



TEACHING AND LEARNING RESEARCH EXCHANGE

“Collaborating to Make a
Difference”:
The Adaptive Dimension and
Differentiating Instruction in
Saskatoon Catholic French
Immersion Schools

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Project #132
June 2005

This research was partially funded through a grant from the McDowell Foundation. However, the points of view and opinions expressed in project documents are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

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Acknowledgements

The researchers, Elaine Stakiw and H el ene Cook wish to thank the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for making this project possible and Verna Gall en, Research Coordinator, and her staff for their support and assistance.

For their support, a special word of thanks is extended to Saskatoon Catholic School Division French Language Instruction Coordinator Ron Sirois, Coordinator of Learning Resources Colette Fischer, and Coordinator of Student Services Marilyn Allen.

Appreciation and thanks are extended to Joanne Weninger, Superintendent of Education, and the Saskatoon Catholic School Division, for approving and supporting this research project.

Thanks also go to the French immersion principals' group and the collaborating teams in each of the Saskatoon Catholic School Division French immersion elementary schools for their willingness to take a risk by participating in this action research project.

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Dedication

“Collaborating to Make a Difference”: The Adaptive Dimension and Differentiating Instruction in Saskatoon Catholic French immersion Schools is dedicated to the reflective practitioners who worked together to meet the diverse academic needs of students in their classrooms and to all students in French immersion classrooms present and future whose learning experiences may be better facilitated as a result of this study.

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Introduction and School Background

THE STUDY: PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Teaching practices are strengthened and opportunities for student learning are improved when teachers network with each other to share challenges, develop curriculum unit modules, pool and review resources, and discuss and/or work on areas of mutual concern (School^{PLUS}, 2003).

Literature indicates that professional collaboration is a preferred practice. Saskatchewan's educational curriculum directs educators to utilize the Adaptive Dimension to differentiate instruction to assure success for all students. Since the provincial curriculum renewal initiatives of the 1980's, literature and provincial educational directives have advocated collaboration, reflective practice, and attention to classroom diversity through the Adaptive Dimension. Currently, the School^{PLUS} initiative and the movement to reculture schools as professional learning communities have joined in their efforts to develop collaborative cultures where teams plan and teach, clarifying what students will learn, how schools will assess whether learning has taken place and how schools will respond to support students who do not learn (Dufour & Eaker, 2002). Whereas the efforts to emphasize the need for collaboration, differentiation of instruction and assessment of learning have multiplied, "most teachers continue to work in isolation" while frustrated as they face the challenges of student diversity in a time of increasing financial restraints (p.8).

The purpose of this action research project was to create a formalized support system, utilizing the existing roles of the classroom teacher, the teacher-librarian, the learning assistance teacher and the school division catalyst teacher, for collaboration in the development and/or adaptation of two curriculum units to meet the diverse academic needs of students in the classroom. Each of the six French immersion elementary schools in the Saskatoon Catholic School Division participated in the study during the academic year 2004-05. It was, and continues to be, the hope of the researchers that this practice would serve as a model for other French immersion teachers within the division. The need for increased attention to differentiated instruction in the French immersion setting in relation to attrition and grade retention is a concern which had been previously identified and discussed by school-based and out-of-scope administrators.

With these needs and objectives in mind, research leaders and school-based teams sought to answer the following research question:

What is the effect on teaching practices and student achievement when teachers are provided with a formalized support system to collaborate for the purpose of differentiating instruction in a French immersion setting?

FRENCH IMMERSION EDUCATION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Traditionally, it has been the practice in French immersion programs to accommodate students with learning differences and difficulties mainly through retention, independent study, or transfer into a mainstream program. Teachers, in most cases, continue to work in isolation. Where collaborative practices exist, their focus has not been on the Adaptive Dimension to differentiate instruction. The amount of collaboration that actually takes place is limited by factors such as the demands of the French immersion program, lack of available resources, the availability of time, perceived roles, pre-service education, and the structures and processes present on a daily basis in a school. This action research has been based on an understanding of these realities and the principles of change theory. The funding for this project by the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation enabled each school to engage in collaborative planning and collect resource materials focussing on the Adaptive Dimension and strategies to differentiate instruction.

Review of the Literature

In order to focus more clearly on the effects of collaboration and differentiation of instruction in relation to student achievement, a review of relevant literature and research was conducted. This review examined the benefits and challenges that occur when teachers work together. In addition, the philosophy of differentiation of instruction and implications for practice within the classroom setting was explored.

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

With the degree of academic diversity present in the classroom increasing, the role of the teacher is changing and this change requires that teachers move from working in isolation to a more collaborative model. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) stated:

As teachers face up to rising and widening expectations in their work and to the increasing overload of innovations and reforms, it is important that they work and plan more with their colleagues, sharing and developing their expertise together, instead of trying to cope with the demands alone. In this emerging conception of the teacher's role, leadership and consultancy are part of the job for all teachers, not just a privilege allocated to and exercised by a few. (p. 4)

The culture and tradition of teachers working in isolation is one of the greatest hindrances to improved professional practice of teachers and, therefore, to the increased achievement of students (Little, 1982). Educators must accept their responsibility to work together as true professional colleagues. Dufour & Eaker (1998) noted that even if teachers have time, structure, and training to work collaboratively, they need to acknowledge this responsibility. Barth (1991) pointed out that, as educators, many of our isolated practices have contributed negatively to student achievement:

God didn't create self-contained classrooms, fifty minute periods, and subjects taught in isolation. We did – because we find working alone safer than, and preferable to, working together. (p.128)

The collaborative school is one in which administrators and teachers routinely work together to promote effective teaching and learning. Little (1990) outlined critical practices that characterize collaborative schools:

1. **Teachers talk about teaching.** In collaborative schools, professional conversation is frequent and the dialogue is theoretically rich and meaningful. The exchange of ideas allows teachers the opportunity to understand and assist and, at times, challenge one another.
2. **Classroom observations are frequent.** By engaging in systematic observation, teachers explore issues in student learning and continually refine teaching practices. In collaborative cultures, teachers move behind the classroom

door of colleagues to share and trade off the roles of mentor, advisor, or specialist. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) wrote about the importance of deeper kinds of reflection. Deeper reflection requires other eyes and other perspectives besides our own. Classroom observation can be a stimulus to meaningful reflection.

3. **Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate and prepare teaching materials together.** When teachers plan collaboratively they build program coherence, expand individual resources, and often reduce individual burdens for planning and preparation.
4. **Teachers train together and train one another.** Teachers view professional practices as an opportunity for discussion and refinement. The Official Minority Languages Office of Saskatchewan Learning (2005) stressed the need for teachers to work as a professional learning community:

Having educators work collaboratively on planning, problem-solving, instructional improvement, mentoring, resource development and assessment activities has proven to be the foundational piece in achieving excellence in programs. Shared instructional leadership is a powerful tool for achieving the goals of any instructional program, and second language learning is no exception. (p.67)

BARRIERS TO PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

When educators think about professional collaboration, questions regarding time are paramount concerns. Where will the time come from and at what cost? Will there be enough time? How will the time be provided?

