French as a Second Language Part Two".

III. A Description of the Course Teaching French as a Second Language Part Two³

Like F.S.L.1, this course is offered in every Faculty of Education in the province of Ontario.

1. Goal of French as a Second Language Part Two

It is to introduce candidates to the theory and practice of teaching and learning French as a Second Language in French immersion programs in Primary, Junior and Intermediate Divisions.

2. Objectives of French as a Second Language Part Two

- (a) Candidates acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in every French teaching program - core program, extended program, early and late French immersion programs.

- (b) Candidates acquire knowledge of child development and its relationship to learning of a second language.
- (c) Candidates acquire knowledge of research findings on alternative French programs.
- (d) Candidates become familiar with reading materials that can be used to supplement and enrich the various programs.
- (e) Candidates are given the opportunities to understand the importance of language across the curriculum in French immersion and its methodological implications.
- (f) Candidates will study the implications of class periods of various lengths, group work, split grades, and individualization.

It is surprising that the only province in Canada requiring a certificate in French as a Second Language for French immersion teachers requires a certificate which is not really meant for French immersion programs, but for French core programs. However, during an interview I had with the Coordinator of Modern Languages working for the North York Board of Education, I was told that in the near future, perhaps in 1986, the Ministry of Education in Ontario will require from student teachers of French immersion programs not only the course entitled "French as a Second Language Part One", but also "French as a Second Language Part Two". The quality of education in French immersion programs would improve if this certificate or its equivalent⁴ was required by every board all across Canada. In the survey made by the "National Study of French Immersion Teacher Training and Professional

Development"⁵ when teachers were asked what courses in pre-service training dealing with methodology and techniques have the most value and usefulness to them, courses related to the teaching of French as a Second Language were on the top of the list. Out of eleven courses considered, seven courses obtained a percentage ranging from 2 to 10, three courses ranged from 12 to 16, and the teaching of French as a Second Language obtained a percentage of 28. Unfortunately, as we have previously mentioned, courses dealing with methodology and techniques of the teaching of French immersion are not yet required to be qualified to teach in French immersion programs. Student-teachers feel the need for such courses. When asked to suggest what courses dealing with methodology and techniques should be added or modified in pre-service training, immersion courses came on the top of the list.⁶ Out of 17 courses, 12 obtained a percentage ranging from 1 to 5, four obtained a percentage ranging from 6 to 10, and the courses dealing with immersion obtained 15 per cent.

French immersion programs are relatively new in the Canadian educational system, having started only in 1964. Students belonging to those programs have greatly increased in numbers since French immersion first started. The future of French immersion is quite encouraging. The separate school board in Toronto is starting early French immersion in September 1985, and will continue to teach late French immersion.⁷

The number of student-teachers planning to teach immersion in Canada rose from 428 in 1979 to 790 in 1982, an increase of 84.6 per cent.⁸ Fifty-six per cent of Faculties of Education forecast a rise

in enrolment and 50 per cent are planning to increase the number of professors responsible for such training.⁹ These very promising forecasts must not prevent us from worrying about the fact that most student-teachers in French immersion programs are not provided with a training related specifically to teaching in French immersion.

Practice teaching in French immersion classes is also very limited in some faculties of education. For instance, the Faculty of Education of the University of Toronto allows its students to take a maximum of one week of practice teaching in the teaching of French as a Second Language (either in French immersion or in French core) out of a total of eight weeks of practice teaching. This is rather disappointing considering the fact that until 1982-83 this same faculty allowed its students to take at least half of their practice teaching in the field in which they were most interested. I was a student there in 1978-79 and I was given the opportunity to help one morning a week in a French immersion classroom for the whole year, except during the weeks of practice teaching. I was also allowed to do two-thirds of my practice teaching either in French immersion classes or in French core classes. Most teachers in French immersion programs believe that practice teaching in immersion classes is most useful to student-teachers. When asked their point of view on the subject¹⁰ French immersion teachers rated quite high the importance of having student-teachers doing their practice teaching in French, at all levels of immersion or in French schools. The rating was 67 per cent when the next highest rating was only 17 per cent.¹¹

In Canada, there is a great variety in the training programs.

