



# TEACHING AND LEARNING RESEARCH EXCHANGE

## Journeying Toward Student Success for Immigrant Students in French Immersion

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# Executive Summary

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## OUR RESEARCH METAPHOR

Just as immigrants journey from distant lands to adjust to new societies and new languages, teachers teaching this unique population are better equipped to journey with their students when they have background knowledge of their students' cultures, have an understanding of the challenges they face, and are aware of teaching strategies that can assist them in their students' learning. Doing this paves the way to better meet the needs of students, thus anticipating or removing roadblocks.

With an increasing number of immigrants enrolled in French immersion and with a shortage of literature regarding immigrants in French immersion, our research team wanted to establish a collective understanding of teaching English language learners (ELLs) by reading common resources on the topic of English as an additional language (EAL) and by inviting local experts to broaden our horizons regarding immigrants in the school system. We wanted to know what French immersion educators in our school division believed, perceived, and knew about ELLs. Last, our research team wanted to establish a sense of direction by experimenting with instructional strategies designed for ELLs and to report back to the team on how they worked in a French immersion setting.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Throughout this research project, we frequently used terms that were common to the field of EAL, and others that we felt necessary to create for the purpose of our project:

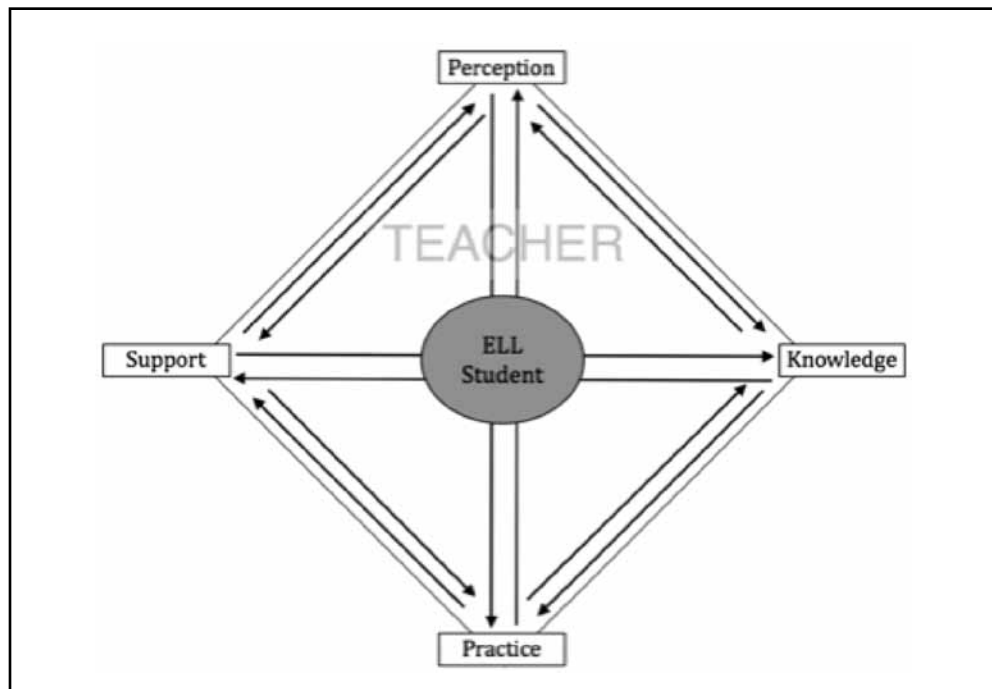
- **English as an additional language (EAL):** An area of specialization in education to support students who have not acquired English as an additional language
- **French as an additional language (FAL):** A term used by our research team to distinguish French as one of the linguistic targets in French immersion to parallel EAL in English schools
- **English language learners (ELLs):** Students who have acquired no or limited English
- **French and English language learners (FELLs):** Our term for students who are acquiring French and English simultaneously as additional languages
- **French and English as an additional language (FEAL):** A term used by our research team to describe the students who access French immersion programs where the goal is to develop both languages starting with French in Kindergarten and Grade 1, and formally introducing English in Grades 2 or 3
- **Immigrant family:** Families who arrive in our schools from other countries
- **Action research:** For this project, the term refers to research that expands our knowledge, enhances competencies of teachers, and aims at an increased

understanding of instructional strategies, thus leading to changes in processes in supporting immigrant students

- **Settlement support workers in schools (SSWIS):** A program in partnership with Saskatoon Open Door Society, school boards, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to assist new immigrant students and their families as they settle into their new school and community
- **Learning assistance teacher (LAT):** A teacher who specializes in working with students with special needs

## FOUR ELEMENTS AFFECTING STUDENT LEARNING

For the purpose of this action research project, our research team identified four elements in the life of a teacher that have an effect on student learning: educators' perceptions, knowledge, practice, and supports. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, these four elements are in a constant dynamic, each one reciprocally influencing the other and having a direct effect on the learner. The data from this research project was collected from K-8 French immersion teachers and administrators in Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) in hopes of shining a light on the perceptions and practices to support an ever-growing ELL population choosing French immersion as their program of choice.



*Figure 1.* Four elements affecting student learning. Copyright 2011 by B. Alberton et al.