Schlechty (1990) noted:

Teachers, faculties, and principals have and more importantly feel that they have little control over the way time is allocated in school. The one commodity that teachers and administrators say that they do not have enough of, even more so than money, is time; time to teach, time to converse, time to think, time to plan, time to talk, even time to go to the restroom or have a cup of coffee. Time is indeed precious in school. (p.73)

Schein (1992) explained, "Time imposes a social order, and how things are handled in time conveys status and intention" (pp. 114-115). Peterson (1999) echoed Schein's thoughts and wrote that how educators think about time and how they use it is woven into the culture of their schools. Peterson stressed that school leaders must learn how to read a school's culture and how to focus staff development on the cultural issues that affect how people use their time.

The way in which a school structures its time affects professional collaboration and school improvement initiatives (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Gideon 2002). The lack of time for collaboration is a product of the factory model upon which

schools were organized. Within this model, the emphasis is on teaching large numbers of students for the entire day and there is little time for collaboration, reflection or thinking. Dufour & Eaker stressed the need for schools to develop a process for eliminating non-essential material from the curriculum to provide teachers with more time to teach the significant curriculum.

Time for collaboration must be built into the school day. Dufour and Eaker (1998) noted that providing time for collaboration did not guarantee that collaboration would automatically take place. Team members needed to be given explicit questions to consider and tasks to accomplish during collaboration. Team members needed training and support to be effective collaborators and needed to acknowledge their responsibility to work together as professional colleagues.

While the structural designs and culture of most schools still lend themselves to teachers working independently, new practices and policies require that teachers move to more collaborative practices. Within the emphasis on school improvement, school restructuring, and school effectiveness, professional collaboration is viewed as the foundation of many key reforms. (Leonard & Leonard, 1999)

DIFFERENTIATION

The Official Minority Language Office of Saskatchewan Learning (2005) acknowledged the student diversity in second language classrooms and the need to provide for this diversity:

Children learn in different ways and at different rates. Students come to the classroom with significant differences in cultural backgrounds, aptitudes, interests, abilities, and achievement levels. It is the responsibility of every teacher to accommodate these differences through adaptations to curriculum content, instructional strategies, and the learning environment if all are to benefit equitably from education programs. (p.68)

Working within the Adaptive Dimension of the Saskatchewan curriculum, teachers are required to enrich, extend, reinforce, or teach differently toward foundational objectives. By differentiating our instruction we can respond to a variety of learner's needs and foster student responsibility for learning. Tomlinson (2001) referred to differentiation as a philosophy or way of thinking about the classroom with the dual goals of honoring each student's learning needs and maximizing each student's learning capacity. Differentiation is a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners. Tomlinson pointed out that differentiating instruction is guided by a number of principles which include:

- providing meaningful tasks for all students,
- utilizing flexible grouping patterns, and
- employing ongoing assessment and adjustment of the content, process, and products of learning in response to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

The need to move from “teaching to the middle” is repeated by Sarason (1990):

A different way to learn is what the kids are calling for. All of them are talking about how our one-size fits-all delivery system – which mandates that everyone learn the same thing at the same time, no matter what their individual needs – has failed them. (p.12)

Differentiated instruction represents a proactive approach to improving learning for all students (Pettig, 2000). Needs rather than labels should guide instruction. Howard Gardner (1994) asserted that the biggest mistake of the past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual, and thus to feel justified in teaching them the same subjects in the same ways.

Our inclusive classrooms of today contain students with diverse needs. Meeting these diverse needs requires a change in teaching practices and a change in classroom culture. This type of change does not occur overnight. It is a journey.

Research Methodology

ABOUT ACTION RESEARCH

Action research has sometimes been referred to as cooperative research, cooperative-action research or as operational research (Good, 1966). Action research addresses planned change designed to study the effects of the change. Hult and Lennung (cited in Kelly, 1985) characterize such research as collaboratively expanding scientific knowledge in an immediate situation within an ethical framework while assisting in problem-solving and expanding the competencies of the respective participants. Glickman (1993) candidly expressed the need for a critical study process in the following statement:

[S]chools need to direct their attention to study as part of their activity and not something that other people do to us. Studying at school is part of taking action in that school. To study without acting gets a school nowhere; to act without study gets a school somewhere-lost. Studying and acting, when integrated, lead to the same result - an educative, purposeful school.
(p.55)

The methods utilized in this study constitute action research in that all participants, including the two lead researchers, were collaboratively engaged in examining the effects on teaching practices and student achievement in the French immersion setting while differentiating instruction within a formalized support system. While the journey of change upon which we embarked had an open-ended destination, data were gathered through the collaborative efforts of the focus groups and lead researchers within an ethical and systematic framework.

COMING TO THE PROJECT (THE FRAMEWORK)

Following the 2003 *Learning from Practice: Exchange of Teacher Knowledge and Research*, the framework for this project evolved as the two lead researchers discussed their respective ideas for possible research. One researcher, as a French immersion school principal, was looking for a project that would provide teachers with the opportunity to develop new ways to meet the diverse needs of the students in their French immersion school. Her perspective was one of finding a solution to an increasingly more prominent concern so as to avoid grade retention and the transfer of students to mainstream classrooms. This concern had been uniformly expressed by other French immersion principals. The other researcher, as Coordinator of Gifted Learner Education, saw the opportunity to create a framework for French immersion schools similar to one modelled by colleagues in English stream schools. Resource personnel and materials were already in her mind. Thus began the journey of collaboration and team-building. Combining their perspectives according to respective roles and

perceptions, the lead researchers engaged in discussions that saw their ideas evolve and meld into a project somewhat different from the one they had initially envisioned.

With the approval of the Superintendent of Education for Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Joanne Weninger, and the support of the Coordinator of French Language Instruction Ron Sirois, Coordinator of Learning Resources Colette Fischer, and Coordinator of Student Services Marilyn Allen, the researchers presented their proposal to the French immersion principals' group.

In May 2004, having received project approval for the project from the McDowell Foundation, the researchers asked each immersion school principal to identify a classroom to participate in the project. Criteria for classroom identification were left up to school-based administration. Once teams were organized in each school, one researcher met with the individual teams to ensure common understandings of the project were in place. Before the school year ended, preliminary plans were outlined and materials were listed for a fall orientation workshop.