This diversity is seen in the type of certification given, the degree of specialization, the time allotted to immersion, the degrees issued and the work experience required for admission. This state of affairs reflects an ambiguity with respect to teacher-training needs and formulas. I would argue that more uniformity among faculties of education, boards of education and ministries of education would help improve French immersion programs. An approach to teacher training for French immersion programs that should be seriously considered as a model to follow is the approach offered at the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia.¹²

IV. A Description of French Immersion Training Program at Simon Fraser University¹³

The training program for teachers of French as a Second Language - immersion or core - at the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University is based on a model that is unique in Canada. The staff is made up of:

- (a) University Professors whose role is similar to that of professors at any other university.
- (b) Faculty Associates, seconded from their school board for one or two years. These teachers take on teaching tasks of a primarily practical and supportive nature related to the student-teacher at the primary and secondary levels. Each associate is responsible for about a dozen students.
- (c) School Associates, each of whom takes one or two trainees in his or her class.

The training of student-teachers takes place in a climate of continuous exchange between courses taken at University and practice teaching. This approach to teaching student-teachers is quite similar to every faculty of education in Canada. However, it is the approach used by Simon Fraser University to teach student-teachers that makes this institution so different from the others. Instead of starting the year taking theoretical courses as is done in most faculties of education in Canada, student-teachers of French immersion are placed for a period of two months in a French immersion classroom in which they are expected to help the teacher, but most of all to observe what is happening in a real teaching situation. This helps them to decide if teaching is indeed their vocation. Then, for a period of two months, student-teachers take four courses on the theory of education. Three of these courses are given in French and one in English. These courses deal with education in general, special education and psychology. Having first been in a school, student-teachers are more able to relate these courses to a real situation. After six months of study at Simon Fraser University, student-teachers have, not only an understanding of the theory of education, but also are able to visualize, at least partially, what the implications are of teaching French immersion students. In most other faculties of education, the first four months of studies are spent in the faculty itself without any experience of teaching. Student-teachers at Simon Fraser University have to study for a total period of twelve months. As a follow-up of observing a French immersion classroom and taking courses

on the theory of education, they have a four-month period of practice teaching in French immersion schools which allows them to put into practice their four-month period of courses taken at university. These periods of practice teaching should help the student-teachers to acquire an understanding of the methods to be used to teach in a French immersion program. The four remaining months of training are spent at the university where student-teachers have to take two courses in French and two in English. These courses are a follow-up of the four courses taken earlier in the year.

The training of student-teachers at Simon Fraser University is very different from that of most faculties of education across Canada. At Simon Fraser University, the training to become a French immersion teacher occupies the student's whole year. It is quite different from having to take a more traditional training in which the preparation for immersion teaching is, in addition to an already-existing program or in which it is not part of an integrated program, offered by the faculty of education.

REFERENCES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. See Appendix 3, p. 44.
2. Glendon College, York University, "F.S.L.1. Outline for 1984-85."
3. Ibid.
4. As we will see on page 26 of the present study, the course F.S.L.1 is only one course among others that focuses on the needs of immersion teachers.
5. See Appendix 4, p. 45.
6. See Appendix 5, p. 46.
7. Notes taken when assisting at the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers Conference on November 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1984, in Montreal, Quebec.
8. See Appendix 5, p. 46.
9. Ibid.
10. See Appendix 6, p. 47.
11. Ibid.
12. See Appendix 7, p. 48.
13. Diane Coulombe, "A survey of teacher training in French immersion in Canada", A Study Done at Simon Fraser University, 1983.

CONCLUSION

The present study has described a certain number of important elements that are found in French immersion programs. It has shown where the programs stand now and has given some thought as to which direction could be taken in the future. To be more specific, some of the most thoroughly-assessed aspects have been the overall academic and second-language achievements of the immersion students in relation to those of reference groups outside of the program. We have noted that "The French language achievements of pupils in immersion programs is superior to that of pupils following a core program of French instruction. For example, the St. Lambert study concludes: 'that by grades 4 and 5 the children in the experimental classes have attained a stage of functional bilingualism that permits them to read, write, comprehend, and speak French with fluency and naturalness'."¹

We have also given particular attention to the teachers of French immersion programs and, more specifically, the training they must have in order to be qualified to teach in these programs. In light of this study, it becomes apparent that pedagogical preparation for immersion teachers should be part of a training program which is relevant to French immersion needs. We have seen that the training at Simon Fraser University might be the only program in Canada answering to a great extent the needs of French immersion student-teachers.