Research into the area of ELLs with an overlay of the French immersion context earned our research team a stamp in its passport of professional knowledge. As a team, we ventured more deeply into a territory that could otherwise have remained as foreign to us as French and English are to the immigrant students immersed in a sea of language. We approached our research project feeling challenged, curious, and hopeful that we would walk away from the experience empowered to serve French and English language learners (FELLs) in French immersion to a greater capacity. Initially, there was a general unease about how best to respond to FELLs. As educators, we wanted to shake the feeling of being captains of sinking ships! We recognized that participating in this research project allowed us to open our minds like sails, in order to catch the winds of knowledge to take us in the direction of improving our practices to go forward to better serve our students.



# Acknowledgements

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As a committee of educators, we would like to recognize the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching for its financial contribution, which greatly supported this project. Educators were given the opportunity to research background information as well as to investigate best instructional practices in relation to teaching French and English language learners (FELLs).

We also acknowledge the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division's support in recognizing the need for research in the area of immigrant children in the French immersion program. We appreciate that French immersion educators from all elementary French immersion schools were released from their classroom duties in order to attend committee meetings and to participate in action research.

The committee also extends their appreciation to the educators in the board office and participating schools: École St. Gerard School, Saskatoon French School, École St. Paul School, École St. Matthew School, École Cardinal Leger School, and École Sister O'Brien School. Without teachers' support and their desire for further knowledge, this project would not have been successful.

We recognize the Settlement Support Workers in Schools (SSWIS) and Saskatoon Open Door Society for their valuable information as well as the services they offer.

We sincerely acknowledge the immigrant children and their families who have chosen French immersion programming. It is for you that we have ventured towards learning more about culture and best teaching practices. Teaching FELLs has provided us with opportunities for reflection on best instructional practices.



# Literature Review

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## INTRODUCTION

Part of our professional development journey in this project was to read, to analyse, and to discuss related literature on the topic of teaching English language learners. We focused on ELL-related literature because it was clear that literature outlining best practices for immigrants in a French immersion setting was very limited. Our information came from articles, books, and professionals from other school divisions responsible for EAL programming, as well as service organizations for new immigrants.

## MYTHS OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

According to Haynes (2007), it is imperative that ELL educators be aware of myths regarding ELLs. These myths misguide and hamper the acquisition of a second language for ELLs. The myths affect beliefs and practices used to deliver instruction. They do not provide a true picture of the difficulties that ELLs have and undermine the true potential for learning. In order to verify our initial beliefs and perceptions regarding myths in ELL, all members of our research team completed a survey based on myths identified in *Getting Started with English Language Learners* (Haynes, 2007). Appendix A outlines the questions and results of the mini perception survey that was completed by committee members. The results further justified our rationale for the project.

## BIG IDEAS OF SIX KEY CONCEPTS IN TEACHING ELLS

Haynes (2007) stated there are six key concepts in teaching ELLs:

1. When people move to an unfamiliar culture, they experience culture shock in five stages: euphoric or honeymoon, rejection, regression, integration, and finally, acceptance.
2. When teaching ELLs, comprehensible input and output need to be considered. Input is characterized by children hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language abilities while output refers to what children can naturally produce in English.
3. There is a difference between language acquisition (subconscious process where one is unaware of grammar rules) and language learning (direct instruction of the rules of the language).
4. Students tend to acquire social language and academic language differently depending on their age.
5. The learner's emotional state or affective filter can interfere with acquiring a new language. The key is to make ELLs feel welcome and comfortable so that their affective filter does not impede their learning.

6. ELLs experience a silent period. This silence should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of understanding or of learning since levels of confidence and sociability vary.

## EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Haynes (2007) suggested 11 activities that aid in meeting the social, educational, and affective needs of ELLs. Haynes stressed the importance of effective professional development in the delivery of information to teachers in regards to second language acquisition, diverse cultures, and differentiated instruction. The key concepts identified include: understanding key concepts of second language acquisition, developing cultural sensitivity and an appreciation of the diverse cultures in the school, and acquiring strategies developed to facilitate the instruction of ELLs in a regular classroom.

## A TOPOLOGY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Rojas (2007) identified the challenge of understanding ELLs and programs. She then suggested a vision and response in order to use time-honoured scaffolding strategies.

**The challenge: Understanding ELLs and programs.** Schools are facing an ever-increasing number of ELLs and this number is going to continue to grow, possibly reaching 40% of the student population by 2030. Yet very few teachers have been trained to address the needs of these students. In most cases, no formal education prior to immigration or first language instruction has been introduced. Differences among ELLs are considerable and complex; their needs cannot be met in one way.

**The vision and response.** Completely segregated programs may lead to students feeling stigmatized, deficient, and removed. Academic disadvantages also result. The goal should not be to lower standards, but rather, differentiate instruction and assessment. There is a need to shift toward learning-centred environments.