A LEARNING COMMUNITY SETS FORTH

Once staff placements were finalized in September, participants in the focus groups were identified. Each focus group consisted of a classroom teacher, a teacher-librarian, a learning assistance teacher, and the division catalyst teacher assigned to the school. Catalyst teachers had an initial meeting with their school teams prior to the September orientation workshop. The workshop provided the focus groups with a common understanding of the principles and goals of the project and its processes. Resource personnel provided first-hand experiences related to the principles of *Building and Supporting a Community of Learners, the Adaptive Dimension and Differentiating Instruction*.

School teams were equipped with a treasure chest of resources. To allow teams to do additional research on the current literature regarding the principles that had been presented and to allow them to work through team-building activities before beginning the unit planning and delivery, site-based planning time was provided. Reflection logs were also provided for journaling. Teams were encouraged to create a working space where visual records of unit development and the collaborative process could be posted and revisited throughout the initiative. In December, the researchers held the second large-group in-service to debrief team members' experiences and findings during development of the first unit. The in-service also served as a celebration of the successes on the road travelled and a review of the principles underlying the project. In this way, team members were prepared for the development of the second unit planned for the period from January to April.

The final workshop held in early April provided an opportunity to evaluate the benefits and the challenges of the research process. It also provided a retrospective as well as a futuristic look at both the project and literature. Video clips on professional learning communities and an adapted version of a template for lesson-planning were added to the resources available (see Appendix

A). Feedback was provided to the lead researchers through questionnaires, focus group reflection sheets, and a final debriefing organized in two groups of three schools. Group responses as well as individual reflective journals, which had been on-going throughout the project, were handed in as data for the researchers to collate with the rest of the documentation and use for the preparation of the final report.

METHODS AND ACTIVITIES USED IN GATHERING AND ANALYZING DATA

The research included both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the changes which occurred in teaching practices (differentiation of instruction, collaboration) and student achievement. Quantitative data were collected by the school teams as ongoing assessments conducted throughout the units. These assessments took such forms as pre and post tests, anecdotal records, teacher observations, portfolios, rubrics, and student self-assessment. The qualitative data were gathered through teacher reflection logs and through formal and informal focus group discussions.

Throughout the project, each school team continued to meet independently to plan and teach collaboratively and experiment with innovative ideas and methodologies relating to the Adaptive Dimension and Differentiating Instruction. At the end of the project, the teams were asked in focus groups to reflect and identify important issues relating to the effects of collaboration on student achievement and professional growth. The results from the focus groups were used to create continued dialogue both for the group members and their colleagues in French immersion schools.

Results and Conclusions

ANALYSIS/EMERGING PATTERNS

What is the effect on teaching practices and student achievement when teachers are provided with a formalized support system to collaborate for the purpose of differentiating instruction in a French immersion setting?

In order to address our research question, the researchers gleaned data from journal responses, focus groups feedback, and workshops. Although the results evolved as the study progressed, some themes remained common and constant. The following general observations, summarized from participants' first unit journal entries and December workshop information, were shared with all participants prior to undertaking the second unit:

- Without exception, all participants reported initial frustration and apprehension; they wanted role clarification and information about objectives, outcomes, and purpose.
- Frustration and apprehension lessened as time went on and trust was developed within the teams.
- Professional growth and renewed enthusiasm for teaching was experienced. Team members valued the opportunity to learn from and with others.
- Many participants were encouraged by the success of their students.
- Participants valued the opportunity for input by all.
- Classroom teachers appeared reluctant initially to give up too much control and were appreciative when their concerns were heard.
- Some teachers felt that in order to accommodate the schedules of all team members, the units went on for too long.
- More time was needed to debrief the experiences of project participants.
- One school felt that there was not enough emphasis on differentiation and wanted to change that for the second unit.
- The importance of setting up the learning objectives was stressed by all teachers.
- A lack of French resources, the limited vocabulary of the students, and unfamiliarity with group and cooperative work arrangements were noted as concerns by most team members.
- Word banks were created and worked well with the students.

- The responsiveness of the students in the learning process as they fed off the enthusiasm of the teaching team was observed by all school teams. Reluctant students were more engaged.

In the early part of the project it was not uncommon for our reflective practitioners to express such concerns as:

I'm concerned that our plan is not going to show differentiated instruction. We prepared one set of questions and activities for all students. I'm worried that ... the classroom teacher is not going to be left with differentiated instruction resources.

With time constraints a reality, it was common for participants to show eagerness to get directly into the task at hand, yet team-building and research are key components of successful collaborative efforts (Robbins, 1993). The following journal entry confirms Robbins' findings:

In retrospect, I wish I would have read the binder before starting the unit. I think if we would have set norms, we would have worked better together and we would have differentiated much more in our unit.

Another entry demonstrates the progression experienced by the participants from the onset of the project to the end of the first unit:

...it took us a long time to prepare part of the unit which originally would have taken me only a couple of hours ...I think our project experienced growth pains. We have a much better idea on how to proceed for our next project.

Other quotations taken from the first unit journal entries and workshop are listed below:

- The collaborative process was absolutely great today!
- Collaboration sucks. You need to listen as well as give your opinion.
- I hope I didn't cause any bad feelings for the team today.
- The resources were a limiting factor on our topic.
- I am quite happy with the final product. Every child was able to complete and be a part of the learning centre, regardless of ability.
- It was a tough day. It was a mish mash. Last day went so well. What went wrong? It seems many kids are frustrated as we move up to Application and Analysis.
- We sat down today to discuss how this project was differentiated. After our discussion, I was reassured about our course.
- Frustration is subsiding.

- The unit is having so many disruptions (house-leagues) – it is hard to have continuity.
- I feel like we have a team.
- We met every day as a team before the lesson and for a quick debriefing after the lesson.
- The procedure worked well but was sometimes long between sessions.
- The students all demonstrated growth but this was most apparent with the lower-end group. All students were receptive to learning.
- Honestly, I feel that our team needs to go out for a coffee just to talk about how we are doing as a team.
- I value the collaborative process. However, we definitely have a gap. We need to have a pre-conference and a post-conference to really make this process fruitful!
- A good day! First, we were able to meet and collaborate our ideas before being with the students.
- My concerns remain – did the students actually learn what was set out for them to learn?
- As an immersion teacher, this project has affirmed in me the definite challenges we face in teaching a second language.
- The planning process was extremely successful due to the team members. We are each one of us specialists, and this is held in regard by others.
- Journaling is not something I do naturally but it has caused me to stop and think about what I am doing.
- Why do the students have to be involved in research when they need help in other areas?
- Getting to know all of our schedules and how to coordinate our lesson times as well as our planning times was very challenging.
- Students saw adults demonstrating cooperative work and tried to follow suit – excellent role modeling.
- Teamwork was influenced by the reality of the human condition and school realities interrupting or altering plans, i.e. illness, family matters, other initiatives and the need to have information for the progress reports.

