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**PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING**

**FRENCH:**

**A CASE STUDY IN FRENCH**

**IMMERSION**

by

**Nicole Riva ©**

**A thesis**

**submitted in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for**

**the degree of**

**Master of Education**

**in the**

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**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my husband Michel for his patience, love and encouragement. His support has allowed this work to be completed and come to light.

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## ABSTRACT

This study set out to determine, through a qualitative research approach, the perceptions of learning of a group of Grade Six Early French Immersion students. Data were collected through classroom observation, class discussions and individual interviews of these students.

Themes included perceptions of their physical and language environment, methods used to teach French, learning and use of French in and outside the school and knowledge and abilities in French.

The findings provided valuable insight on students' perceptions and on their response to different aspects of the program. For example the students had various reactions and opinions on the use of French by themselves, their peers and their teachers. They also reiterated frequently their strong dislike of being corrected in front of other students and suggested ways they thought were more effective in handling correction. They revealed that little could be done if they decided to speak English during French time. They talked about the difficulties they encountered in learning the language and in using it in and outside the school. These students derived a great sense of accomplishment

from the fact that they knew and understood French while the rest of their families and friends usually did not. They also understood the usefulness of being bilingual and believed it would be of great advantage to them in the future.

Students provided valuable suggestions to enhance their learning and in so doing help all educators to consider the program through different eyes.



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## CHAPTER 1: THE QUESTION

### Introduction

After ten years as a Core French teacher I had the opportunity in 1985 to teach in the French Immersion program. I taught Grade Two for four years and later taught some of the same students in Grade Six. When I met them again I was both amazed and disappointed. I was amazed at their academic and social maturity, but somewhat disappointed in their abilities to speak and write French. From what I recalled of their language abilities in Grade Two, I had expected more sophistication and fluency in their spoken language.

As I shared these ideas and impressions with other French Immersion teachers, it became obvious that it was a "malaise" felt by many. Teachers could be expected to be concerned about student progress, but what about the students themselves? I was familiar with teachers' perceptions of students' abilities in spoken French. What I did not know, was how students perceived their own abilities in speaking French, and how they felt about the way they were being taught and their learning environment. I decided I needed to find out what

actually was happening in the classroom when they were being instructed in French, and how they felt about learning French in such a context. The best way to understand their perceptions was to observe them in action and to ask them what they thought.

### **The Problem**

We know little of what encourages and motivates students, of what enhances and what inhibits their desire to speak better French and to improve their oral skills. This research attempted to shed some light on students' perceptions of their oral language abilities and of their language development in a French Immersion classroom at the Grade Six level. It focused on the learners' perceptions of the learning of French, on their beliefs about what is helpful and what is not, and on their views of their learning environment.

By moving into the students' world, by observing them and asking them what they thought and felt, we may better be able to understand what drives and influences them to try to improve on their speaking skills.

Four questions were investigated in the course of this research.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the students' perceptions of their environment?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the teaching strategies used in class?
3. What are the students' perceptions of their own learning and use of French in the French Immersion program?
4. What are students' perceptions of their own knowledge and abilities in French?

### **Significance**

In the last thirty years French Immersion has been steadily gaining in popularity all across Canada. Ever since the first cohort of five year old English speaking children arrived for their first day of school in September 1965 in St-Lambert Quebec, hundreds of thousands of children have experienced schooling in French, their second language (Commissions of Official languages, 1989, p.258).

Every year thousands of parents register their children in French Immersion programs in the hopes that their children will become fully bilingual.



The French Immersion program, in spite of its recognized success, has presented some areas of 'weakness' particularly in regards to speaking skills. Tardif's (1987) call for research is clear:

More research needs to be done, however, in order to pinpoint the characteristics of immersion teaching and its particular context.... There is a need to describe the different types of communication strategies used by teachers and the concomitant reactions of children.... Virtually no research has been done which considers the tactics used by children in making sense of their experience in a second language immersion situation.  
(p.68-74)

Stern (1976) suggested that more attention be given to what goes on in the classroom and in the school environment. A study that looks into classroom verbal exchanges amongst students and with the teacher may help us better understand the dynamics of second language learning in a French Immersion classroom.

This research has investigated students' perceptions of their second language learning experiences within the context of their daily activities in a Grade Six French Immersion classroom, lodged in a dual track school. This

study has attempted to reveal some of these students' desires, motivations and frustrations, as they pertain to learning a second language.

Observing students in their classroom environment and conveying their perceptions of that environment and their learning of the second language will bring an added dimension to the current body of research. By focusing on the learner, by looking at this from the insider's view, we were provided with a better understanding of what students believe to be effective and what they think is ineffective. This information may assist administrators, teachers and parents in planning for changes geared to the learners' needs. By discovering what motivates and helps these students improve their speaking skills, we may be able to better understand our limitations and focus on feasible and effective strategies for improving the oral language component of the French Immersion program.

#### **Limitations**

This study does not pretend to describe the French Immersion setting for all Grade Six French Immersion classrooms. It examined perceptions of a particular group of students in a particular setting at a specific

time. It is an attempt to describe second language learning in an immersion context from the learners' point of view.

## CHAPTER 2 : REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

### Second Language Learning

Canadian French Immersion has been regarded as one of the educational success stories of the late twentieth century (Krashen, 1985b):

Canadian immersion is not simply another successful language teaching program - it may be the most successful language teaching program ever recorded in the professional language teaching literature.

(p. 6)

Obadia (1984) called French Immersion teaching a "revolution" in language teaching.

In very broad terms, French Immersion programs may be defined as programs in which English speaking students study in French, their second language. Several different models exist within this general framework: early immersion, middle immersion and late immersion, to name a few. These categories relate to points of entry of students in the program and have variations within each grouping. There is also the organization by partial or total French Immersion which relates to the total hours of instruction in French.

In this context students are faced with the double task of learning simultaneously a second language and the content or subject matter. According to Stern (1978), the learner in the French Immersion classroom finds him or herself in a second language learning context similar to the one in which the mother tongue is acquired. The learning environment is not linguistically ordered but is activity-based and geared to communication. In this context the learner improvises and takes risks. Stevens (1984) attributed the success of the program to this particular approach:

These coping techniques are needed in real life communication situations and little or no provision is made for them in a formal teaching situation. It is this difference according to Stern (1978b) which accounts for the success of the French immersion method. (p.6)

In the last thirty years, French Immersion programs have been intensely scrutinized with most of the emphasis on comparing achievements of French Immersion students with achievements of regular English program students. Studies such as Bruck, Lambert and Tucker (1974), Edwards and Casserly (1976), Swain and Lapkin (1981) have demonstrated that French Immersion students suffer no

loss in achievement in academic subjects such as English Language Arts, Mathematics and Social Studies. Parkin (1987) also found that there was no evidence that French Immersion programs have a detrimental effect on either subjects taught in French or on basic skills in English. Trites and Moretti (1986) concluded that French Immersion programs did not have negative effects upon cognitive development of students in the program.

Roy (1983), Swain and Lapkin (1981) have investigated French proficiency skills of French Immersion students, as compared to those of French first language students. In a study done in Manitoba (1983), Roy found that in French language proficiency skills the oral component was the weakest as compared to French first language speakers. Swain and Lapkin (1981) found that at approximately Grade 5 to Grade 6 level, French Immersion students' performance was similar to those of their Francophone counterparts in receptive skills, such as listening comprehension and reading. However the results of this research and others (Day et al., 1988), clearly indicated that the productive skills, such as speaking and writing were the weaker skills of the French Immersion students.

In a study undertaken in the province of

Newfoundland and Labrador by Netten and Spain (1989) on students' level of performance and levels of achievements, it was found that different processes in different classrooms bring about very different results for students. The way teachers organize and instruct their classes have a great impact on the learning outcomes for students in their second language.

It is likely that pupils in the classroom where there is a richer language environment, from the point of view of more opportunity to interact in communicative exchanges that have direction and meaning for a child, will learn the second language better than would be the case if they were in a more restricted classroom environment from the point of view of language interaction. p.499

Quality of spoken French of French Immersion students is becoming an increasing target of concern and criticism (Hammerly, 1989). Roy Lyster (1987), a practising French Immersion teacher, observed that primary and early junior grade students, appeared to have speech patterns that were much less inhibited than those found at the senior level. He expressed some disappointment in the non-native-like French he discovered in his Grade Eight class and went so far as to

say that French Immersion's success was overstated and overestimated. Swain and Lapkin (Lyster, 1987) noted that French Immersion students had not acquired many aspects of French after several years of being in a French Immersion Program. They partly attributed this to the language used by Immersion teachers which was too limited to provide sufficient input to acquire proficiency.

Krashen (1985b) contended that, even though students in the Immersion program had been described as having a fossilized dialect he considered them to be definite intermediate speakers.

Canadian style Immersion programmes... have produced genuine intermediates despite their 'flaws', their occasional errors in second language, immersion students are clearly capable of using the second language on the outside. They can use French comfortably in social situations and can follow complex subject matter instruction in French. (p. 62-63)

In spite of this recognized success, the French Immersion program's weakness lies in the productive skills such as speaking and writing. This is the area where students show many non-native characteristics



(Adiv, 1980; Day & Shapson, 1978; Spilka, 1976). Various explanations have been attempted on the possible causes of this 'weakness'.

Lyster (1987) attributed this problem to the fact that students were not actually 'immersed' in a French setting but rather were 'integrated' in an anglophone context and exposed to language, within an academic context. Kashen (1985b) explained that in French Immersion the focus was on what is being said rather than on how it was being said, "... speech is allowed to develop naturally on it's own" (p.59).

The interaction between the mother tongue and the second language, "interlanguage" (Selinker, 1972) can also be the source of the acquisition of deviant forms.

...it (interlanguage) will be of some help in early stages... There may be dangers, however, when it is used exclusively and over a long period of time: errors in the input may be 'acquired' by the listeners. (p.9)

It appears that, in spite of the overall accepted success of the French Immersion Program, there are aspects such as interlanguage and fossilisation, that are problematic.

### **Second Language Learning Theory**

There are several theories of second language learning which explain immersion language learning. Some of these are the monitor theory, the input hypothesis, the affective filter theory and the fossilisation of errors theory. Special note is taken of the fossilisation of errors as it relates very directly to speech patterns commonly used in French Immersion.

Motivation as a determining factor in second language learning is self evident. It will be examined briefly.

There is an important distinction to be made between language learning and language acquisition. Krashen (1985b), suggested that there were two independent ways of developing ability in a second language:

'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language, while 'learning' is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language. (p.1)

Acquisition produces a feel for language while learning is a conscious knowledge of a language. According to Krashen (1985b), acquisition plays a far greater role than learning in second language

performance. "Our ability to use second language comes mostly from what we have acquired not from what we have learned" (Krashen, 1985a, p. 8).

#### Motivation

Much attention has been given to the cognitive skills of the learner while affective and personality factors have received less attention. Stern (1983) contends: "Any language teacher -and for that matter, any learner- can testify that language learning often involves strong positive or negative emotions" p.375.

Affective and personality factors have been researched by Gardner and Lambert (Gardner and Lambert 1972) and by Gardner and his colleagues (Gardner 1979, Gardner and Smythe 1981). They investigated the learners' social attitudes, values, and the motivation of learners in relation to other learner factors and to the learning outcome. Gardner found a positive association between measured learning outcomes and attitudes towards the target group and the language.

Gardner (1972) has laid particular stress on a distinction between 'instrumental' motive reflecting the practical advantage of learning a language, and the 'integrative' motive reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and the

culture. p.132

Gardner (1981) thought that an interactive motivation was needed for successful language learning but found that in some settings successful learning was associated with the instrumental orientation. Stern (1978) agreed that,

the social status of the second language in relation to the first language, ethnolinguistic group relations, economic or political factors, are likely to influence motivation to learn a second language. (p. 378)

According to Stern (1983) the factor that affects learning the most in second language is the perception of teachers and learners of the second language. Stern (1983) goes on to say that these perceptions are usually "more influenced by cultural and sociolinguistic assumptions that are current in the speech community in which learning occurs than by purely geographical factors." p.279

### The Input Hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis is considered today to be one of the most important ones in second language theory as it attempts to answer the central question, how is language acquired? The input Hypothesis has three major

corollaries:

1. We acquire language by understanding input language that contains structures a bit beyond our current level of competence.

Put differently, if an acquirer proceeds along an order of acquisition or structures: 1 2 3 4 ... i where i is his or her current stage of development, he or she can proceed to the next structure  $i + 1$  by understanding input that contains  $i + 1$ . (Krashen, 1985b, p.39)

2. Speaking is a result of acquisition rather than its cause. Speech 'emerges' on its own as a result of building competence through the exposure to sufficient comprehensible input.

We acquire in other words, via comprehensible input by listening or reading for meaning. We do not acquire by practicing speaking. Speaking is now thought to be a result of acquisition. (Krashen, 1985b, p. 39)

3. When quality comprehensible input is provided in sufficient quantity, the necessary grammatical structures are automatically provided.

The Input Hypothesis also claims that "... comprehensible input, when delivered in sufficient

quality and quantity automatically contains all the appropriate structures for the acquirer..." (Krashen, 1985b, p. 20).