French immersion student-teachers should be trained to combine the qualities of general educators with those of second-language teachers. Ideally, they should become:²

1. practitioners at the educational level and in the subject area(s) for which they are responsible;
2. bilingual, with a native-like command of French but with sufficient knowledge of English to understand the language background and problems of the students and to have an ability to speak English in an emergency and to communicate with Anglophone colleagues or parents;
3. able to present Francophone culture;
4. able to understand the language development of children and the specific nature of bilingual education.

I believe that the approach taken by Simon Fraser University could very well be a good example of a teacher-training program to be followed. I would also argue that the course "French as a Second Language Part II" has a lot to offer as well. Although I do not have any very definite solution to offer on what would be a perfect teacher training program for French immersion teachers, I believe that there is a need for one. Education in French immersion programs would also improve if there was more consensus among ministries of education and boards of education on common policies to adopt regarding uniformity and specification of criteria with respect to French immersion teacher certification.

French immersion programs have become increasingly popular for English-speaking students throughout Canada. They are a very valuable

alternative to the English program in the Canadian educational system. French immersion programs were first started in order to respond to parents' demand for a new approach to the teaching of French as a Second Language. The popularity of these programs is rather obvious considering the fact that from 1978 to 1984 the number of French immersion students in elementary and secondary schools has more than tripled. From 37,000 in 1978 it went up to 125,000 in 1984. French immersion programs have a very strong parent support and appear to correspond to the objectives of educators. Students in these programs are proud of their accomplishments; teachers are pleased with being major agents providing their pupils with opportunities to handle with ease a language that is not their first language and to master the English language like any other Anglophone of their age!

French immersion programs are a recent method of teaching in the Canadian educational system. Consequently, we have not yet seen their full impact. As this study has been pointing out, a need is felt for more uniformity at the level of qualifications to teach in these programs. There is also a need for the faculties of education across Canada to re-evaluate their approaches to the training of student-teachers of French immersion programs.

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2. H.H. Stern, "French Immersion in Canada: Achievements and Directions", The Canadian Modern Language Review, Vol. 36, (1978), p. 850.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

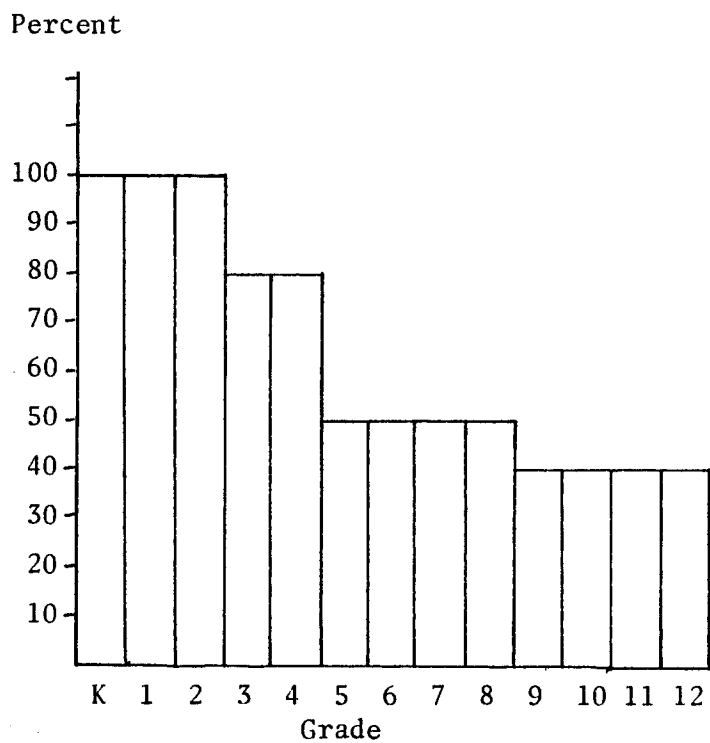
FRENCH IMMERSION ENROLMENT IN CANADA FROM 1976-1977 TO 1982-83NOT INCLUDING ALBERTA AND QUEBEC¹

(Source: Statistics Canada)