Based on their initial experiences, all team members indicated that they were looking forward to working collaboratively on the second unit. Some common themes were noted:

- the value of the collaborative process when trust develops over time,
- the importance of setting up learning objectives and ways to measure them,
- the positive impact on student learning and professional growth, and
- the value of communication.

The following journal entry exemplifies the interactive overlapping nature of these themes, which rendered them impossible to separate:

The students were always very responsive to the work presented to them. They fed off of the enthusiasm of the teachers involved. ...The small group work we did do was amazing. The kids felt so good about their results that they were sharing their work with other groups. Students who usually are very non-participatory were willing to share, to teach partners and to ask the teachers questions within the group. I have seen 2-3 students continue to bloom even after our group sessions have stopped. They often ask if we can do more work in groups like this.

Themes from the second unit, although similar in many cases to those appearing during the first, provide evidence that project participants were engaging in the reflective practice of action researchers, using data feedback in a cyclical manner to solve problems, expand their knowledge, and enhance competencies. Findings are summarized below under the headings of collaboration, differentiation, teaching practices, and student achievement.

COLLABORATION

The major recurring idea related to collaboration centred on the gifts that each team member could bring to the planning and teaching of the units.

- The planning process was extremely successful due to the team members. We are each specialists and this is held in high regard by the others. My level of worry and anxiety are decreasing because of the cooperative spirit around the table.
- I think the thing that made the planning so successful was that no one person stole the show. We came up with the basic framework and worked our way through the objectives.
- Using the skills of others, we were able to capitalize on computers, art, and reading skills. There was support and sympathy when problems arose.

- A strong team was formed. I feel that we are allies working together. Others in the school who are not involved in the project have asked questions and are interested in the process.
- The school community also benefited in that our energy was felt by other teachers, students and parents. We had become a “Learning Community” of sorts and our peers were truly interested in our projects and progress. The students saw us collaborating, sharing, laughing, and enjoying each other and the lessons. Parents noted the excitement and success of their children. The feeling was absolutely contagious.

Problems arose when there was a lack of communication due to factors such as conflicting and complicated schedules, a lack of team norms, and concerns involving time.

- Collaboration isn’t easy when you can’t rely on some to pull their load and when some members of the team rely too heavily on others to keep the focus.
- A challenge I see in collaborating with others is the element of time – time to meet, time to plan, time to teach, and time to reflect on the process. This project has given us a glimpse of what can be done when teachers collaborate and when they are given time to support their efforts.
- Because of our complicated schedules, we did not have enough time to properly meet, debrief, reflect, or converse as a team.
- Making a schedule which includes everyone and which works for all members of the team is extremely difficult.
- I value the collaborative sessions but we definitely have a gap in our process. We would need to pre-conference and post-conference to really make this process fruitful.
- It is important that team members have enough time to meet and discuss goals and reflections.
- We were not always on the same page. Some members of the team consistently interrupt others as we try to share our ideas. I find this bothersome and unprofessional. Plans for the unit are changed without consulting with the team.
- Our team seems not to be able to meet as a group to share – this is frustrating. We had a meeting scheduled for 8:30 but only two members of the team showed up.
- Things to watch for as a team – having time to meet before and after a lesson and being sure that we are clear on what it is we are doing.
- We had so many interruptions at school that it is difficult to find extra time to plan together.

All participants found that collaboration was much easier with the second unit. It takes time for trust and respect to be established within teams. Teachers were more familiar with the students and were able to differentiate easier for the second unit.

- As a team we worked together with greater comfort as trust and respect had been established. We knew our students and their needs better with the second unit.
- The second unit was easier. Everyone had clearer ideas about roles and differentiation strategies.
- There is a real sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from collaboration. With the second unit, we were feeling like a well oiled machine.
- Our meeting with the other immersion schools was much appreciated. It was a reminder that each team member went into this project with different mind sets and perspectives. It was important to emphasize the growth of the team members and the students and focus less on the challenges.

DIFFERENTIATION

The focus on differentiation required teams to anticipate and respond to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs. This proactive approach saw teams “reading their students”. There was a shift from teaching to learning.

- Through this process, I learned to keep content and students’ needs at the top of the priority list. Every activity had a purpose and concrete outcomes – no fluff.
- We had some discussion around the grouping of students and it was felt that behavior along with ability needed to be considered to make the group work. We also discussed teacher strengths and assigned teachers to groups based on the strengths identified. Great consideration to the needs and abilities of students made work more successful.
- I learned that we were very fortunate to have the opportunity to group students based on their needs. We differentiated the activities and were flexible from day to day to meet the needs of the groups. Students seemed very comfortable with their groupings and enjoyed the challenges. How will I manage when the project is over?
- We differentiated content by providing material at different reading levels. Process was differentiated by leveled or tiered activities based on Multiple Intelligences and readiness. We provided several choices for end products.

- We are attempting to group kids each lesson based on skills they can perform and then have activities tiered to teach and challenge them at their level.
- The students were the big winners with this model. Each of our lessons was completely differentiated to meet the student needs and learning styles.
- There were lots of hands-on activities. Authentic learning and concrete understanding of the concepts were the results of differentiated instruction. WOW! What an experience.
- Our top group just took off. Our middle group rose to the challenge and pushed each other to do a good job. Our lower group needed 1-1 instruction and we were able to provide that so that all the children were successful.
- Counting in French isn't fluent in all students. This is cause for concern in Math. However, without our groupings and differentiated activities these concerns would not have been addressed or maybe even noticed.

In a differentiated classroom it is necessary to be clear on key concepts and generalizations that give meaning to the unit. Several participants noted the use of Content Enhancement routines as useful tools for planning and implementing the units.

- We have been having informal meetings in an attempt to determine what our topic will be. We are carefully previewing resources as we see they are the key to success. We are studying the curriculum so we are all knowledgeable about the topic, and we are using the "unit organizer" from Concept Enhancement to outline the main understandings of the unit. Everyone seems to be on the same page as far as terminology and how we can best differentiate for the group.
- We focused on using Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking, Content Enhancement framing routines, and Multiple Intelligences when planning the activities and lessons.
- The teacher gave her class a pre and post test using a framing routine from Content Enhancement.

Immersion settings often bring unique needs. These needs often highlight the need for adequate resources.

- The reading level of the resources was still high but we adapted them. The low group used the same resources but we worked through it together gathering vocabulary and explaining concepts.
- We need to differentiate content more. Some students are having difficulty with collecting information from an internet source.

- We need to attend conferences to get material for immersion classrooms.
- We have many resources to use but the challenge is to find them in French.

Assessment for learning is key to program improvement and increased student achievement. Ongoing assessment allows a teacher to focus more directly on student learning and the student response to instruction.