In short we can say that in the Input Hypothesis Krashen (1985) claims that we acquire language in an amazingly simple way, by understanding messages, by receiving comprehensible input.

#### The Monitor

Central to second language theory is the Monitor hypothesis. Krashen (1985b) explains how it works:

This hypothesis states how acquisition and learning are used in production. Our ability to produce utterances in another language comes from our acquired competence, from our subconscious knowledge. Learning conscious knowledge serves only as an editor, or Monitor. We appeal to learning to make corrections, to change the output of the acquired system before we speak or write. (p. 2)

Krashen (1985b) adds that two conditions must be present for the Monitor to be effective: the performer must be consciously concerned about correctness and he or she must know the rule. When one looks at the first years in French Immersion, it is obvious that the Monitor is absent.

### The Affective Filter

The Affective Filter Hypothesis claims that comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition but not sufficient. The acquirer needs to be willing and receptive to the input. Krashen (1985a) defined the affective filter as a "... mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition " (p. 3). The affective filter plays a major role in language acquisition. Krashen (1985b) believes that the affective filter may gain in strength at puberty and it may never go 'all the way down' again. Tatham's (1975) research revealed that:

The ability to learn a second language seems to be limited after a certain age. Lenneberg (1967) has suggested that there is a critical period for language learning since there appears to be definite changes in the ability to acquire language after early teens. (p. 245)

This may explain, in part, why children learning a second language have a much better chance of obtaining native-like levels of attainment as compared to adult learning a second language (Krashen, 1985b).

According to Krashen (1985a), the comprehensible

input and the affective filter present the fundamental principles in second language teaching:

... people acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input 'in'. (p. 4)

All other conditions are considered to be invalid or irrelevant unless they contribute to comprehensible input or a low affective filter.

One question that may be raised could be: what is sufficient quantity and quality of input when one applies this principle to French Immersion? In the French Immersion class the input becomes very soon a combination of teacher and student input, all intertwined. The dangers of overuse of interlanguage and eventually fossilization obviously threatens the French Immersion language environment.

Recent findings (Tardif, 1987, p.73) confirm that second language learning for children has far more complex dimensions when it is the language through which they are learning to learn and at the same time the medium for social interaction. In French Immersion, the focus is on the message and not on the form; it is on what is being said rather than on how it is said



(Krashen, 1985b). Consequently, the student's speech is permitted to develop naturally, on its own. What role does error correction have in this context? What do you correct and when do you correct? For many French Immersion teachers stifling communication has been a great concern and proper use of error correction has been a daily challenge.

### Errors

Fossilisation of errors was described by Krashen (1985b) as the halting of acquisition (not learning) before the native-like speaker level is reached. Pellerin (1986) attributes fossilization to the effects of "successful communication" at any price:

...la fossilisation est un des effets produits par la communication 'réussie' (transmettre ses idées à tout prix, de n'importe quelle manière) au-delà de la compétence de l'apprenant dont les inexactitudes linguistiques ne sont pas corrigées ou le sont par des techniques superficielles et inefficaces. (p. 594)

Krashen (1985b) gave a comprehensive explanation of this phenomenon. He attributed fossilization to several causes:

1. Insufficient quantity of input

2. Inappropriate quality of input
3. The affective filter
4. The output filter
5. The acquisition of deviant forms

Krashen has been an important contributor to second language theory and there has been extensive discussion of his theories in other parts of the literature.

Pellerin (1987) attributed the 'assimilation' of faulty structures to the utilization of faulty structures which were not properly or effectively corrected year after year. If Pellerin's assessment was true, this could be an irreversible situation. Krashen (1985b) predicted that the cure may be an extremely difficult task, but that it may still be possible:

One possibility is that there may be a way 'around' rather than out. While the acquirer may not be able to forget, or 'un-acquire' acquired form, he may be able to acquire a new-language, a new-version, a new 'dialect' of the target language. (p. 49)

Concerning errors Klinck (1984) became convinced that the use of newer and better teaching methods would never eliminate the occurrence of errors.

The making of errors is an inevitable and indeed

necessary part of the language process. The 'correction' of error provides precisely the sort of negative evidence which is necessary to discovery of the correct concept or rule. They (language researchers) hypothesized that errors made by the learner represented various stages of learning and were part of the progress toward the mastery of the target language. (p.414)

In a study that consisted of taped conversation of four grade nine bilingual students, the researcher found that students demonstrated a clear preference for self-correction but were willing to assist each other and to be corrected as they spoke. When questioned about this phenomenon they said that as second language learners in an anglophone city they needed each other's help to attain a better level of French. "Several students stated that they did not like to make errors and were embarrassed by them and, for this reason, were grateful for any corrections" (p.419).

Klinck (1984) proposed that second language research should investigate the social construction of reality as undertaken by students, among students and between students and teachers. It also pointed to the fact that students needed to work in small group interaction.

Klinck suggested that to promote the greatest in-depth use of the second language, students be allowed to interact with each other on a variety of topics as well as casual conversation.

How do errors become fossilized in the French Immersion classroom? If one considers the "quality of input", the onus falls on the teacher who is the principal language model in French Immersion. As Tardif (1987) puts it, "the teacher is the key actor in the language environment" (p. 74).

Teachers can arrange proper conditions for learning intellectual skills, verbal information, cognitive strategies, and motor skills. Gagné believes that attitudes are learned indirectly through one's exposures to live and symbolic (televised, video-tapes) models. (Shunk, 1991, p.305)

Gayle (1984) examined the effects of different language teaching styles on learning, for different types of students. She found a strong and direct association between language aptitude and language acquisition and suggested further research be conducted in looking at how these relationships are affected or enhanced by particular teaching styles.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their

students are exposed to as many quality models as possible. In French Immersion the task becomes more difficult, especially after a few years in the program, as the models of language are not only teachers but also peers. Proper usage of the language must be encouraged while maintaining a relaxed atmosphere conducive to spontaneous communication.

As Tardif (1987) indicated in the French Immersion program the learning of French is far more complex than it would be in a basic second language class as it is also the language through which children learn the curriculum and interact socially. In this learning context, children acquire language through all their classroom activities and interactions.

### **Summary**

Learning French in the French Immersion program is a complex and sophisticated process. The second language is learned and acquired through the bias of content, the school curriculum.

The research on the success of French Immersion program in regard to cognitive development and achievement in basic skills has been conclusive. The aspect of oral communication in French has been regarded

as the weaker skill of French Immersion students when compared to their Francophone counterparts. The language theory previously mentioned suggests that a number of factors influence this acquisition of the second language.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on a Grade Six French Immersion classroom housed in a dual track school. Grade Six was chosen as many changes take place at this particular time in childrens' school life. In this school board, Grade Six was their last year in the junior division as well as their first year of receiving French instruction 50% of the time as opposed to 75% of the time since Grade Two. It was assumed that for most of them, it was the onset of puberty, a time of great physical change and emotional growth. This study attempted to learn about students' actions and reactions in their actual learning environment by investigating students' perceptions, motivations, desires and frustrations with regard to learning a second language, French, in a French Immersion program.

#### Theoretical Foundations

The investigation used qualitative research methods which root themselves in anthropology, history, and political studies. In qualitative research the researcher describes reality as seen by the respondents themselves. Qualitative research is a **naturalistic inquiry** which uses noninterfering data-collection strategies to discover the

natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. Most qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions. (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p.372)

Qualitative research is based on a naturalistic-phenomenology perspective that views reality as series of layers of interactions and social experiences from the participants points of view. In qualitative research the researcher "immerses" himself, herself in the situation and attempts to depict the meaning of that world accurately to the reader.

The impact of qualitative research is a dynamic one. In qualitative research, the researcher is allowed to discover what are the important questions to ask of a topic and what are the important issues. "Without the continual stimulation of new ideas, educational research could become stagnant and filled with rhetorical abstractions" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p.376).

#### **Validity and Reliability**

Internal validity of qualitative design is "the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p.391). This



is achieved through systematic and rigorous investigation with the intent of gathering "useful and credible qualitative findings through observation, interviewing and content analysis..." (Patton, 1990, p.11).

Qualitative researchers, in order to ensure internal validity, need to conduct research in the field, allow sufficient data collection time, remain close to participants' language and exercise disciplined subjectivity.

Researcher self-monitoring, called disciplined and subjectivity (Erickson, 1973), submits all phases of the research process to continuous and rigorous questioning and reevaluation. (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p.392)

#### **Research design**

This research design was chosen because it provided access over an extended period of time with the students and left opportunity for themes to emerge that had not been identified in the literature. The students had an opportunity to become accustomed to my presence and were more likely to be honest about their reflection on learning French in a French Immersion context.

The research was conducted over a period of three weeks. The first and last weeks were spent on site, while the second week was spent reviewing and reflecting

in order to prepare for the interviews that took place the third week.

Data collection consisted of a field diary, informal and formal observation, audio tape recordings of class discussions and individual interviews of students that were transcribed later on.

During the first week, students were observed during class time, in their classroom and in the school, from the moment they walked in until the class discussion period which took place during the last 45 minutes of the morning session. Verbal exchanges, casual conversations and interactions between the students and, between the students and their teacher, were noted. Informal observation of physical surroundings focused on the presence of French related materials (e.g. bulletin boards, activity centres) in the classroom as well as in the other parts of the school such as the hallways and the central gathering area.

During class discussions, which were conducted at the end of each half day, two initial questions were planned ahead of time. Other questions arose from observations I made during that morning. They related to events or situations that occurred during that half day.

The second week was spent off site. During that week

I proceeded with an **interim analysis** as explained by Schumacher and McMillan (1993):

Interim analysis serves two purposes: (a) to make decisions in data collection and (b) to identify emerging topics and recurring patterns. Researchers do interim analysis as an ongoing activity of data collection. (p.486)

Time was spent reviewing, reflecting and organizing data collected in order to prepare pertinent questions for the following week. During that week I also scanned data collected and chose twelve students who would be interviewed individually the following week. I attempted to chose a equal number of students between those who appeared to use French willingly and cooperatively in class and those who appeared to be using English very frequently during their exchanges amongst themselves.

The third week I returned to the school to complete data collection by interviewing the twelve students chosen during the second week. These interviews, which lasted approximately 45 minutes in length, were semi-structured and tape recorded to be transcribed later on. They consisted of pre-determined questions, as well as questions that emerged from reflecting on the data collated during the first week of observation and

discussions. In the interviews, I asked students questions about their perceptions of their own learning of the second language and of their abilities in spoken French. The students' perceptions of strategies used in class were also investigated as well as their perceptions of their physical environment. During the course of these discussions, some of the questions asked were: How do you feel about your knowledge of French? Do you feel you can speak French adequately? How important is it to you that you speak French well? How do you feel about the approaches used in class? What encourages you, motivates you, and enhances your desire to improve on your language skills? What works and what does not work for you? How does the classroom physical environment and the school's general atmosphere affect you and your attitude towards the language?

#### **Data Organization**

Tape recording of discussions and interviews was transcribed in duplicates. Each line of the texts was numbered and subsequently those number lines were colour coded in two different colours, one colour for the interviews and one for the discussions. This was done to ensure that once the data were fragmented it would be

possible to retrace the origin of the quote, as either a discussion or an interview. The informal and formal observations as well as the field diary were coded and given a number page. This permitted me to manipulate data (cut and classify) and keep track of its origin.

### **Data Analysis**

The method used to classify the data was one of reoccurring themes. As Patton (1990) explains: "Without classification there is chaos. Simplifying the complexity of reality into some manageable classification scheme is the first step" (p. 382.). Throughout the data collection, I looked for repeated words, sentences, and ideas (noted and used as indicators of reoccurring themes. The "constant comparative method" (Patton, 1990; Bogdan & Bilken, 1992) was used to code the data as data were collected. As Smith and Glass (1987) have recognized, coding in qualitative research is an ongoing process. Transcripts of interviews, discussions and field diary were examined for primary themes as they related to the initial questions: the environment, the perceptions of teaching strategies, the perceptions of learning and usage of French.

Once data had been assigned to a category, themes were highlighted in different colours. These themes were

highlighted in a progressive manner, starting with the primary themes, the ones directly related to the research questions:

- . Students' perceptions of their environment.
- . Students' perceptions of strategies used to teach French.
- . Students' perceptions of their learning of French and of their speaking abilities in French.

I then proceeded to highlight secondary themes, the ones that had emerged from data analysis:

- .French being spoken in class by them and their teacher.
- .Students perceiving the French Immersion program as "hard".
- .The correction of errors, the importance of speaking French without making errors.
- .Students inability to express feelings and understanding humour in French.
- .The opportunities for choices.
- .Their likes and dislikes.
- .The dictionary issue.
- .Their desire to change something.

In many instances, certain quotes were assigned many different colours as they related to more than one theme.

The next step in analysis was carried out by

separating and regrouping quotes relating to the same theme, that is, the re-occurrence of the same colour. During this process the I always made sure that both the cut up portions and the text left over were kept in numerical order, in two categories, one for interviews and one for discussions. This was essential in order to be able to proceed to the subsequent themes and to be able to consider the quotes that had been used in previous themes.