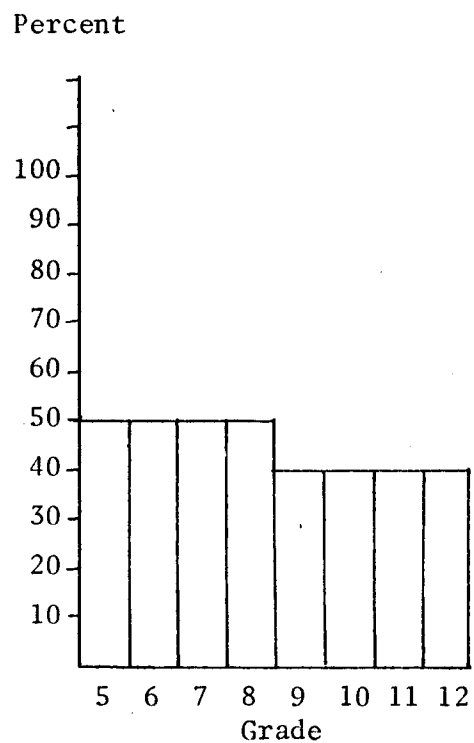
1976-77	17,763
1978-79	26,004
1980-81	53,170
1982-83	102,168

Percentage of Instructional Time in French: Three Examples

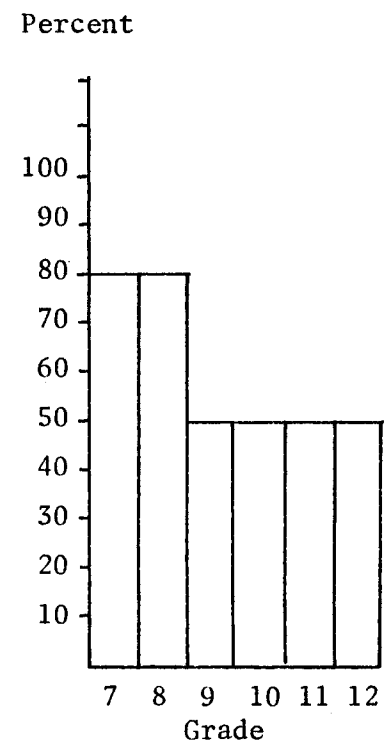
1. Early Total French Immersion



2. Partial Immersion



3. Late Immersion



APPENDIX 3

CRITERIA USED BY INSTITUTIONS TO DETERMINE
DEGREE OF FLUENCY IN FRENCH³

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Rating in Percentage</u>
Oral test	12
Oral test and French schooling	6
Oral test and university French	6
Oral test and written test	47
University French only	6
Provincial proficiency test	6

APPENDIX 4

VALUE AND USEFULNESS OF COURSES ON
METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES⁴

<u>Courses Dealing With</u>	<u>Rating in Percentage</u>
French as a Second Language (teaching)	28
Teaching Methods in General	16
Reading	14
French (study of the language)	12
Games (audio-visual)	10
Mathematics	6
Immersion	6
Primary	4
Fine Arts	4
Social Studies	2
English as a Second Language	2

APPENDIX 5

SUGGESTED ADDITIONS OR MODIFICATIONS OF COURSES IN
METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES GIVEN IN PRE-SERVICE TRAINING⁵

<u>Courses Dealing With</u>	<u>Rating in Percentage</u>
Immersion	15
Reading	10
Oral French	8
French as a Second Language	8
Teaching at Different Grade Levels	6
Resource Material	5
Vocabulary	3
Social Studies	3
Practical Suggestions	2
Class Management	2
Spelling	2
Literature	2
Communications with Parents, etc.	2
Motivation	2
Mathematics	1
Activity Centres	1
Error Correction	1

APPENDIX 6

. MOST VALID AND MOST USEFUL PRACTICE TEACHING⁶

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Rating in Percentage</u>
Experiences in the teaching of French at all levels of immersion, in French schools, with different methods	67
Practice teaching in English with a great deal of observation	17
Experience in the different subjects (example: physical education, mathematics)	11
Experience in specialized area (example: pedagogy, team teaching, lower socio-economic areas)	4
More experiences with teaching materials	2

APPENDIX 7

PROGRAM AT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
FOR IMMERSION TEACHERS⁷

Observation and preliminary teaching 2 months
(most of the time spent in immersion
or mother-tongue French classes)

Courses 2 months
(3 in French, 1 in English)

Practice Teaching 4 months
(all in French)

Courses 4 months
(2 in French, 2 in English)

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