- Today I felt grateful that I was working as a team because we decided that we could use our observations and assessments to evaluate the progress of the students in each of our groups.
- I had the opportunity to sit at length with a number of students and help them to critique/correct their own work.
- The pre-test routines gave us a good idea as to where the students were and how we had to adapt the unit.

TEACHING PRACTICES

While participants noted that there were challenges during the project, most agreed that the project was an excellent professional development opportunity and that some of their traditional teaching practices had been altered.

- Sincerely a professional development project that will affect the way I teach from now on.
- We used questions from the grid to model Bloom's Taxonomy for the students.
- I'm practicing. I'm using the tools. I've become better at planning differentiated units.
- I wish we had block scheduling. I was booted out to the computer lab and my group is falling behind.
- Keeping a journal helps me to clarify what we did and what we need to do.
- One classroom teacher commented that she had not known just how weak her weakest students were as she had never had the opportunity to work this way before. She now has more empathy for the Adaptive Dimension and had learned, through our teams' collaborating and sharing, practical strategies she could employ in her own class.
- This experience gave each of us amazing energy as we were always excited about our lessons, the students' visible progress and our feeling of being a part of something very cutting edge and important.

- For next year, we are planning to block our time using the catalyst teacher and learning assistance teacher.
- As an immersion teacher, I need clarification on the topic of content vs. language.
- Personally, as an educator it was good to see how other teachers see and approach learning situations and specific students. I was able to learn new techniques of instruction and have a better appreciation of working with large groups, something I seldom have the opportunity to do.
- I love these planning tools. They help keep planning meetings well focused as all members cooperatively fill it out and stay CONTENT BASED!!
- As a school principal, I was pleased to see the application of this team-teaching model used in other classrooms in the school.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

There was a positive impact on student achievement. Participants attributed this impact to differentiation practices that challenged each child at his/her optimum level. Smaller groups allowed for more student engagement with hands-on activities. In addition, an increase in student confidence was noted.

- It was wonderful to see the student learning that occurred and that we celebrated their successes.
- When I see the published works of my students along with their visual displays, I simply recognize the fruits of this collaborative project. With the extra adults, we are able to tier students and do a complete study of their topic at their level.
- The students are focused and are enjoying the individualized attention they get in small groups.
- The self evaluations are very positive. The students enjoyed the experience. They were proud and confident when they presented their work. They worked at a challenging level and felt successful.
- One student said his least favorite subject was Math (prior to the unit) because it was too easy.
- In three way conferences, almost all mentioned Math as an area of strength or weakness. The ones who were weak felt they were doing well and those who were strong felt less confident in Math, because suddenly it wasn't all straight forward and easy.

- (Projet de sciences humaines) Les élèves sont groupés par niveau d'habileté et pour des considérations d'interaction sociale.depuis le début de l'année, il y a moins de disputes et taquineries dans la classe. Les enfants ont plus de confiance en eux-mêmes et dans les autres. N.1..peut maintenant jouer avec.N2... Toute la classe fait des projets supplémentaires. En ce moment ce sont les recherches de sciences qui les passionnent. [Translation: Students were grouped according to level of ability and for social considerations. There have been fewer classroom disruptions. Children have greater self-confidence and more confidence in each other. The entire class is doing supplementary research projects... social studies is their present passion.]
- One student commented (in his journal) that math was a pleasure. The students seem focused and are doing well.
- The top group was challenged and many were working independently.
- The struggling students found success where they hadn't before. "Success breeds success" and we saw this on a daily basis. The students had fewer behavior problems because they were engaged in their learning. Their confidence, participation, and understanding of the concepts grew with each lesson. For some this was the first time they were fully participating and really learning at their personal pace and ability level. The stronger students were being challenged daily at their ability levels and were not finished their work in a short time with free time to spare. We did not give them more work, but work that engaged them at their levels.
- Some of the students are starting to show leadership within the group. Some are opening up and sharing more, bonding within the group. We're seeing qualities that we haven't seen before.
- Success for all students. We saw weaker students grow in confidence. Some of the stronger students were uncomfortable because they didn't know all the answers. Other strong students loved the challenge.
- Les élèves qui ne lisaient pas beaucoup lisent plus, prennent plus de livres de bibliothèque. Il y a une amélioration de lecture. Ils s'acceptent plus et s'aident plus. [Translation: Students who read very little are reading more and are taking out more library books. Their reading has improved. They accept each other better and help one another more.]

At the onset of this project some team members and administrators expressed concern about the fact that not all catalyst teachers were French-speaking. In French immersion, the mandate of delivering instruction and learning experiences in the target language is one that must be respected. It was, therefore, always at the forefront of considerations throughout the project. Comments made at the end of the project showed that because non-French speaking catalyst teachers made an effort to utilize the French language they had, less capable students felt comfortable correcting errors and teaching vocabulary. Students felt validated because they recognized that their own abilities in speaking French were superior to those of a role model who they held in esteem.

Implications and Recommendations

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT FINDINGS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Today's inclusive classrooms contain students with a wide range of abilities, from the gifted to the learning disabled. In any given classroom, it is not unusual to find students with profound learning disabilities and others who exceed grade level expectations by two or three years. At the same time, issues of gender, culture, learning styles, and intelligence strength, shape the varied ways in which students approach and respond to learning. Each group of students, and in fact, each individual student, has unique needs. In order to best serve all students, a teacher should develop and adjust expectations and learning strategies for the various learning styles and groups that are represented. However, this is easier said than done, and the reality is that most teachers "teach to the middle" (Tomlinson, 2001). It is extremely difficult for a classroom teacher working in isolation to meet the challenges of this range of academic diversity.

Professional collaboration offers opportunities for professional growth and increased student achievement as teachers share their areas of expertise. The needs of all students are better accommodated through this collaborative process. The principles of collaboration are the basis of this action research project, which was to create a formalized support system utilizing the existing roles of the classroom teacher, the teacher-librarian, the learning assistance teacher and the division catalyst teacher to collaborate in the development and/or adaptation of two curriculum units to meet the diverse academic needs of students in the classroom.

Although this study describes the efforts of only six school teams it provides practical insights into collaborative team-building and the views and reactions of team members as they participated in the process of team development for the purpose of differentiating instruction. It exemplifies the processes of professional learning communities engaged in reflecting on teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of French immersion students.