For each theme I organized quotes in sub-themes, prioritizing and deleting irrelevant data. General statements collating similar ideas led to regrouping of sub-themes. The results were prioritized and irrelevant information was deleted. Each theme or question, was analyzed in the same manner pulling the data from the main text as well as text from manipulated data.

In chapter 4, the result of thematic analysis of script and notes will be reported. The description of findings will be provided, each theme and sub-theme thoroughly presented and analyzed. Additional questions that emerged from data analysis will also be discussed .

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND OBSERVATION

As mentioned previously, the information from the field diary, discussions and interviews was analyzed according to research questions originally formulated, then reorganized into sub themes. The information pertaining to primary themes is presented first.

### Primary Themes

#### Question 1: What Are Students' Perceptions of their Environment?

##### 1. Aesthetics

I described the classroom as follows: The classroom had low windows on the east side of the room and the lighting was cheery and sunny especially in mid-morning. There was a hydroponic garden and a few plants on the shelf under the windows. Some of the displays and posters on the walls seemed to be dated as some had faded or lost parts of the lettering. On the last day of the first week, the French Immersion classroom teacher had changed the bulletin board above the windows to display student made posters. At the back a series of u shaped cubicles, were not being used except for one computer and



some storage space.

Some students felt the classroom was messy or ugly: "I don't like our classroom cause it's really ugly like if you look at this orange with green..." (D, 27-28).

Most students had attended the same elementary school from Senior Kindergarten to grade three. Comments comparing the two schools all favoured the old school they had attended three years before. That school was more "comforting" (I, 777-778), with "nicer colours" (I, 782). They perceived it as more "fun" (I, 1945) with "a better environment" (I, 1947-1952), with "less people" (I, 3348-3350) and "friendlier" (I, 1947-1942).

## 2. Seating Arrangements

During the first week's visits, two different styles of seating arrangements were used: sometimes sitting in rows and sometimes sitting in groups with clusters of desks of 4 to 6. Students overwhelmingly stated that they preferred sitting in groups and cited as a main reason the fact that they could help each other.

I like sitting in a group because if you don't know ... like you can't figure out what a word means or something then you ask somebody who is sitting close to you or if you don't understand parts of it

then you can ask them. (D, 206-210)

During my visit I witnessed many occurrences of students helping each other during class.

Students perceived sitting in rows as a form of punishment used by the teacher for control.

I think the teacher prefers us in rows because ... she watches us better... I think she thinks that if we're in rows we won't talk cause we're separate.

(D, 1355-1360)

One student mentioned that sitting beside a friend meant "getting into trouble" for speaking English (D, 1302-1306).

### 3. French Spoken Outside the Classroom

Students reported instances of French being used outside the classroom which included: 1. general assemblies where 'O Canada' was announced and sung in French every other day, 2. Bilingual posters, 3. French Awards handed out in French during the School's monthly Awards Assemblies. One student mentioned that occasionally they would hear teachers speak French in the hallways.

At general assemblies I attended, the administration, teachers or students usually made

announcements in English. In only a few instances teachers made some announcements in French. Some students felt that they had to accommodate the students who did not know much French and were not in French Immersion. For example, they felt it was fine that all announcements were done in English, since these students would not understand if it were done in French. (Field Diary, 8-9).

#### 4. Visibility of French

French was visible in the school as French and English signs could be found throughout the school. For instance, at the top of each door was a sign with the teachers' name, with one side in French and the other in English. Many of the students' displays in the hallways were from the French Immersion classes. Large school bulletin boards such as sports or awards bulletin boards all had French and English titles. In the classroom there was also a mixture of both.

When asked about the visibility of French in the hallways, some students said it was not important to them. They said they did not care if the posters or displays were there or not. However, they noticed that they were in both languages and some said it was just

normal to have it that way. Students appeared to take all of this for granted. When asked which language they read first or if they read them at all, many of them said they usually read and preferred reading the English first, only partly reading the French: "... I'm a faster reader in English, I can read a little easier" (I, 270-271). "... I understand more English than I do French" (I, 971-972). While most students viewed reading the French as strictly extracting information, some students considered reading these French displays and posters an important tool of learning, an opportunity to improve their French:

If there's more French around the school then like I'll learn French better and faster ... if I see it written ... I'll see it in a sentence and I'll know what it means. (I, 1819-1821)

Question 2: What Are Students' Perceptions  
of the Methodology Used?

In French Immersion, teachers teach the regular curriculum in the students' second language, French. Particular attention has to be given to explanation techniques, use of vocabulary and structures to ensure that students comprehend the task at hand. Modelling of

language, by the teacher, is also of crucial importance. Correction of errors in the spoken language is an important strategy used by French Immersion teachers to help students improve the target language.

When discussing difficulties of the program, students associated part of their enjoyment or their dislike of French Immersion with the teacher, regardless of strategies used.

I think it's better if you have a nice teacher to work with cause then it's more fun.... (D, 403-404)

It depends on your teacher because if your teacher is a nice one and one that plays games with you and stuff you like to learn French .... (I, 2564-2568)

They described a good teacher as someone "who listen(s) to our suggestions" (I, 2488-2494), "who understands" (I, 3590) and "who is strict but nice and fun" (I, 3605-3610).

### 1. Explanation Techniques

In second language teaching, when a concept is presented, a lesson is taught, or questions answered, the teacher tries to use a level of French that is appropriate to the students' level of understanding of the second language. Some students expressed frustration

and discouragement when they did not understand the teacher. Some said the teacher did not take sufficient time to explain (D, 454; D, 1477) or for various reasons did not explain again, when asked (D, 400-402; I, 675-678). Others complained that when they asked for further clarifications they would be sent to look up the words in the dictionary, which they found annoying and frustrating (D, 409-511; I, 2929-2931).

## 2. Correction of Errors

When students spoke informally, answered questions or presented to the class, they often made grammatical, structural or vocabulary errors. The teacher used various techniques and strategies to correct these errors. It was during the students' presentations in front of the class that I was able to best hear the corrections offered by the teacher.

Frequent corrections and interruptions by the teacher was mentioned as one of the reason for dreading presenting in front of the class (D, 1731-1734). Students felt resentful of the interruptions (D, 1744; I, 2642), found them rude (D, 1783-1784) and annoying (I, 440-443). Others mentioned that being corrected in front of the class made them feel stupid (D, 1774-1775),

frustrated (D, 2139, I, 452-458; I, 2643) or mad (I, 2652).

### 3. Modelling with Student's Repetition

This strategy basically consists of the teacher correcting an error by modelling the proper structure or the appropriate vocabulary and having the student repeat the corrected word or expression. Some students said this practice would sometimes confuse them (I, 2648-2650), or cause them to lose their train of thought. Students mentioned that sometimes the words used were unknown to them (D, 1787-1790), which made it very difficult for them to remember these words or expressions.

When asked if speaking French without making errors was important to them most of the students responded in the negative (I, 594-604; I, 2962-2965; I, 3523-3524).

"I don't think it's important to speak all French like, I think you could have a little bit of English in it" (I, 602-604). Many of them felt that they learned from their mistakes and were not overly concerned about it (I, 1258-1269; I, 2426-2430).

The students, for whom it was more important to speak without making too many mistakes (I, 940-941; I,

2110-2118), explained that it was important to them to speak correctly when doing a presentation in front of the class (I, 610-618; I, 2728-2733; I, 3269-3272). Good marks, as well as the use of tangible incentives such as prizes (I, 3294-3301), seemed to motivate these students to try to improve the quality of the French they spoke in class (I, 3015-3025; I, 3552).

It appeared that students correcting students did not occur very often (I, 1204-1210; I, 14446-1450). In general, students felt the others did not know much more than they did. An array of feelings was sparked by peer correction. Some did not mind (I, 862; I, 1690-1692) or felt it gave them a good feeling (D, 644-645; I, 110-11; I, 460-461). Others found it annoying (I, 2314-2317) because it made them feel stupid and dumb (D, 648; D, 655; D, 683-684).

The teacher correcting the students seemed to be a much more common occurrence. Most students expressed very strong feelings towards this strategy. Some felt it was good because that is how you learn (I, 87-90; I, 2617-2621) and others said they did not care (I, 2303-2305). Many said it did not bother them as long as it was not during a presentation (I, 100-102; I, 849-853; I, 1194-1197; I, 1421-1423; I, 2882-2890, I, 242-245; I,



1176-1177; I, 1189-1192; I, 1660-1673; I, 2873-2879).

Students said that correction during a presentation was annoying (D, 438-447; I, 1419), rude (D, 1781-1783; I, 3419-3425), frustrating (I, 2641-2646) or made them feel mad (I, 2652-2655) or stupid (I, 658-651; I, 1673; I, 2868-2869; I, 3404-3409).

Students overwhelmingly complained of being interrupted in the middle of a sentence (D, 1743-1744; D, 1779-1781) particularly during oral presentations in front of the class. They disliked the teacher saying something after everything they said (D, 1731-1730; I, 3191-3194). Some students said they hated presenting in front of the class because the teacher always stopped and interrupted them (D, 2135-2136; D, 2146-2148). They suggested that the teacher should note the errors, wait until the end of the presentation and then correct the student, preferably in private (D, 2160-2162; D, 2174-2176; I, 1429-1431; I, 3430-3434). According to the students, this method of correcting would be much less embarrassing and a more effective way to help them ameliorate.

I think she should like wait until you're finished ... and then tell you when nobody else is listening so that you're not embarrassed by making

mistakes. (D, 2170-2173)

Finally some students identified alternate helpful strategies which helped them remember exact words or proper structures.

.write it on a piece of paper (D, 1810)

.hearing people say it a lot (D, 1813)

.hearing it in a sentence (D, 1819-1820)

.through games (D, 1816)

.reading it in a story (D, 1826-1827)

.thinking about it and repeating it over and over again in your head (D, 1830-1831; I, 107)

#### 4. Using a Chart System

The teacher used a chart system in order to control the amount of English being spoken in class. When the teacher "caught" a student speaking English, she would put an x beside the student's name (D, 258-260). The students believed this was the way the teacher calculated their marks for their report card. For some students it seemed to be an incentive (D, 1044-1048) while for others it didn't make any difference (I, 2356-2365).

Many students mentioned a system that was used in their Grade Five class, where students were grouped and monitored each other (D, 2045-2064; I, 1022-1030). They

seemed to prefer this system as the teacher did not have to "hound over it" (D, 2067-2068). This system also included small rewards which many appeared to like.

#### 5. Using Punishment for Speaking English

One of the strategies used in this classroom to attempt to control the amount of English being spoken in the classroom, was time taken off recess (D, 251-252, D, 263-269). Instances of this practice were observed a few times during my visit. This tactic was perceived by some students as an unjust and unfair practice (D, 247).

During gym time the teacher removed from the game the ones that were "caught" speaking English. One student explained it this way:

When you're in gym she'll say if you talk English you're out of it you can't play any more so that kind of encourages you cause everybody in the class likes gym. (D, 1068-1071)

Another student said this strategy worked "because you want to play" (D, 1141-1142). However, a few students voiced their resentment saying it was not fair since some "don't get caught" (D, 1117-1122, D, 1132). Others mentioned being mad and upset about it (D, 1101-1111). When it was used in class there was always

protesting from the students.

For some of the students it seemed that very little could be done to motivate them to speak French:

. "If the teacher does not watch I talk English."

(I, 3033-3037)

. Marks don't make any difference. (I, 288-295)

. Nothing motivates except the chart. (I, 282-286)

. Even with the chart "... everyone still talks English". (I, 2365)

#### 6. Good Strategies and Suggestions

For some students good marks (I, 645-646), the teacher's encouragement (I, 651-652; I, 2161-2163; I, 992), future social need for French (I, 1294-1296), a better job in life (I, 2153-2158), were all factors that helped motivate them. Students suggested several strategies they felt would encourage or motivate them to speak French during class time.

1. Use of a chart, where the teacher would check off their name if they spoke English to discourage them from speaking English in class, was mentioned as a useful tool (D, 1044-1048). However, a system used by a previous teacher was more appreciated by the students. In this version students were grouped, monitored themselves (D,

2065-2068) and were rewarded with token prizes such as bubble gum. As one student put it, "It made it more fun." (D, 1951-1961).

2. The teacher working individually with students on various assignments such as stories (D, 1049-1058; D, 1059-1062).

3. Letting students speak a bit of English (D, 1398-1399) or use some English whenever it is too difficult to explain in French (I, 2032-2036).

4. Not interrupting during oral presentation and waiting until the end to go over the errors in private with them (D, 1781-1783; I, 444-446; I, 1429-1431; I, 2653-2655; I, 3419).

5. Students watching films for pure enjoyment instead of always for information purposes (D, 1428-1431).

6. English and French teachers consulting each other so they do not overburden them with assignments (I, 1049-1057).

7. Informing the students of projects ahead of time (I, 1063-1068).

8. Using visual aids as it helps them remember (I, 2209-2213; I, 2215-2219).

9. Working in pairs is considered very helpful (I, 1834-1841).

Question 3: What Are Students' Perceptions of their  
Learning and Usage of French in the French Immersion  
Program?