Based on the findings of this study, it is reasonable to conclude that student achievement and professional growth were positively affected by the differentiated instruction that was collaboratively planned by school teams. With this collaboration, school personnel became aware of the strengths of other team members and their role within the school. With continued support, this collaborative culture should continue to grow and flourish, resulting in increasing academic and professional growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of this action research project, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Collaboration to differentiate instruction within the Adaptive Dimension needs to be an expectation and not an option. The role of the principal is key in articulating and supporting a vision based on a collaborative culture committed to growth.
2. Part-time teaching assignments and conflicting planning times hamper collaborative efforts. In order to create time for collaboration, creative ways of doing tasks differently need to be explored (see Appendix B). The use of block scheduling was suggested by the participants and is a required practice in the literature on professional learning communities.
3. School teams need assistance in developing skills to set norms in order to run meetings effectively, handle conflict, and increase communication.
4. Because many immersion settings are small, schools need to work together to develop and share resources. These resources include technology supports for FSL programs to support resource-based learning and for instructional purposes.
5. Immersion teachers should be given opportunities to network with other immersion teachers within and outside the school division. There is an increasing number of online resources available to facilitate this dialogue (see Appendix C).
6. Teachers need support and encouragement to use strategies that differentiate instruction in order to meet the diverse needs of immersion students. Support to develop and adapt material and to plan interdisciplinary instructional units is crucial.
7. With the demands of an immersion program, time for instruction must be kept sacred. Layering on too many initiatives at once robs the focus and energies of educators who are trying to move from teaching in isolation to a more collaborative model.
8. Identifying and planning for the “big ideas” in curriculum is necessary. Content Enhancement routines need to be part of the toolkit that teachers use on a regular basis.

DISSEMINATION OF THE FINDINGS TO TEACHERS TO AFFECT ACTUAL TEACHING PRACTICE

One of the obligations of research, which is emphasized in the McDowell Foundation projects, is planning to share the results of the research with other teachers to affect actual teaching practice. In this project, the information gleaned from the participant reflection logs and the data from the in-service sessions has been compiled and shared with all participants. In addition, at each of the six French immersion schools, the participating team will share its experiences with the rest of the school staff. Information will also be shared with other school staffs at the school division's Fall Institute and Principal Program Meetings. Presentations on the research may also be made at provincial and/or national French teachers conferences and the McDowell Foundation's Learning from Practice Conference. Our findings may also be published in journals and other publications.

Many of the units and other instructional materials that were developed over the course of the project were submitted to the Saskatoon Catholic Cyber School to be put online and made available to colleagues in other immersion settings.

To support continuation of a collaborative approach to teaching and learning in our French immersion schools, teacher-librarians have planned a year-end meeting to better coordinate the sharing of resources for the coming year.

REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHERS

Susan Drake (1990) in her article, "The Monomyth Brings Meaning to Change" referred to the journey of the hero in universal mythologies as a "universal path that we all must travel in order to experience real change" (p.15). Participants in an action research project indeed adopt a process of change as they answer a call to adventure, stepping into the unknown. The only known factor in the process is that data will be gathered to answer the research question; what the answer is going to be is unknown. To a large extent, the answer is the quest, and the data-gathering, the journey. Equipped with strategies, such as team-building, collaboration, and differentiation of instruction, the heroes are prepared to confront the tests and trials, which tend to be cyclical in nature. Theirs is a journey where the leadership role changes according to the talents and gifts of each team member and the nature of the various obstacles that need to be overcome in fulfilling the quest.

This journey contrasts with that of the lone hero who sets forth depending only on his own resourcefulness. Strength in numbers is significant as school staffs face life realities such as illness and other personal and professional demands. This project, though carried out within a formalized support system, was not protected from the realities that all school communities face, e.g., wellness leaves. In one case, the only constant member of the school team was

the catalyst teacher, but the interesting point to note is that the project continued to thrive.

Even with the switches of personnel the core teachers kept everyone on track. It was interesting to see who took on what role automatically!

Timelines and the ultimate reward of having improved the learning experiences of children are the reference points that help researchers arrive at stabilization and a new knowledge to take back to share with the kingdom.

The intent of this project is summarized by Sergiovanni (1994), “Building community in schools is about a shared quest to do things differently, to develop new kinds of relationships, to create new ties, to make new commitments” (p.153). While the researchers realize that professional collaboration needs to be more than an occasional pilot project, the reality of the financial and time constraints on schools are such that only by application to an agency such as the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation could the resources be obtained to provide the impetus for change to these school teams. It is through this funding that it is possible to provide the supports (time and material resources) that allow team members to become comfortable in working collaboratively to apply the principles related to the Adaptive Dimension of the curriculum and differentiated instruction.

The effectiveness of this project is well illustrated by the following reflection:

My role as Teacher-Librarian has always been one of instructional collaborator with classroom teachers. Most often my resource-based units are in core content areas with grades K-8 and their classroom teachers, but I also work once a year with grade 4-6 classes that include ELO designated students, their classroom teachers and our ELO catalyst teacher.

This year I was fortunate to be involved in the Stirling McDowell Project: “Collaborating To Make A Difference”: The Adaptive Dimension and Differentiating Instruction in Saskatoon Catholic French Immersion Schools. This project added a very important member to our collaborating instructional team, the Learning Assistance Teacher. The four of us planned, carried out and evaluated differentiated units in the classroom. This experience proved to be an enriching and valuable experience for all of us on many levels. The students were the big winners with this model. Each of our lessons was completely differentiated to meet the students needs and learning styles. The struggling students found success where they hadn’t before. “Success breeds success” and we saw this on a daily basis. The students had fewer behavior problems because they were engaged in their learning. Their confidence, participation and understanding of concepts grew with each lesson. For some this was the first time this year they were fully participating and really learning at their personal pace and ability level. The stronger students were being challenged daily at their ability levels and were not finished their work in a short time with free time to spare. We did not give them “more” work, but work that engaged them at their levels.

We teachers benefited greatly in our sharing of ideas and strategies because our knowledge and experience base was multiplied by four. We focused on bringing Bloom’s Taxonomy of Thinking, Content Enhancement framing routines and Multiple Intelligences when planning the activities and

lessons. The planning was completely shared as there had to be three levels of activities planned for every concept or lesson. One classroom teacher commented that she had not known just how weak her weakest students were as she'd never had the opportunity to work in this way before. She now had more empathy for the Adaptive Dimension and had learned through our teams' collaborating and sharing, practical strategies she could employ on her own in the class. This experience gave each one of us amazing energy as we were always excited about our lessons and the students' visible progress and our feeling of being a part of something very cutting edge and important.

The school community also benefited in that our energy was felt by other teachers, students and parents. We had become a "Learning Community" of sorts and our peers were truly interested in our projects and progress. The students saw us collaborating, sharing, laughing and enjoying each other and the lessons. Parents noted the excitement and success of their children. The feeling was absolutely contagious.

This was an experience that I will never forget. It has been one of the most beneficial professional experiences I've had as a Teacher-Librarian and I know I will be able to use what I've learned to benefit the students and teachers I will work with in the future.

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Appendix A: Instructional and Management Strategies for Differentiated Classrooms

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Strategy	Description of Strategy	Rationale for Use	Guidelines for Use
Compacting	A 3-step process that: (1) assesses what a student knows about material to be studied and what the student still needs to master, (2) plans for learning what is not known and excuses student from what is known, and (3) plans for freed-up time to be spent in enriched or accelerated study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes large reservoir of knowledge in some learners • Satisfies hunger to learn more about topics than school often allows • Encourages independence • Eliminates boredom and lethargy resulting from unnecessary repetition of material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the process and its benefits to students and parents • Pre-assess learner's knowledge and document findings • Allow student choice in use of time "bought" through previous mastery • Use written plans and time lines for accelerated or enrichment study • Can use group compacting for several students
Independent Study	Process through which student and teacher identify problems or topics of interest to the student. Both student and teacher plan a method of investigating the problem or topic and identifying the type of product the student will develop. This product should address the problem and demonstrate the student's ability to apply skills and knowledge to the problem or topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds on student interest • Satisfies curiosity • Teachers planning and research skills at advanced levels • Encourages independence • Allows work with complex and abstract ideas • Allows long-term and in-depth work on topics of interest • Taps into high motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on student interest • Allow the student maximum freedom to plan, <i>based on student readiness for freedom</i> • Provide guidance and structure to supplement student capacity to plan and ensure high standards of production • Use preset time lines to zap procrastination • Use process logs to document the process involved throughout the study • Establish criteria for success

Strategy	Description of Strategy	Rationale for Use	Guidelines for Use
Interest Centers or Interest Groups	<p>Interest centers (often used with younger learners) and interest groups (often used with older learners) can provide enrichment for students who demonstrate mastery and competence with required work and can be a vehicle for providing these students with meaningful study when required assignments are completed. In addition, all learners enjoy and need the opportunity to work with interest centers or groups in order to pursue areas of special interest to them. These centers or groups can be differentiated by level of complexity and independence required, as well as by student interest, to make them accessible and appropriately challenging for all learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows student choice • Taps into student interest – motivating • Satisfies curiosity – explores hows and whys • Allows study of topics not in the regular curriculum • Can allow for study in greater breadth and depth • Can be modified for student readiness • Can encourage students to make connections between fields of study or between study and life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on student interest • Encourage students to help you develop interest-based tasks • Adjust for student readiness • Allow students of like interests to work together • Develop clear (differentiated) criteria for success • For advanced learners, allow long blocks of time for work, change centers less often to allow for depth of study, make certain tasks are challenging
Tiered Assignments	<p>In a heterogeneous classroom, a teacher uses varied levels of activities to ensure that students explore ideas at a level that builds on their prior knowledge and prompts continued growth. Student groups use varied approaches to explore essential ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blends assessment and instruction • Allows students to begin learning where they are • Allows students to work with appropriately challenging tasks • Allows reinforcement or extension of concepts and principles based on student readiness • Allows modification of working conditions based on learning style • Avoids work that produces anxiety (too hard) or boredom (too easy) • Promotes success and is therefore motivating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure the task is focused on a key concept or generalization essential to the study • Use a variety of resource materials at differing levels of complexity and associated with different learning modes • Adjust the task by complexity, abstractness, number of steps, concreteness, and independence to ensure appropriate challenge • Be certain there are clear criteria for quality and success

Strategy	Description of Strategy	Rationale for Use	Guidelines for Use
Learning Centers	Learning centers can be "stations" or collections of materials learners use to explore topics or practice skills. Teachers can adjust learning center tasks to readiness levels or learning profiles of different students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows matching task with learner's skills level • Encourages continuous development of student skills • Allows matching task with student learning profile • Enables students to work at appropriate pace • Allows teacher to break class into practice and direct instruction groups at a given time • Helps develop student independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match task to learner readiness, interest, learning profile • Avoid having all learners do all tasks at all centers • Teach students to record their own progress at centers • Monitor what students do and what they understand at centers • Have clear directions and clear criteria for success at centers
Adjusting Questions	In class discussions, tests, and homework, teachers vary the sorts of questions posed to learners based on their readiness, interests, and learning profile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students need to be accountable for information and thinking at high levels • Some students will be challenged by a more basic thought question • Others will be challenged by a question that requires speed of response, large leaps of insight, or making remote connections • Teachers can "try out" students with varied sorts of questions as one means of assessing student progress and readiness • Adjusting questions appropriately helps nurture motivation through success • In oral settings, all students can hear and learn from a wide range of responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target some questions to particular students and "open the floor" to others • Use open-ended questions where possible • Use wait time before taking answers • When appropriate, give students a chance to talk with thinking partners before giving answers • Encourage students to build on one another's answers • Require students to explain and defend their answers • Adjust the complexity, abstractness, degree of mental leap required, time constraints, and connections required between topics, based on learning profile of the student being asked a question

Strategy	Description of Strategy	Rationale for Use	Guidelines for Use
Mentorships/ Apprenticeships	Students work with a resource teacher, media specialist, parent volunteer, older student, or community member who can guide their growth in a particular area. Some mentorships may focus on design and executive of advanced projects, some on exploration of particular work settings, some on affective development, and some on combinations of goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends learning beyond the classroom • Makes learning a partnership • Can help students expand awareness of future options and how to attain them • Allows teachers to tap into student interest, strengths, and needs • Have low teacher-to-learner ratio (often one-to-one) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match the mentor with the student's needs (interests, strengths, culture, gender) • Be clear in your own mind and be specific about the goals of the collaboration • Make sure roles of mentor, student, teacher, and parent are written and agreed upon • Provide for appropriate preparation and instruction for mentors, including key information about student • Monitor the progress of the mentorship regularly and help problem-solve if snags occur • Connect what is learned in mentorship with what goes on in class, where feasible
Learning Contracts	Learning contracts take a number of forms that begin with an agreement between student and teacher. The teacher grants certain freedoms and choices about how a student will complete tasks, and the student agrees to use the freedoms appropriately in designing and completing work according to specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can blend skill- and content-based learning matched to student's need • Eliminates unnecessary skill practice for students • Allows students to work at appropriate pace • Helps students learn planning and decision-making skills important for independence as learners • Allows teachers time to work with individuals and small groups • Can encourage extended study on topics of interest • Can foster research, critical and creative thinking, application of skills, and integrated learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blend skill- and content-based learning in contract • Match skills to readiness of the learner • Match content to readiness, interests and learning profile of student • Allow student choice, especially in content-based portions of the contract • Set clear, challenging standards for success from the outset • Provide rules for the contract in writing • Focus contracts on concepts, themes or problems, if possible; integrate appropriate skills into projects or products • Adjust levels of student independence and time span of the contract to match student readiness

KEY TOPIC: SUBJECT:	GRADE:
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1. What do we want students to know, to understand, and to be able to do?
2. How will we know when they get there? (assessment)
3. What will we do if they don't meet the learning objectives?
4. What will we do for those students who have already mastered the learning objectives?