Learning French in the French Immersion Program

In general students seemed to enjoy learning French in the French Immersion program. Some thought it made school more exciting, more fun, and believed they would be bored if they were in an English only program (D, 534-537; I, 1366; I, 1604-1607). Others talked about the satisfaction of being able to speak two different languages. To describe these feelings they used the words like "neat" and "it feels good" (I, 16-17; I, 824; I, 1132-1134; I, 1977-1978; I, 2828-2829).

When you think about it you can speak another totally different language so I think it's neat. (I, 1968-1972)

A few students said they just liked being in French Immersion, for no particular reason (I, 1656; I, 1966). One student said she liked it depending on the teacher (I, 2569-2570). A couple of students said they did not like being in French Immersion. One of these students said he did not like it because he did not get good marks in French (I, 797-799), while another said he simply

would rather be in the straight English program (I, 3354-3355) .

Most students perceived their environment as an important factor in the learning of the second language. "It is good to be surrounded by French and that French is visible because the more you see French the more you learn it." (I,1522-1525). In discussing the French Immersion learning environment, some of the students suggested, as an ideal environment, an environment what many of us assume to be in the French immersion classroom.

Student- "I think the best way to learn French is in an environment like or a classroom where they are talking French around you and to learn it by ear."

Facilitator- "Is that not what we're doing here?... in French Immersion?"

Student- "Well we have English too and people talk English lots in the halls and stuff but like where I learned my French they put me into a classroom halfway into the year where everyone was talking French and that's how I learned it." (D, 1015-1022)

What this student was referring to was the same French Immersion kindergarten all the other students in the class had attended, but because she arrived halfway

into the year, her perception was that everyone was speaking French around her.

Many students used the expression "learning by ear" in describing the best way to learn the language (D, 968-970; D, 1017-1018; D,1037-1038). One student said it would be better to live somewhere where there was French and to go to a French school because one could just "pick it up" (D, 971-975). Another student suggested that this would be easier: "You could learn easier cause everyone would speak French, you would understand more words, you could speak faster" (D, 1001-1009). This particular student also remarked that "you don't really learn that much in two hours of French" (D, 1001-1009).

#### The French Immersion Program's Rationale

In general students seemed to understand the rationale of the French Immersion program and why they and the teacher had to speak French all the time (D, 305-310; D, 315-316; D, 321-322). Students were aware of the philosophy behind the program and seemed to agree on its importance: " ... they're trying to teach you French, they want you to speak it all the time so you'll get used to speaking it so you can get good..." (D, 299-301). On her feelings about the teacher always speaking French in



class one student answered:

... when you hear the language more you get more accustomed to it, you pick it up by ear and then you pick up how to say words instead of just learning them (I,1214-1217).

### Usage of Language

The teacher as a model. The teacher being the principal second language model in the classroom, his or her attitude, comportment and usage of the second language was constantly observed by the students. Most students understood and accepted the fact that the teacher should speak French with them and in front of them, if they were to learn the language (I, 127; I, 1699-1700; I, 2027-2028). However in their perception, French Immersion teachers "used French outside the classroom only when students were close by because they did not want to be heard speaking English" (D, 128-130). Some of the students thought that the strategy that consisted of always speaking French in front of the students was more appropriate when they were in lower grades and were starting to learn the language (I, 142-144; I, 502-512).

When describing their feelings when they first found

out their teacher could actually speak English, they used words like "shocked" (D, 143-150; D, 164-165), "strange", "weird", "different" (D, 170-173). It seemed that they had now become accustomed and more tolerant of their teacher speaking English. Many said it did not bother them to hear their teacher speak English indiscriminately. Others specified certain situations where they found it acceptable, for example, going to the door to speak to a parent that only spoke English. In other situations they were less tolerant:

... When she goes out and talks to some other French teacher in English it makes me feel kind of mad because, well, she's the one who's trying to teach us French and if she's allowed, if she can talk English, then I don't understand why we can't either. (D, 258-259)

The students' use of French. A few students mentioned speaking French all the time or most of the time during the French portion of the day (I, 1225-1229; I, 1736; I, 2936). However many students perceived themselves as "not speaking French that much" and rather speaking English most of the time. They admitted that when reminded to speak French, they simply spoke English

quieter. Here are some of the comments shared with me:

.We don't really speak that much French in class.

(I, 892-894)

.Nobody really talks in French. (D, 244; I, 2365)

.No one speaks French. We all talk English really quietly in our groups. (I, 3211-3212)

.We have to speak French all the time, we don't.

(I, 530-531)

.When the teacher tells you to talk French, nobody does. (D, 237-238)

.Hardly anybody does (speak French)... it's just when they say to start talking French it's just a signal to talk English quieter. (D, 240-242)

.If you're sitting beside a friend, you'll talk English all day... (D, 1304-1305)

.But now in Grade Six we like talking English a lot in class, we don't speak much French. (I 522-524)

One student said that in grade four it became boring, "and we didn't want to talk French any more so we just talked English" (I, 3245-3246).

When asked in what particular situations they would more likely resort to English to communicate in class during French time, they gave these scenarios:

. to talk to their friends. (I 1234-1235; I, 3480)

- . to talk about something exciting or important. (I, 168-169; I, 1242)
- . when they don't know the words in French, or lacked vocabulary. (I, 884-889; I, 2373-2375)
- . when they don't understand what the other person was saying in French. (I, 1475-1477)
- . To talk about events in and out of school. (I, 901-903; I, 3042-3044)

Even though students understood it was the teacher's mandate to encourage them to speak French (I, 526-528), they still tried to get away with speaking English as much as they could. They saw the teacher as a police-type person in the classroom, "pestering them" (D, 1400), and "nagging them" (I, 1718), trying to catch them in the act. The choice of words used by the students to describe the teacher's role, spoke for themselves:

- .The teacher catches you talking English. (D, 256)
- .She looks over your shoulder all the time. (D, 1325-1326)
- .She constantly nags us. (D, 1399-1400)
- .She gets suspicious. (D, 1987-1989)
- .She always pesters you (D, 1316-1321).

Students revealed that not much could be done to motivate them to speak French with the exception of marks

for some of them (I, 650-651), and the chart system for others (I, 282-289). Students said that when the teacher "walked out the door" (I, 563-565) or when she was not "watching" (I, 1323-1331), they spoke English. One student went as far as to say that even the teacher's proximity was not sufficient incentive to make the students speak French. This was confirmed during my visit as I noted that the teacher's glance or proximity, made a difference to only some of the students.

Even if the teacher's like standing right beside them they still will speak English in the class. Like they don't really care. (I, 1728-1732)

Some students appear to rebel against this pressure and to do the opposite when asked to speak French (D, 237-244). Others expressed frustration and resentment of not being able to express themselves well enough in French (D, 744-746; I, 2909-2913; I, 3463-3472). According to them, their lack of knowledge of the second language caused them to resort to English which then caused them to "get in trouble" (D, 225-227; D, 1117-1122; D, 1097-1108).

When asked why they spoke English during French time one student responded by saying:

We wanna say what we really wanna say and you

don't really know really too much the things you want to say in French so you say them in English.

(I, 2062-2065)

Some students explained that it was very difficult for them as they spoke English everywhere else, and all of a sudden they were expected to switch to French in an instant (D, 230-233; D, 513-514).

You talk English cause you've been talking English like on the bus to all your friends, at school before the bell rings and in your locker ... so you come into class talking English.... (D, 230-233)

Some students felt they should be allowed to speak English (D, 1111-1116; I, 543-544; I, 2818-2819). A few students declared they didn't really want to (D, 321-322) or like to speak French in class, because it was too hard (D, 302-303; D, 339; D, 343). One even went as far as saying, "... I hate French here" (D, 336).

#### Disenchantment with French Immersion

It must be mentioned that a few students have mentioned experiencing a disillusionment with French, a loss of enthusiasm for learning and speaking the language. The excitement and awe of the first years in the program had been replaced by feelings of frustration

mostly due to the difficulty they experienced in understanding and speaking the language.

Now since we were in grade six it's getting really annoying, boring, cause you don't understand anything almost you only understand the simple things. (D, 377-380)

One student mentioned how difficult it was for him to cope with both French and English.

... during kindergarten to grade three it was just French, I did pretty good back then, but since I've gotten French and English, it got real hard. (I, 1001-1005)

One student noticed the change in attitude in grade six: "I spoke French all the time unless I didn't know a word...", but it changed in grade six. (I, 2924-2925)

#### Question 4: What Are Students' Perceptions of their Knowledge and Abilities in French?

##### Speaking French in the French Immersion program

For many students, speaking French appeared to be very easy. They seemed to have acquired a good comfort level with the second language. When asked how they felt about speaking French they responded in this way:

.It feels normal. (I,2256)

.There is no difference between speaking French or speaking English. (D, 578-585; I, 1275-1276)

.It feels natural: "I've been speaking it so long it just is natural. Sometimes I even dream in French." (I, 1142-1143; I, 1392-1393)

.It feels nice cause you can talk to people who don't speak English. (I, 3379-3383)

Some students expressed difficulty being able to relate to others who could not understand French.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning and Speaking French

Many students believed that they would have a brighter future and a better chance in the job market if they spoke French (D,507-509; I, 421-424; I, 823; I, 2287-2288; I, 2853-2855; I, 3151-3152). They also believed that knowing French would be helpful when they travelled (D, 566-572; I, 24-26; I, 401-402; I, 3153-3154; I, 3169-3170), as well as help making travelling more secure (I, 1135-1136).

They also considered it an advantage to be able to communicate with different people (I, 1408-1409) and to find out what they're like (I, 3390-3395). They also



considered being able to help others (D, 1593-1597; D, 1635-1646), particularly by translating, to be a notable advantage (I, 1411-1412; D, 1658-1662).

### Using French Outside the School

Many of these students have had very little or no opportunities to use French outside of their classroom (I, 1245-1223; I, 1505-1507; I, 1752-1767; I, 3257-3260). For some of them, their exposure to Francophone people had been limited to a visit to a tourist attraction in the area with a Francophone class from the local French school (I, 2392-2393; I, 2939-2940).

One student mentioned he heard French when going to the hockey rink (I, 225-230), while another had an opportunity to hear and use French when going to his summer cottage (I, 839-845).

Most of the students who had contact with Francophone people had their experiences through travelling in such places as Quebec, France, Florida (I, 3488-3491), or Alberta (I, 919-920).

When the opportunity arose, most students felt really good about using French outside the classroom. "It felt good" was a term often used when describing situations where they had used their skills in French (I,

2107; D, 1277-1279).

.It felt good in France cause I could order (D, 1273-1276).

.It was cool (D, 1250; I, 1500).

.Kind of proud (D, 1262; I, 3163-1364).

.It feels really neat (I, 404; I, 2587).

.It's fun (D, 1517; I, 2949).

The feeling of uniqueness that was related to their knowledge of French was quite obvious. Some students expressed pleasure in the extra attention it gave them (I, 830-831), while others stressed the fact that they felt they had something others, especially their parents, did not have (I, 1169-1173) (D, 1259-1260). For example: We can speak with our brothers and sisters and our parents don't understand (I, 1613-1629; I, 2829-2834). Many students said that it made them feel that they were better than their parents (D, 1259-1260; D, 1271-1272; I, 404-409; I, 1993-1996). One student said he liked to show off in front of his family and impress them (I, 298; I, 209-210; I, 415-417).

Feelings expressed concerning the usage of French outside of the classroom, were not all positive. Some students were annoyed to have their parents push them to speak French when the need arose (D, 1524-1527; D, 1531-

1541; D, 1575-1578). In situations where they had to speak French with Francophone people, some students felt embarrassed and weird, partly due to their perceived incompetence.

- I didn't understand that good but then she kept talking to me in French and I really didn't understand and I felt weird... (D, 1268-1271).

- She's French but she didn't understand what I was saying. (D, 1565-1566).

- It was sort of embarrassing because they could speak French better than us and stuff... (I, 2714-2716).

One student sometimes felt comfortable speaking French with Francophone people while other times he felt uncomfortable because he felt "they know lots more" (I, 929-930).

Another student said that at times he didn't like to speak French outside of the classroom because "... I talk French all day and I get tired of it" (D, 1506-1507). Some students mentioned not liking to speak French to people in stores (D, 1229-1230), or not at all in public (D, 1532-1533).

### Wish List

Students in general expressed desires and hopes with

regards to their abilities and competence in the second language. Many would like to be able to speak "faster" (D, 1681-1683; D, 1705; D, 1721) and "better" (D, 1683-1686). They also expressed the need for better vocabulary skills (D, 1696; D, 1698; D, 1705; D, 1721), to be able to speak French without using English words (D, 1678-1679; D, 1685) or with a better accent (D, 1700-1706). In short they wished to be able to sound more like a native French speaking person (D, 1702-1703).

### **Secondary Themes**

A number of questions emerged from observations on site, from interviews and discussions and finally from the preliminary analysis of the data collected. These will be presented and analyzed as additional themes: The correction of errors, the students ability to express feelings and understand humour in French, the students' feelings on the program i.e. French Immersion is "hard", the issue of choices, the use of the dictionary as a tool for learning French, and finally their likes and dislikes about the program.