Plan to pre-assess students' readiness (abilities, interests, motivation) to make appropriate adaptations: concept map, discussion period, interest, pre-test

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment	Assessment
multiple resources	grouping arrangements/tiered assignments	PRINT: report, essay, paragraph, poem, story, interview, brochure, song...	room arrangement	RUBRICS: teacher assessment student self-assessment, peer assessment
audio-visuals	graphic organizers	ORAL: skit, play, poetry, puppet show, demonstration, teaching...	Lighting	portfolios
interest centre	learning centres	TECHNOLOGY: power point, video, audiotape recording, overheads...	noise level	teacher-created tests
computer programs	teacher roles	MODEL: experiment, mask, structure, food, art...	opportunities for movement	checklists, surveys

SO WHAT? (What's important to understand about this?)

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Appendix B: Making Time for Collaboration

(Reprinted from Stephenson, S. (1998). School-based planning. Ontario: School Success Consulting)

School structures create isolation for teachers and barriers to a collaborative profession. Schools are hampered with numerous time constraints such as 70 minute periods, so many periods a day, short preparation periods, 110 hours required for a secondary school credit and a ten month school year. If we can loosen the knot that restricts our use of time, we can release the creativity, idealism and energy necessary to find collective solutions to the challenges of the 21st century.

None of the concrete suggestions that follow will be worthwhile in your school unless these attitudes are present:

- a) Together everyone can achieve more. Collaboration is truly beneficial for both students and teachers.
- b) The focus needs to be on managing ourselves, rather than on managing time. Put first things first by developing school-wide goals through open dialogue and debate.
- c) People won't care how much we know, until they know how much we care. Getting to know our colleagues and building a trusting climate is an important first step.
- d) Obstacles and problems must be confronted and surmounted.

The strategies for making time for more collaboration require pre-planning. While they cannot be imposed on an unwilling staff they are definitely worth fighting for in your school. Consider these options:

1. Instead of a computer or the luck of the draw randomly deciding the timetable, take care to schedule common prep time for those who want to collaborate.
2. Rather than the direct, lecture style used at many staff meetings, break the staff up into small discussion groups with facilitators and recorders to increase total involvement of staff.
3. Instead of always holding staff meetings after school, gather people with common prep time together and schedule mini-staff meetings that repeat during the day in each prep period.
4. Morning people may prefer short, stand-up, Japanese-style meetings before works starts. Breakfast is always an incentive.
5. Double up classes or disperse students to various classes to free time for teachers to meet.
6. Instead of every teacher having a regularly scheduled prep period, consider a team approach. A team of teachers working together with a larger group of students can organize their time almost as a school-within-a-school. For example, pairs or small groups of teachers could have an entire morning, or even a day, for a collaborative session each week.

7. Teachers working alone find it difficult to group and re-group students who need remediation or enrichment. A team of teachers can handle this challenge in flexible and mutually supportive ways.
8. Instead of devoting all of the P.D. budget to send people to conferences, some of the money could be diverted to hiring roving supply teachers to cover several teachers' classes in one day so they could observe each other teaching.
9. An alternative to board-wide P.D. days is to stagger the equivalent time throughout the year when it is more relevant. Then teachers could visit local classrooms while they're in action.
10. If we care about collaboration, arrangements are easily made to cover each other's classes. Enlist the help of the principal, VP's, parents or senior students with supervision.
11. Instead of meeting only during school hours, consider exchanging home phone numbers and decide on any ground rules for the calls.
12. Video camcorders have many advantages. Lectures or instructions can be taped and then replayed when the lesson is repeated. This frees up time for collaboration and the students could even take the tapes home for review.
13. Peer partners could videotape lesson segments to share for feedback at a later time.
14. Instead of traveling miles away to find good ideas, spend time talking to staff in your own school and value their expertise.
15. Take advantage of technology to bring people together from different locations.

The challenges facing educators are increasingly complex and they cannot be handled alone. Think about one simple thing you can do or say that will make a significant difference in reducing the isolation of teachers. It's not really working harder, but working smarter. In these ways we can move closer to becoming a true learning community for staff, as well as students. **We cannot afford NOT to make the time for collaboration.**

Appendix C: Digital Resources for Research and Instruction

(The following information has been taken from Saskatchewan Learning's *2005 Handbook for administrators: French second language programs*.)

There are an increasing number of "online" resources for administrators and teachers of French as a second language. The following websites are of particular use to teachers and administrators as they contain current research on second language teaching (French Immersion and/or Core French) and, in most cases, instructional resources for teachers.

Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT)

<http://acpi.scedu.umontreal.ca/>

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

<http://www.caslt.org>

Canadian Parents for French

<http://www.cpf.ca>

CPF French Internet Address and Popular Software Lists

<http://members.shaw.ca/cpf99/>

CPF French Resources Portal

<http://members.shaw.ca/cpf99/CPF-Res-Fr-Collections-de-sites.html>

Centre canadien de ressources sur l'enseignement des langues (CCREL), Simon Fraser University

<http://www.sfu.ca/ccrel/>

Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/>

Collections numérisées du Canada

The Government of Canada has established an extensive collection of French digital resources. Teachers of all subjects will find useful material in this collection.

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/F/Ressources.asp>

Distance education, Official Minority Language Office (OMLO)

<http://www.bmlo.ca/>

Enigmatic Problems in French

This site promotes logical thinking.

<http://www.pedagonet.com/other/enigme.html>

Exchanges Canada

<http://www.exchanges.gc.ca/>

Index de sites éducatifs francophones (ISEF)

<http://isef.ntic.org/>

Institut français

<http://www.prometheus.cc.uregina.ca:6666/institutfrancais/home/htm>

Official Languages Support Programs

<http://www.patrimoinecanadien.gc.ca/offlangoff/>

Language Immersion Education and Research

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/>

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/>

Radio Canada Archives

<http://archives.radio-canada.ca/url.asp>

Regina Board of Education

<http://web.rbe.sk.ca/french/>

Resources for Students and Teachers of French as a Second Language, University of Ottawa

<http://www.aix1.uottawa.ca/~weinberg/french.html>

Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French (SATF)

<http://www.apfs.ca/>

Second Language Education Centre, University of New Brunswick

<http://www.unb.ca/slec/>

Tennessee Bob's Famous French Links

<http://www.utm.edu/departments/french/french.html>

University of Regina – Baccalauréat en éducation (Bac Program)

<http://www.education.uregina.ca/>

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