#### Expressing Feelings and Understanding Humour

Many students said they found it hard to express

feelings in French such as anger, joy or excitement. (D, 750-752; D, 770-773; D, 798-801) One student expressed her frustration this way: "It's hard to express (anger) in French because you don't know the words and you have to go look them up in the dictionary" (D, 744-746). Other students said they could not say what they really felt (D, 635; I, 2062-2065; I, 3463-3465). Some students said that there were no words in the French language such as "awesome or cool" (I, 2911-1912). Others said they simply did not know the words in French to properly express their feelings (I, 888-887; I, 891-893; I, 2062-2065; I, 2370-2371).

Many students admitted to resorting to English when they spoke to their friends in class (I, 157-160; I, 883-886; I, 1473-1474; I, 2058-2060; I, 2919-2921; I, 2908-2909). One student explained one of the strategies used to chat in English with their friends during French time which was observed many times during visits in the classroom. "If I'm with a whole bunch of friends and we're like over at my desk or someone else's desk and we kind of go in a little huddle and we talk English" (I, 2058-2060).

As mentioned earlier, when students were asked when and why they resorted to English they gave these

"feelings" related reasons:

- to talk about something really exciting (I, 168-169)
- to talk about something personal (I, 170-172)
- to talk about how the other students are "acting" (I, 3043)

Students said they had very few opportunities to talk with their French teacher, in class, about trivial subjects, to have informal conversations, to "shoot the breeze" types of conversations. (I, 184-186; I, 2066-2071; I, 3674) Some students said that this type of conversation occurred much more commonly in lower grades.

Many students said they had not experienced much humour in French because they did not understand it (D, 853-855; D, 861). "I don't really see anything funny because you don't know how to get the jokes because they're in French and they're too hard to understand" (D, 847-848). Some students attributed their failing to understand humour to the fact that the jokes were "too" fast for them to understand (D, 878-873; D, 916-920; D, 930-931).

The students mentioned some situations where they enjoyed humour and understood it better:

- .when reading a story (D, 865-866)
- .when watching children's shows and cartoons (D, 885-887;

896-903)

.during speeches "...they talk about funny things like brothers and sisters, memories from the past, they're funny and they're interesting." ( D, 867-870)

Students said they rarely watched anything funny and said they didn't wish for more as they figured they wouldn't understand anyway (D, 1420-1421).

#### The Difficulties of the Program

Some students reported experiencing no major difficulty with being in a French Immersion program (I, 1550; I, 2192-2193; I, 2465-2472; I, 3567). Other students said they did not find it difficult because they had someone in their family that already spoke French, which made it easier (I, 1550; I, 2765-2768). One student said it depended on the subjects being taught (I, 2174).

Other students expressed frustrations towards the difficulty of the program which they attributed to various factors.

#### Vocabulary

For many students their frustration arose from problems with vocabulary. They found the words in general, specific vocabulary and using all French words

too difficult (I, 2978; I, 536-539; I, 1862-1865; D, 385-387; D, 1490-1491; D, 1785-1790; D, 1117-1120; D, 419-420). Because of their lack of vocabulary, students found it difficult to express feelings (D, 744-746; D, 770-773).

Many students found grammar and spelling the hardest (I, 2183; I, 3305; I, 1307; I, 305; D, 434-438; D, 442; D, 452). Some students said they confused the French and the English (D, 390-392; D, 436-437). Others mentioned finding it difficult to understand information in books (D, 427-428; I, 671-673). Some students said they had difficulty understanding explanations from the teachers because the vocabulary they used was too difficult (I, 675-678; I, 3066-3070; D, 357-358; I, 2929-2931).

A few students said they did not like speaking French any more because it was too hard (D, 302-304; D, 339-341; D, 348-349)

It also appeared from some students comments that at this time in their school life, the appeal of English was very strong. English was becoming more interesting and easier while French was becoming harder and less comprehensible (I, 317-319; I, 330-333).

#### Rate of Speech

Many students complained that because people spoke



too fast and it was very difficult to understand them (D, 873-878; D, 920-1193; D, 1201-1203; D, 931; D, 1174-1177; D, 1461-1462; D, 882-883; D, 1475-1477; D, 1471-1472). Frustration resulted from this inability to understand and follow certain conversations.

#### A Heavy Load

Some students said they found French Immersion particularly difficult because of the fact they had to learn everything both in French and in English (I, 1867-1868). A couple of students mentioned that alternating subjects such as maths and environmental studies for instance from year to year, made it quite difficult (I, 1060-1061; I, 1870-1884).

The homework load in two languages was revealed as being an important contributor to making French Immersion difficult (I, 306). Juggling homework in both languages and keeping track seemed to be very difficult for some students (I, 306-314; D, 836-839; I, 1008-1013). Students said they felt constantly rushed: " We hardly have time to do anything... you don't get a lot of time to do anything, we're rushed into doing everything" (I, 737-742).

#### A Turning Point

Students often compared their first years in French

Immersion to their present situation. They regarded those years as less difficult language wise.

.In Grade Two or Three it was "cool", now it's difficult. (D, 343-346; I, 371-377)

.In Grade Two the words were easy (D, 350-351) it was easier to understand (D, 355-356).

.In Grade One Two and Three it was easier, they didn't expect you to know hard words and stuff (I, 2560-2562).

Some students mentioned Grade Six as being a turning point (D, 365-366; D, 467-468). Some students said that in Grade Six they did not understand (D, 378-379) and they found it more confusing than in lower grades (D, 475-479).

A few students offered suggestions to help make the French immersion program easier and less frustrating. They suggested French and English teachers let them know ahead of time what was expected of them as well as consult each other so that projects and tests would not all be due at the same time (I, 1063-1068; I, 1049-1055). One student suggested that it would be easier if they had all French or all English, as one day of French and one day of English or one week of French and one week of English (I, 1001).

### Choices

The students mentioned repeatedly that having a real say in the decision making process, such as having fair choices in the topic or the style of a given project, was much more motivating to them (I, 3634-3636). According to some students, allowing real choices heightened motivation and made school more fun (I, 2498-2500; I, 3612-3622). They said they liked a teacher that listened to their suggestions (I, 2489-2507). One student said there had to be real choices with actual options to choose from, rather than choosing between very similar things : "... would you rather write a twenty page story or you know, a twenty page book of poems " (I, 3616-3619).

The students gave examples of choices they valued: choices in partners or groups (D, 211-215) so they could work with people they liked (I, 2786-2790). Choices about doing or not doing speeches and science projects (D, 1899-1903). Choices on topics to work on (D, 1931-1940; I, 340-341). Choices in creative writing because it gives them a chance to express their ideas (D, 2098-2108).

### Dictionary Use

Many students expressed frustration with dictionary

use. When teachers tell students to go look up a word in the dictionary, it was described as a turn off for that student:

It really annoys us ... she's got it, you know, she knows it, she could easily say it, she still makes us look in the dictionary (I, 3530-3534).

They find it very discouraging to be told during a conversation, to go look up a word in the dictionary if they don't know a particular word in French (D, 315-320).

Students appeared to have a defeatist attitude when it came to dictionary use. They felt that in order to understand a more difficult message, they would have to look it up in the dictionary, which was often inconvenient to do at that particular moment:

"Some of the hard words we don't even know what they are and you can't look them up in the dictionary cause they're talking so fast..." (D, 1490-1492).

When they did use the dictionary, some students found other frustrations. For instance if they didn't know the spelling of a word they found it difficult to look up: "How are we supposed to look up in the dictionary if we don't even know the spelling? (D, 393-397)."

Once they have found a particular word the words

used to explain the word found are sometimes beyond them and they are no further ahead (D, 409-413; I, 1848-1852; I, 2928-2933).

### Likes and Dislikes

It became obvious throughout the class discussions and the interviews that students had strong likes and dislikes that affected their perception of the program. For instance, art and gym were both cited as the preferred subjects because they were fun and easier (D, 418; D, 445-451; D, 1385; D, 2085; I, 686).

Many students said they liked it when they had incentives or prizes to encourage them to speak French or participate in general (D, 2024-2027; D, 2041-2050; I, 3292-3302). They liked to play games (D, 1962-1968; I, 398-399; I, 690-691) and preferred to have students monitor their usage of language as opposed to having teachers check their names when they spoke English (D, 2065-2076).

The issue of choices came up frequently. Being able to make choices (I, 2498-2507; I, 3628-3636) on a variety of matters such as choosing partners (I, 2786-2790) and writing on a topic of their choice (D, 2093-2101), resulted in more satisfaction on the part of the students.

Some students mentioned that they did not like having mathematics in English in Grade Six. They said they would prefer to have it all in English or all in French as the switch from French to English in Grade Six was difficult and confusing (D, 1888-1896).

Grammar and spelling were mentioned as disagreeable because they were boring (I, 1907; I, 3623-3627) and too hard (D, 434-435; D, 452).

French music did not seem appreciated by some students who could not understand it (D, 1194-1198; D, 1211-1216) or found it "too young" for them (D, 1204-1207).

#### Changes Suggested

Students were asked what they would change if they had the opportunity to change something in the Immersion program. A few mentioned that they liked it just the way it was and they would not change a thing (I, 355-363; I, 1582-1584).

Many students gave suggestions they felt would improve the program. Many thought the program should be made easier, especially the language part (I, 697-704; I, 3102-3105; I, 3080-3087). Making work in general more fun was also a reoccurring comment (I, 1889-1890; I, 2200-2207; I, 2510-2512; I, 2777-2785).

One student mentioned he/she would like to have more oral work in the program:

Not standing up presentations but more or less like the class discussion or something instead of just writing because when you're talking you don't have to worry about the spelling or grammar or stuff.

(I, 1338-1345)

Many students mentioned feeling rushed all the time, never having enough "time". They suggested making sure there was time to complete work and to do everything that needs to be done (I, 747-750; I, 1084).

Finally, a few students suggested, as a solution to this particular problem of lack of time, to have French the whole day one day and English the whole day the second day (I, 1001; I, 1075-1079).

We have lots of homework, cause we have half day French, half day English and we have to do all our things in that little bit of time. (I, 1081-1087)

**CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS****Analysis****The Environment**

My first impression of this group of students was one of a cheery, friendly, busy and noisy group. The classroom was very often almost chaotic with lots of students walking around. When requested by the teacher to quiet down they would eventually settle and listen.

Even though some students said they did not care much about their environment, many of them mentioned their first school as being more comforting and a better environment. They described their present environment with some discontent. The fact that the study was conducted towards the end of the school year may have been a contributing factor. Students were tired of school and starting to look forward to the Summer holidays.

Peer support and socializing was obviously very important and the students overwhelmingly mentioned preferring to sit in groups. Chatting, being friendly and joking (F.D., 4-19-23) were an integral part of their daily lives at school. While sitting in groups students engaged in all kinds of verbal exchanges, many of them in English. They felt there were great benefits to be



gained from sitting in groups, preferably with friends, an important one being that in groups they were able to help each other. They perceived the traditional "row arrangement" as a form of control or punishment by the teacher.

The students accepted the fact that the general "business" of the school should be conducted in English. They expressed concerns for the needs of the students and staff in the regular English program in that they might not understand French. The students were very aware they were, first and foremost, in an English school, in an English environment and that allowances and concessions had to be made to accommodate the other teachers and students who were not in French Immersion. This was a non-issue for them.

The students equally took for granted the fact that in the school they had displays, bulletin boards, posters signs etc. in both languages. They appeared to accept that as a "fait accompli" and saw some educational value in it as far as reading in French was concerned.

#### Strategies Used in Language

The teacher, a young, energetic yet experienced woman, spoke in a soft voice and had a casual non-threatening attitude with the students. She often

circulated amongst them, most times speaking with individuals or small groups. Students believed that their teachers played a major role in their enjoyment and desire to learn French. The description they gave of an ideal French Immersion teacher embodied characteristics that would apply to any good teacher: someone who listens to suggestions, who understands and who is strict but nice and fun (I, 2564-2568, 2488-2494, 3590,3605-3610).

In this group of Grade Six students it appeared that the abilities in comprehension of the language were quite varied. Some students expressed frustrations with the level of language being used. Some students mentioned having difficulty understanding the teacher's explanations. This seemed to be due to various reasons. A few students admitted that they sometimes did not listen or pay attention the first time but for most of the students, not understanding the message, seemed to be related to a language problem. They would not understand what the teacher said, and would turn to a peer for clarification out of embarrassment or frustration. For example, when students viewed a film on a science theme, it became obvious that the language was beyond their capacity to understand (D, 1454-1455; I, 3070-3071; I, 3452-3460). Even though the form was appealing (a

colourful cartoon with lots of action), they became restless and inattentive. In this group of students the range in comprehension of the language appeared quite wide.

Productive skills such as speaking and writing have been regarded as the weaker skills of French Immersion students (Adiv, 1980; Day & Shapson, 1978; Spilka, 1976). Perhaps comprehension has been taken-for-granted and may not be given the attention it deserves. Is it possible that students need an approach that is geared to a wider range of comprehension levels in order to take them from  $i$  to  $i+1$  (Krashen, 1985)? Is it possible that the gap between what they hear and what they understand may be too wide for them to acquire satisfactorily?

When using French in the classroom, students resented certain types of correction, most specifically corrections in front of their peers. The correction of errors during presentations was a definite issue of discontent, and appeared to contribute to their lack of desire to speak French in front of others. Most students mentioned this as a problem. They suggested that the teacher, rather than interrupting them during a presentation, should wait until the end and correct them in private. For example when presenting posters most

students appeared uncomfortable and ill at ease. The students' self-confidence and self-assurance are fragile at this time in their lives, so presenting in front of peers made them vulnerable and insecure. During their presentation they often hesitated searching for the right word that was usually provided by the teacher. The teacher questioned them throughout and occasionally would provide a word or correct an error or expression. The students felt that interjections during oral presentations, had a detrimental effect on their morale and motivation. As Krashen has contended the "Monitor" which is the internal editor, is absent in K-6. This may explain the students reluctance to attend to form and rules. Their preferred mode of internalizing the second language being "acquisition", a subconscious, intuitive process of construction, akin to "picking up the language", these interferences by the teachers were perceived somewhat negatively by the students. The whole issue of how correction of errors is handled may be central to motivation in language learning.

There were mixed opinions on the necessity to speak French all the time, without making errors. When teachers used incentives, they regarded this as motivating and helpful but much more so when the students

were actively involved in the process as opposed to the teacher being the "policing" agent. There appeared to be a constant cat and mouse game in the classroom, where the balance between incentives and control was very fragile.

#### The Learning and Use of French

At the beginning of my observation period the students perceived me and reacted to me as if I were another teacher, checking to see if I heard them speak English. However, after a while they seemed more relaxed and carried on naturally in English or in French. Because the classroom was very noisy most of the time, it was difficult to figure out what language the students sitting further away from me were speaking. Even so I was surprised to hear students speaking English openly without worry (F.D. 14). During class time most students used a mixture of French and English. I soon realized that the utterances that were loud and clear were in French while the other subtle conversations were most often in English (F.D., 27, 29). When French was spoken it was frequently spoken in a loud voice to speak to the teacher, ask a question or talk to another student across the room (F.D., 18). Except for the teacher's proximity or her inquiring glances, it seemed that little could be

done to motivate the students to speak French all the time in class. A supply teacher that had worked with this group of students since Grade One, remarked that she had noticed a deterioration of these students' desire to speak French during French time. In her opinion the change had been gradual since Grade Four (F.D., 6).

The chart mentioned as "the" form of control was probably used by the teacher in an inconspicuous way. I did not see it myself. However, when French was spoken, it was obviously done in a louder voice.

The forms of punishment being used, like time off recess or removing students from the game for speaking English during gym time, was something the students did not like at all and reacted strongly to by moaning and groaning and complaining.

Obviously, choice of language use was at the heart of our discussions. Some students mentioned resenting their teacher using English freely because they felt this practice was a form of double standard. On a few occasions the classroom teacher did use English while standing in the classroom to speak or respond to another teacher coming to the door. Some students commented that if they were expected to speak French all the time she should be too.

Very little seemed to motivate students to use French at all times or at least most of the time in class. Even though students said they understood the French Immersion philosophy, they did not seem prepared to make efforts to put it in practice. No intrinsic motivation was apparent in many of these students. They would use French if they had to, and many of them used English for all oral exchanges in the classroom that were not directly related to the task at hand. They seemed to expect their teacher to come up with some sort of plan, preferably "fun plan" to encourage them to speak French all the time.

Swain and Lapkin (Lyster, 1987) noted that French Immersion students had not acquired many aspects of French after several years of being in a French Immersion program. They partly attributed it to a language level used by teachers which was too limited to provide sufficient input to acquire proficiency. Lyster (1987) attributed this problem to the 'integrated' environment rather than a true 'immersed' environment. The lower proficiency level of French Immersion students recognized in the literature may also be explained by a much smaller portion of time where students really use and function in French. The limited proportion of French used by some

students may actually be insufficient for them to acquire the language satisfactorily and cause them to feel inadequate in many aspects of the second language.

Underlying the unwillingness to speak French may represent a disenchantment with French. They did not feel very well equipped to converse on ordinary topics of interest, claiming they missed proper vocabulary related to what really interested them. A feeling of being incapable of transmitting their message properly to a friend resulted in the usage of English in class. There seemed to be a lack of desire to use French in these instances. It may also be related to an uneasiness about talking about these more personal issues in French.

Motivational problems may also be related to students' perception of the academic load of the French Immersion program. Students expressed feelings of being overburdened at times, of having difficulty managing two languages and two sets of very different expectations. This situation seemed to become more prevalent in this grade level, where students divided their time equally between French and English instruction. For many students, enthusiasm for the program seemed to decline, as French became more difficult and English more interesting.



A similar comment emerged when discussing the use of French outside the school. Even though there were many positive comments on how learning French had enhanced these French Immersion students self-confidence and self-image, there were also descriptions of feelings of uneasiness when they spoke with Francophones - mostly due to a sense of limitation with the language. Krashen (1985b) contended that in spite of occasional errors, French Immersion students were capable of using French on the outside and comfortable in social situations. This may be mostly true of students that have completed and graduated from a French Immersion Program at the High School level. It may also be true of students who have lived in an area where they have had many opportunities to use French on the outside. In the case of these students they were mixed feelings about the experience of using French on the outside. The fact they were in Grade Six and the fact most of them had very little opportunity to use French outside the classroom contributed to their feelings of inadequacy.

#### Speaking the Language Out of School

The students appeared to have acquired a very comfortable level of language for communication. Even though many students had few opportunities, when they

were exposed to real life situations where they had to use French outside the classroom with francophone people, most of them related very positive experiences. Coupled with the belief that they may have a brighter future because of their knowledge of both French and English, they revealed a sense of being "special", of having an advantage over the people who did not speak French.

Most students did not feel comfortable speaking French for their parents or other people as a forum to demonstrate their skills. In general this made them ill at ease. I have noticed that people who speak more than one language usually establish a sort of "mother tongue" with various individuals. For instance, if one has always spoken German with a friend, even though both may know English, it will feel uncomfortable speaking the second language with this person. On the other hand, if the same person has always spoken English with another friend, it may feel awkward to speak German. This may partly explain students uncomfortable feelings when using French with people with whom they have not established French as their "mother tongue".

Even though some students were happy to "perform" in front of their parents, many of them resented having to display their knowledge in a forced situation which

caused them to feel uncomfortable. Students, when given the opportunity to speak French with Francophones, sometimes felt inadequate. This was partly due to the rate of speech of Francophone people, as well as their perceived lack of vocabulary and different accent.

#### Other Concerns

Many non-anticipated concerns and perceptions of these French Immersions students emerged from this research. Students mentioned their inability to understand humour, their lack of vocabulary and their inability to comprehend speech when spoken in a faster pace. All of these concerns contribute to the disenchantment they had been feeling towards the program.

The perception that French Immersion is difficult prevailed in this group of students. The frustrations they encountered by being instructed in two different languages and the pressure they felt appeared to be, for some, overwhelming at times. They themselves gave suggestions on how to lighten the burden.

#### **Reflection on the Research**

In hindsight I am truly grateful to have chosen a qualitative approach to this inquiry. It gave me the opportunity to move in closer into the French Immersion students' world. The process itself allowed me to

consider their reality and become surprised. As a French Immersion teacher I held assumptions of what students liked and disliked, of what were effective teaching strategies and of what was important to these students. Through this process I was able to put aside these assumptions and let the students' words and actions speak for themselves. I have become much more attuned to our students' needs in Immersion and truly hope we take all opportunities available to us to listen to what they need to say to us.

### **Recommendations**

This study has explored the perceptions of a group of Grade Six students, on their learning of French in a French Immersion program. This section will make recommendations based on the findings.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Students in this study longed for a French Immersion environment similar to one where French would be spoken in a natural and authentic way. It appeared that the atmosphere of the school and the classroom, as well as the attitude of the people in the building, have influenced the students' own attitudes and responses to the language. Given the artificial nature of the Immersion environment, everything needs to be done to

enhance and enrich the language environment of French Immersion students. This means that great care has to be given to how this environment is organized and how people interact in it. It is suggested that administrators and teachers consider carefully the physical as well as the language environment of their school and that they provide the most enriching environment possible. This would compensate for the artificial nature of the context and provide a more meaningful and authentic arena to learn French. It is, therefore, important for teachers and administrators to strive to create an atmosphere that values and truly maximises the use of French, in many different contexts, as close as possible to real life situations.

#### Recommendation 2

The response of the students to the use of French or English, by teachers and by themselves was mixed. It appeared that students, in spite of their stand, were very aware and interested in their teachers' use of language. The teacher was considered the model of language and his or her attitude toward using French influenced the students' attitude. It is suggested that teachers take great care with their choice of language in front of the students. Teachers should speak French in

front of their students, not because they don't want them to know they speak English, but because they want to set a "standard", a model to follow. In other words they would show that they speak French by choice and not by obligation. All efforts should be made to encourage the use of French in a variety of situations, not just in the confined space and time of the French classroom. French should be used in day to day activities whenever possible. To facilitate this, schools in which French Immersion is taught should set clear guidelines regarding the use of language in front of the students. Administration should educate both French Immersion and non-French Immersion teachers, to make them aware of expectations and of the rationale justifying these expectations.

### Recommendation 3

This study has confirmed that French Immersion students are not necessarily using French in the classroom. This issue should be very seriously considered as it is at the heart of the problem: if students are not using French during class time then the Immersion program is greatly weakened. The students expressed a desire to have some incentives in place to encourage them to use French at all times. Students

expected teachers to find effective ways to encourage and motivate them to use French. Successful strategies to encourage the use of French and the improvement of the language should be shared amongst French Immersion teachers and adapted to particular groups of students.

#### Recommendation 4

In this study, students expressed very clearly what they believed helped and hindered their learning and use of French. The sense of inability to use certain types of language has resulted in much use of English during French instruction. To justify this situation students complained of being ill equipped to converse in certain types of language. It appears that the French Immersion program at this grade level, needs to assign more importance to speaking about everyday life experiences and give more time to oral communication. This will promote and facilitate casual exchanges in the classroom environment. Students need to be given many opportunities to converse and express themselves on topics that touch their everyday lives and to do this in a context where they can learn appropriate vocabulary and expressions.

#### Recommendation 5

The students in this study showed great pride in

being able to speak French. When given opportunities to use their knowledge of the language outside the classroom they appeared to develop a sense of purpose and meaning. Unfortunately, for many of these students, the opportunities to use French in a real live context with Francophones were very limited. Students need to have more opportunities to experience French in a real context but they also need help and guidance in better understanding the difficulties and limitations they may encounter. Students need to learn more and talk more about their experience, the successes they have encountered as well as the failures. This will lead them to appreciate their knowledge and encourage them to move on.

#### Recommendation 6

These Grade Six students expressed the difficulties and frustrations that came with juggling two curricula- one in English and one in French- and how it contributed, to some extent, to a lowered motivation. They suggested different approaches to the program in its organization of time. It may be necessary to look at the present model being used and explore innovative ways to teach in the French Immersion program. We need to listen to the students and consider alternatives and innovative ways of



delivering the program that may help the students better cope and, therefore, improve their desire to learn.

#### **Implications for theory and research**

French Immersion programs are flourishing right across this country. A wealth of research as considered the effects of this program on childrens' performance in their first language and other subjects such as Sciences and Maths. It has been widely accepted that children in the French Immersion program do not fair as well as francophone children in the productive skills. Looking at what actually happens in the classroom between teachers and children and between children themselves as far as usage of language is concerned needs to be investigated further. Comparing and analyzing childrens' motivation and enthusiasm at various grade levels would shed some light on what actually happens with their attitude towards learning French, when it happens and why it happens. Teachers as models of language as well as schools as proper environments for learning the language could also be further investigated.

As qualitative inquiry helps to bring to light pertinent issues' it allows researchers to ask important questions. This research encourages other researchers to pear deeper in the students' world and consequently

better understand it so that we can become more aware of what can be done to improve the quality of the program.

### CONCLUSION

This study has provided an insider's view, a description and interpretation of perceptions on learning and speaking French of a group of Grade Six French Immersion students.

The findings suggest that in spite of an understanding and appreciation of the French Immersion's program rationale and of the known benefits of speaking French, these students experienced many frustrations and difficulties related to the delivery of the model.

The students in this study appreciated a physical environment that was conducive to group interactions and group work. They were sensitive to the visibility of French in their surroundings in and outside their classroom and saw this as another learning opportunity.

These students expressed strong views on how French was being taught to them. The different approaches used by teachers seemed to have an important impact on their desire and motivation to use the language. For example they talked at length of their dislike of being corrected in front of their peers and explained the consequences to

their self esteem when this method was being used. Concerning the use of language in the classroom, they described all the different situations when they used English to communicate during French time and said that very little could be done by the teacher to make them speak French if they did not want to. They described the teacher as a police figure trying to catch them in the act. They also saw the teacher as their prime model of the language as well as a model of attitude. They attributed a lot of their motivation or non-motivation to the teacher's method and personality.

They said they were not overly concerned about correctness in speaking French but also said they wished they could speak better French in a more native like accent and with a richer vocabulary.

The students talked about the positive aspects of learning French such as knowing something more than their relatives and friends, being able to communicate with Francophones and finally perceiving their bilingualism as a real advantage for them in their future life and career.

In light of these findings it becomes clear that there is a need to reassess the program considering more carefully the students' needs and desires. Motivation

being a key factor in the students' learning of French, more attention needs to be focused on enhancing students' motivation. A closer look at the program needs to be taken considering the "language" aspect of the program. As educators we all wish to provide students with the best possible chances to come out of the French Immersion program the best speakers of the language as is possible.

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**APPENDIX 1**Ethics Information Package*STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF**FRENCH IMMERSION*To Parents/Guardians

Your child has been invited to participate in a study to find out how students feel about French immersion.

Your child's participation will involve being observed, along with the rest of the class, during a period of one week as well as participating in class discussions. Your child may also be chosen to be interviewed during the second week, in an interview that will last approximately 3/4 of an hour, and will be conducted at school at a convenient time.

All of the data collected will use pseudonyms. Your school and Board will be characterized but not named. Once the research is complete, all data will be destroyed. If requested the researcher will share findings with you, both in writing and in person.

Your child has the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time.

Please feel free to contact Nicole Riva at anytime before or during the research regarding any questions or concerns you have by calling (tel. num.).

This research will give your child an opportunity to have his or her views heard, and perhaps help improve the French Immersion program.

If you give permission for your child to participate in this research study, please sign the attached form.

*STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF FRENCH IMMERSION*

I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the study as described. I realize that I may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify my child's involvement or the data collection procedures used in the research. I am assured that my child's identity will be kept confidential and that he or she may withdraw at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(One copy of signed agreement will be given to

participant for their records and one copy retained by the researcher.)

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS**  
**OF FRENCH IMMERSION**

To the French Immersion teacher,

Your students have been chosen to participate in a study to find out how students feel about French Immersion.

Your participation will involve being observed, along with the students of the class, during a period of one week. All of the data collected will use pseudonyms. Your school and Board will be characterized but not named. Once the research is complete and the report on the findings has received final approval from Lakehead University, all data will be destroyed. If requested the researcher will share findings with you, both in writing and in person.

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time.

Please feel free to contact Nicole Riva at anytime before or during the research regarding any questions or concerns you have by calling (tel. num.).

This research will give your students an opportunity to have their views heard, and perhaps help improve the French Immersion program.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign the attached form.

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS**  
**OF FRENCH IMMERSION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in the study as described. I realize that I may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify my involvement or the data collection procedures used in the research. I am assured that my identity will be kept confidential and that I may withdraw at any time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(One copy of signed agreement will be given to participant for their records and one copy retained by the researcher.)

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS**  
**OF FRENCH IMMERSION**

Dear Grade six French Immersion Students,

I am presently conducting a study to find out how, you the students, feel about French Immersion.

Your group has been chosen and I will be conducting this research in your classroom, for a period of two weeks. During the first week I will be observing the students during the morning. This means that I will be simply sitting amongst you, looking, and taking notes in a special note-book. During the second week there will be no observations. Instead some students will be asked to join me for an individual interview that will be taking place in the school, during school time. These interviews will last approximately 3/4 of an hour.

This will all be done confidentially, which means no one except me will know what you have said.

You are free to participate or not to participate in this project, and you can at any time decide you do not wish to participate any more.

However your participation in this project will be greatly appreciated. By expressing your feelings and opinions on the French Immersion program, you may be of

great help in planning for the future.

Sincerely,

Nicole Riva

## **Appendix 2**

### **Class discussion questions**

Day 1. How do you feel about learning French? Do you like knowing French, or are you indifferent to it?

Day 2. How do you feel about your classroom and school environment? Is it important to you that there is French displayed in the classroom and in the school? Is it important to you that French is visible in the school?

Day 3. What does your teacher do that encourages you and motivates you to speak better French? In other words what works and does not work for you?

Day 4. Have you had opportunities to use French outside the classroom? Do you feel comfortable using French outside the classroom? Do you think it is important to speak French outside the classroom?

Day 5. If you could change something in the French Immersion program what would you do to improve our approach to teaching oral language?

### **Interview Questions**

1. Have you attended immersion classes in an other school? If yes was it different than here?
2. Do you like being in French immersion? Tell me why.
3. How does it feel to be able to speak French?

4. What do you like best about speaking French?
5. How do you feel when the teacher or classmates correct you when you make an error?
6. How do you feel about the idea of the teacher always speaking French in your presence?
7. How do you feel about you always having to speak French during the half of the day of French?
8. Have you had the opportunity to speak French with francophone people? How did it feel?
9. How important is it to you to be able to speak French without making mistakes?
10. Is it important to you that French be visible or heard in the school?
12. What helps you or encourages you to try harder to speak French more accurately?



**Appendix 3**

## CLASS DISCUSSION 1    Friday, May

1st, 1992

I: interviewer

I. O.K. so my first question this morning is, how do you feel about your classroom environment, tell me about your classroom environment, tell me about it. Do you like it don't you like it, what's important to you in the classroom and so on.

A. I don't really like it... I don't like it kind of like, ... you always use lots of paper and you always been like wasting it...and, and its like to make that paper it pollutes the air. (I. you have to speak up or we won't be able to hear you.) Like to make the paper it pollutes the air so that when you waste the paper then it'll just be like ...

B. A long time ago they had chalk board to write on instead of paper to write on so why not now, obviously a chalk board would not work to well, why not have a lap top computer instead of... (laughter)

I. O.K. now I want you to talk to me when you talk about your environment, I don't want you to talk to me about

your, I want it to be related to learning, hum not to ecology.

C. It be interesting like in the summer if we had our classes outside... (others yeah! yeah!...)

I. O.K.

A. I don't really like the classroom, its like all messy all the time... its so messy...

D. I don't like our classroom cause it's really ugly like if you look at this orange with green...

I. O.K. now one question... do you do anything to improve on this environment yourself... (kids responding here and there no, no, ...) do you have any responsibilities in improving the environment?

E. Well we do clean up a lot but it really doesn't work the classroom doesn't look that good... If we pick up all the stuff that's on the floor... but the teacher she doesn't agree very well with us cause she gets mad cause she says that you know were old... yes it's not her job to pick up all the stuff and that were... sometimes were... we made the mess and we're old enough to pick it up and all that, cause sometimes there is lot of things on the floor.

F. The problem is when it gets messy and stuff in here is that madame... she always gets mad at us... half the

time she's sort of mad she's always like screaming at us.

I. Now tell me about your environment as far as what's displayed on the walls, I've seen that there's some in French and there's some in English...hum... Does that have any...is that important to you (some voices saying no) what...for instance written in French or written in English. Is there any difference for you or does it matter or do you actually notice it. Think about it. One at a time.

G. You don't really notice it.

I. You don't notice it. (A few voices here and there, no, no...)

H. I don't notice it very much, I don't really care. I don't think it makes too much of a difference.

I. It doesn't hey?

C. It doesn't make a difference cause it's not our personality like our bedroom. Our bedroom is our personality and stuff (?) so they can't make fun of us cause its not ours... like how it looks.

I. So you feel that it doesn't belong to you?

C. No it doesn't matter, it's just there.

I. Does it matter to you if it's in French or in English?

(Voices here and there, no)

I. O.K., now what about the outside of the classroom, what about the hallways, the foyer and all those places do you see things in French or in English and does it matter to you?

A. It doesn't matter to me. You see things mostly in English and then you see some stuff in French but... it doesn't make a difference.

H. It doesn't make that much of a difference but sometimes like if it's written in French like the people, the English students, don't know French very well so they get (?)

I. I'm sorry K. (turned off the tape recording to remind students to be very quiet)

I. Were talking about the school and the environment, and if there was something in French or in English and if it matters to you, if you notice it.

H. I don't really notice it but, but the people in English do.

I. What do they notice?

H. Well they notice it's in French and they don't understand it.

I. Has anybody ever said something to you about it?

H. Well it's like when there displays in the hall...So then they'll ask us what it's about and stuff.

I. So they'll ask you information on it?

(yeah!...)

I. Now what about announcements... hum... are there ever any announcements done in French?

E. Well they mostly all in English, cause that way everyone can understand them. If they were in French then people would be like... what? So...

B. I think the English could do some adapting a little bit to the French like they can sing the anthem in French...or some....they can't understand it, you actually talk to them but a few short things to say like... they can't understand.

I. So as far as the school is concerned, tell me exactly what do you hear or see in French outside of your classroom? Is there anything you hear or see outside of your classroom, in the school, that has to do with French.

G. Well when they're announcing when its time to stand up for O' Canada they say its going to be sang in French they say it in French, and then sometimes there are poster like for Jump Rope for Heart they have in English and then in French so like.

J. Some of hum the awards are in French, it's not in English...

I. Explain a little bit more.

J. Well we get awards each month and some it's like if your in French class then you give out French awards and in English class you give English awards.

I. You like that?

J. Yeah.

E. Sometimes you hear others teachers walking around speaking French, they don't always speak English sometimes because walk down the hall speaking French.

I. Is that sort of unusual or nobody notices it? (no, no...)

E. Sometimes they just talk French when you're around cause they don't want you to listen to them speaking English...

I. How do you feel about that?... The teachers not speaking English around you or not having you hear them speak English.

F. I think their trying to keep something from you because like when your growing up or something ... they always you always think they're French... they don't want you hearing them speak English.

I. When you're growing up you mean...

F. Like like it happened in other grades.

I. Like when you were little how did you think they...

F. Like when you were little you think that all they do is just French.

I. And when did you discover they didn't?

F. Sometimes hum when they were taking to my parents or something.

I. How old were you when that happened, what grade were you in when you saw that happening?

F. Hum, I was in grade two.

I. Were you shocked?

F. Yeah! ( other voices yeah!, yeah! laughing, joking)

I. How did you feel at that moment? Do you remember?

F. No not really.

I. You were surprised?

F. Yeah I was.

I. And did it change anything afterwards or you forgot about it?

F. Ha, I forgot about it.

C. In kindergarten madame ... she lied to us, she said she couldn't speak French, in English, and she kept insisting she couldn't speak English and like every one listened when their parents went for interviews ...

I. Everyone what?

C. Listened at the door when their parents went for interviews and they all speak English. (yeah I

know...what a shock...)

A. I heard a French teacher once she said that she was born in France and everything and then one day she taught us English.

I. And what happened?

A. Everybody was like "Why are you talking English. It was really weird.

I. Weird?

A. Yes it was weird, she sounded different.

I. You felt fun... How you felt hum ... Did that happen to anybody else this particular experience?

(Oh, yes...yeah...)

I. How do you feel about the new classroom arrangement you have today?

G. I don't like it.

I. Why do you have it that way.

G. So we don't talk.

I. When did that happen?

G. When we started talking.

I. When Friday afternoon?

(I don't know...yeah...)

G. When mrs.....comes in she puts us into rows.

I. Is that your English teacher?

G. Yeah!



I. And she put you into rows on Friday afternoon?

..... Excuse me but when I came back on Friday morning they were still in groups.

C. Because we had a maths test and we didn't have time to put them back into tables at the end of the day. They're suppose to be in tables.

I. So are they going to go back into tables?

C. Well I asked ( a supply teacher) and she said just to leave them like that.

I. So usually you have them in rows for English? (no, no, just for tests) Just for test, O.K. so that's not normal. Hum, how do you like sitting in groups?

E. I like sitting in groups because, hum, if you're sitting beside your friend or whatever you can just ask them for help and stuff, either you can ask around the group to see if anyone can help you or anything instead of getting up and going to the teacher.

H. I like sitting in a group because if you don't know... like you can't figure out what a word means or something then you can ask somebody who is sitting close to you or if you don't understand parts of it then you can ask them.

C. It be better when we sat in groups if we could pick like a partner to sit with and then like two girls would

be in partners and then two boys would be in partners and then they could put us in a table instead of having to sit like with anybody cause most of the time she'll put us like one boy in a group of three girls and then a girl in a group of three boys.

I. So you don't decide where you sit?

(No in unison)

I. How do you react when a teacher, for instance this morning Mrs..... reminded you quite a few times to speak French in class, how do you feel about that? When the teacher says you're to speak French and so on... how do you feel about that?

A. Sort of like, mad cause, like I like to talk English.... Sometimes you don't know a word in French and then you talk in English and then you get in trouble.

I. Cause you don't know the word in French and you say it in English and you get in trouble...

G. You talk English cause you've been talking English like on the bus to all your friends, at school before the bell rings and in your locker you're talking English, so you come into class talking English...

I. So when the teacher tells you o.k. it's time to speak French and all this, how does that make you feel... some people it may not bother at all.

K. When the teacher, when the teacher tells you to talk French, nobody does.

I. Nobody does?

K. Hardly anybody does their just like....it's just when they say to start talking French it's just a signal to talk in English quieter.

I. Talk quieter?

K. (laughing) Nobody really talks in French.

H. Sometimes it's only a few people who talk in English and then like the whole class gets punished cause you have to stay in like a couple minutes at recess.

I. Do you often get punished?

(in unison yeah! yeah!)

I. What is your punishment usually?

H. Usually we get two or three minutes off of recess.  
( more...more 10 or twelve...)

A. Well she catches us, she goes around....(?).

I. When she catches you, what does that mean when she catches you?

A. When she catches you talking English.

I. What happens at that point?

A. She marks off on a sheet of paper with x, and then and then you loose marks on your report card, and then and then if your cross with someone...for instance like

you say "Oh! you look like your mother!" or something like that she'll give you a little check mark.

E. Once we had our whole entire recess off she started taking like clumps like time off of our recess and we hardly were even doing anything, we were speaking a little bit of English but we were quiet, but she kept on taking time off and but like it came time for recess and, and we stayed in for ten minutes and she let us go out for the five minutes.

I. Colin I'd like to hear from you.

M. Well we stayed in twice cause sometimes we are very noisy but sometimes she just keeps us in for talking English.

F. I think an other reason that we stay in for recess and stuff, she's got a really bad temper.

I. We mentioned the other day that this is not something about the teacher it's something about you.

N. If we stay in at recess cause we speak English, sometimes you see the teacher and she'll go she'll go out and talk to an other French teacher but in English.

I. And how does that make you feel?

N. Mad! Why can't we talk English when were inside for recess we can't speak English while she goes out and speaks English to the French teacher.

H. Hum when she goes out and talks to some other French teacher in English it makes me feel kind of mad because well she's the one who's trying to teach us French and if she's allowed if she can talk English then I don't understand why we can't either?

I. Does that happen often?

(in unison yeah!)

O. Well like when we're having a class discussion or something and you want to say like, you just want to say something about the topic and she she hum she takes at like being noisy she takes half our recess off.

I. O.K. now I have one more question. Why do you think teachers ask you to speak French? Do you know why this happens?

E. Because they're trying to teach you French, they want you to speak it all the time so you'll get use to speaking it so you can get good but but I don't think I don't really like speaking French all the time because it's it gets harder and it's not it's not really easy to understand so...

P. She mostly wants us to speak in French cause it's a French class and hum... (giggling and laughing in the group) and she also wants us to learn the language a lot better too we won't learn the language or anything if we

talk in English during French class...you can't talk French in English.

I. Do you, do you you just talked about something do you feel it's important for you to speak French during class or is it not important to you, do you think about that or don't you think about that?

G. Hum, I think that's it's important to to speak French in French class cause then if you don't know what a word or whatever is then you just go off and ask the teacher, but if your talking French in English class and you don't know what a word is then you have to go to the dictionary and I don't think kids like to do that.

A. Well I know it's important to talk French during French class but I don't want to.

I. You don't want to?

A. No!

I. What do you want to do?

(a bit of laughing and in unison, "Speak English".)

I. Tell me, the way you feel about it right now, has it always been the same or has it changed in the last year or two years, your feeling about the way you know it's handled with the fact of speaking French all the time and so on. I'd like to hear from some of the boys at the back cause I haven't heard much about some of you guys.

Have you always felt that way or has it changed or does the teacher make a difference or...

M. Well I used to talk in French cause... now I feel like talking English cause I hate French here...

I. I'm sorry (name of student) do you want to speak louder, you used to speak French before and now...

M. I don't like it.

I. Why don't you like it?

M. It's harder.

I. It's too hard.

Q. Yeah, it's too hard like when we were in grade two or three like I liked speaking it I thought it was cool and all (laughing) now now it's difficult and I don't know.

I. It's it's getting more difficult?

Q. Yeah, and it's sort of and we have... it's harder to talk!

R. Back in grade two and that we were like the words were really easy and what we knew but now we have sometimes like big grammar tests and the words are like eight letters (laughing) you can't spell them and then you get D's and fail and stuff...

S. In grade two it seemed that it was easier to understand and now teachers don't explain things to you and they're using all these words .... and then she asks

you does everybody understand and it's like yeah, yeah..

I. Tell me you you were saying you compared grade two and grade six is there something in between there where it changed?

(some voices here and there "Grade Four, Grade Four, no, well no...)

I. Can you remember?

(voices here and there "Well because Grade Five it was easier now Grade Six (...?)

S. And then she gets overworked about something she (?) she screaming "Excellent!" and goes writing it on the board and everything.

C. In grade two like we we're allowed to speak English if we didn't know a word, but now she expects us to speak French all the time (...?) she'll still make us (...?) we speak with half of a word anyway.

E. I thought it was interest like finally when we were in grade one and all that because we couldn't we couldn't believe we were actually speaking something like an other language but now since we were in grade six it's getting to be really annoying, boring, cause you don't understand anything almost you only understand the simple things.

I. When you say that you find it difficult and you don't understand anything are you talking about the subject,



are there any particular subjects that you're talking about or is it all the same.

M. Those words up there like anatomie...like we don't know what those mean (...?) you probably know what they mean in English.

I. So you find that the words are too complicated for you and it makes it more difficult.

F. Sometimes like in French you get the words mixed up like a French word for an English word, you spell it wrong and then she like totally passes a fit (laughing).

E. Hum well when we're doing works we don't understand the big words we'll go and ask the teacher she'll tell us well go look in the dictionary but how are we suppose to look in the dictionary if we don't even know how to spell the word.

N. If your at your seat after she explains the the whatever were doing and you ask her she slams down her book and says "I already explained it!" (and your not listening) yeah your not listening or maybe you didn't understand.

J. Hum I think it's better if you have a nice teacher to work with cause then it's more fun (...?) and really easy to it (...?)

O. When she writes down like the big words on the board,

she doesn't explain them or anything and she expects us to know like all the stuff.

S. And then like if you ask her a word that you don't understand that you looked up in the dictionary so you go to the dictionary and having the word in the dictionary explaining it, you don't know what it means (?) so you look up this word and that word...

I. Are there any particular... is there anything during your French time in Grade Six one area that you find easier or one area that you find harder. Is there you know is it related to subjects.

F. I find art easier.

A. I find things like the human body that's hard... o.k. so you learn all of this in French and when you try when you go and you like someone asks you something in English and you have no idea (you know it in French) yeah and when they say the word that you don't understand in English, and they don't explain it, you don't know what it is because you know it in French.

T. We're doing this (?) on energy and you have to read stuff out of books and if you don't understand some of the accent, and you don't have anyone to explain it (...?) and you let someone else do the other part and you never learn what it is and you just don't understand.

I. So you're learning something that you don't understand and sort of...

T. She doesn't explain it to me.

H. (?) grammar and spelling it's kind of the hardest because especially the like the date and stuff is different like in English you say hum May 26 but in French you say hum le 26 mai and it gets confusing.

I. So the French and English confuse you.

I. Some of the boys at the back, what do you have to say about that? (name of student) is there any particular subject that you find harder or easier.

N. (Grammar...verbs...) (lots of comments)

I. Do you get lots of that?

(O yeah! in unison)

G. I find gym is easier than grammar and it's funnier than grammar.

G. I find gym is easier than grammar cause its more fun and you like to learn it better.

I. Do you speak French when you're in the gym?

(unison o yeah! no!)

E. I think art and gym are the easiest to do and then the orthographe and all that are the hardest because if you don't get good on test then you have to more of it, she doesn't really explain she just gives it to you and

you got to take home, yeah for homework and bring it back and get a bad mark on it and all that.

I. O.K. I can feel a lot of frustration from a lot of students here but I want to ask you one last question. Do you find that this is something that has been frustrating you for a long time or is it something that is recent lets say in the last month, the last year, can you give me more of an idea... ( had to sent (name of students) outside as they were being too disruptive) so is this something more recent or is it something that has always frustrated you or something that has gone on for a long time.

J. Hum, I think for me it just started this year because like she said we should have learned it last year but we didn't and it's very hard.

I. So your frustrations is more from this year. (Yeah!)

E. I think it just started this year because all the other years have been really good we've had good years but yeah fun, but this year it's been really confusing and difficult because I don't know if it's madame or not but it's just you don't I I don't really feel like hum I'm comfortable doing Grade Six work because like in Grade Five and all that we understood better but now in Grade Six it's more confusing and I didn't think it would

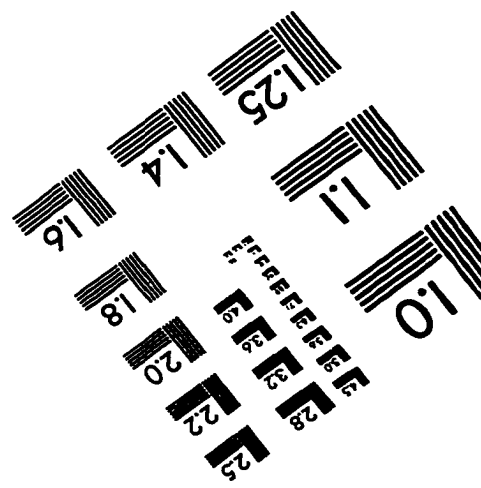
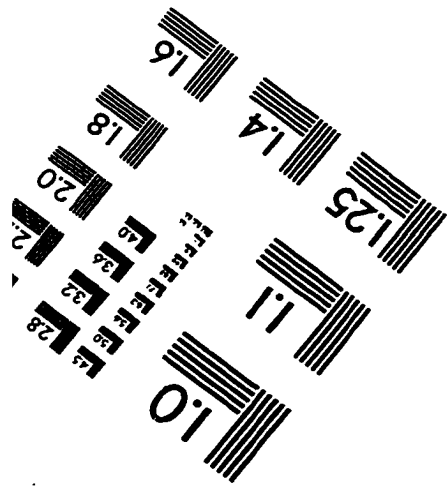
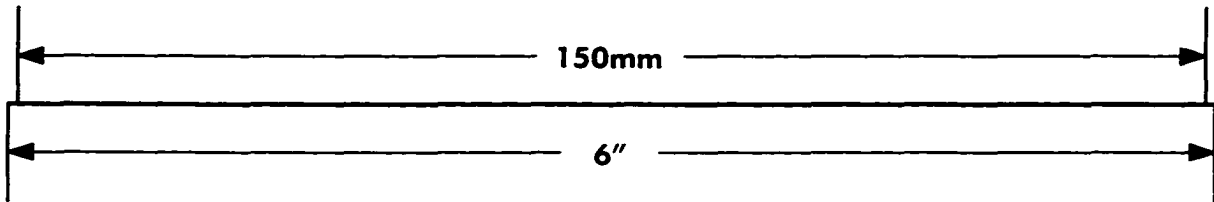
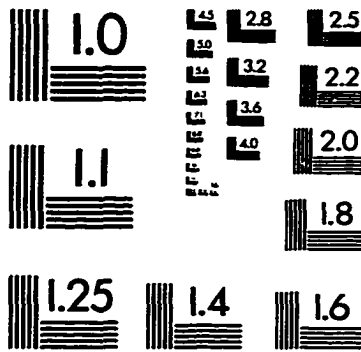
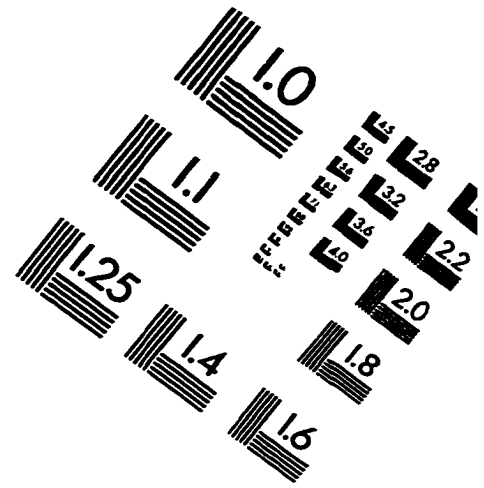
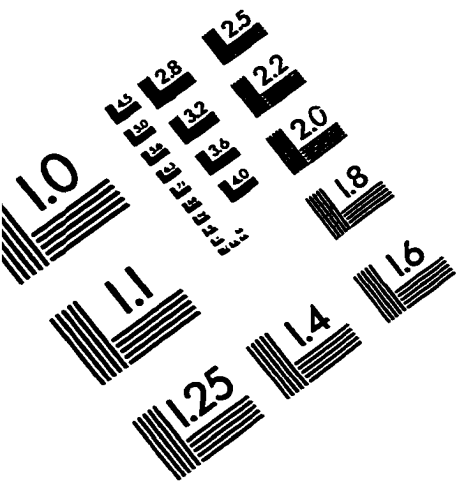
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F. I think (...?) one person the teacher.

I. O.K. hum, do you think it has anything to do with the fact that you have more like less French in Grade Six then in Grade Five in the previous years do you think that that has any bearing... because as you know like in Grade Six you have French less time.

E. Well last year we had only one hour of English and the we had English in the morning till recess and we had one hour of English till lunch and the rest would be all French but this year and we didn't do we did a lot of work in French but cause in English we only had one hour so but this year we only have a half a day for French that's why were doing all this work and I think that it should be like this that in English too cause then cause last year we didn't really study English very much and this year now that we have lots of English we can kind of have both French and English equally so it won't be sort of we can learn both like really good and we won't have to worry about you know like how you... and all that.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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

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