**Time-honoured scaffolds.** Time-honoured scaffolds have proven effective as instructional tools for ELLs. Scaffolding involves the building of instructional structures to support ELLs as they advance to higher levelled proficiencies, skills, concepts, and understandings. These strategies include literacy and instructional practices that the author has adapted for the K-2 and 3-12 grade levels. Literacy strategies include graphic organizers, vocabulary, reading, and writing strategies. Instructional practices include cooperative learning, co-teaching, and differentiation strategies. The goal of these strategies is to better assist students while holding them accountable. To encourage participation, while not forcing them to talk until they are ready, helps to foster a positive learning environment.

## PRESENTATION FROM EAL PROGRAM LEADER, DIANA NORDICK (DECEMBER 2010)

The Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey is the diagnostic tool used in the placement of ELLs from Grades 1-12. It tests students' Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), or social language, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or academic language. Six areas tested are: picture vocabulary, verbal analogies (an indication of academic language), letter-word identification (decoding), writing dictation (indication of grammar phonics), understanding directions (looking for key words), and reading (listening skills).

The EAL program in our schools focuses on vocabulary building, comprehension strategies, as well as obtaining a base in one language. Students are assessed according to a six-level scale of language proficiency. Students who score a CALP of 3.5 or 4 are often ready for full integration into academic classes. Refer to Appendix B for a detailed overview of each CALP level.

## PRESENTATION FROM THE SSWIS AND THE OPEN DOOR SOCIETY (MARCH 2, 2011)

The Saskatoon Open Door Society is an organization that offers employment services, language services, settlement, and family support, as well as hosts family and youth programs. SSWIS (Settlement Support Workers in Schools) is a school-based outreach program designed to help newcomer students and their families settle in their school and community. SSWIS is linked to the Saskatoon Open Door Society, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Saskatoon Public Schools, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and Saskatoon's Fransaskois schools.

To build a bridge between school and home, SSWIS can be present during school registrations, three-way conferences, meetings, home visits, and follow-ups by providing interpreters and translation services. It helps government-sponsored refugees as its first priority but will also help those who arrive via church or private sponsorships. Others who benefit from this program are skilled workers and professionals who have immigrated, international students, secondary immigrants, and Canadian citizens who are children of immigrants. A ten-week program is offered by a cultural bridging consultant. The goal is to help new immigrant parents understand laws, their role in their child's education, and how to deal with a cultural identity crisis.

# Our Research Journey

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## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In recent years, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has experienced a rise in the number of immigrant families choosing French immersion for their children who have little or no language skills in either of Canada's official languages. Previous to this change, immigrant families typically enrolled their children in regular English schools and were provided supports for English as an additional language (EAL). Though human resources have typically been allotted for EAL within the school division, the intent of our research team was multifaceted. First, we wanted to explore our beliefs and those held by our colleagues regarding ELLs in French immersion. Second, we wanted to discover other models of support currently used in other Canadian districts to meet the needs of their ELLs in a French immersion setting. Third, we wanted to conduct some action research in our French immersion classrooms using various strategies suggested for ELLs.

Some of us may have come to this project in hopes of finding the one and only answer to serving ELLs in French immersion, hoping it would be as easy as being handed a roadmap or a first class ticket to smooth sailing. But what we discovered was that there were many good practices that needed to be consciously explored in order to minimize bumps, barricades, and major detours that accompany learners in general, regardless of their immigrant status. As such, our research team wanted to take information from the EAL world to see if it applied to the context of French immersion where the target language of instruction for the first few years is exclusively French. In our context, the term French as an additional language (FAL) is much more apropos. When English is introduced after a few years as an additional academic language, it is hoped that French has taken root as the primary academic language. What makes the immersion setting unique is that English is predominantly the social language due to its majority status. To approach the learning of French as a second language in immersion requires setting one's eyes on not one, but two languages. Given that our school division's EAL services were established from a monolingual viewpoint, that is, to acquire English as the academic and social language in an English school and in an English milieu, there must be considerations for a dual linguistic program with the goal of functional bilingualism. As a result of being in a French immersion program, many questions surfaced as we began our project:

- What will work with FELLs?
- What approaches might work best to help immersion teachers cope with this new reality?
- Do the divisional practices we currently have in place respond to the needs in an immersion setting?

With so many questions, we felt a need to establish a common point of departure as a research team by exploring our own knowledge and beliefs regarding FELLs in immersion. In one way, it was like checking items in one's luggage before leaving on a trip. This helped us to discover what we had and did not have at our point of departure as travelers on our research journey. Our key question was: What are the perceptions of French immersion educators in teaching immigrant students and what research-based practices and services could ensure these students' success?

## RATIONALE

Many of the existing supports in place for EAL in our school division have evolved over time. With the influx of immigrant students through the province's sponsorship program and Immigration Canada, Saskatchewan has experienced unprecedented growth in its immigrant population and in our EAL population in GSCS (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*EAL Enrollment Summary in GSCS - 2007-2010*

<b>Category</b>	<b>June 2007</b>	<b>June 2008</b>	<b>June 2009</b>	<b>June 2010</b>	<b>June 15, 2011</b>
High School	150	167	283	336	402
Elementary	168	237	363	423	571
Kindergarten	32	46	56	62	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>1,059</b>

*Note.* Enrolment statistics supplied by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, 2011. Copyright 2011 by B. Alberton et al.

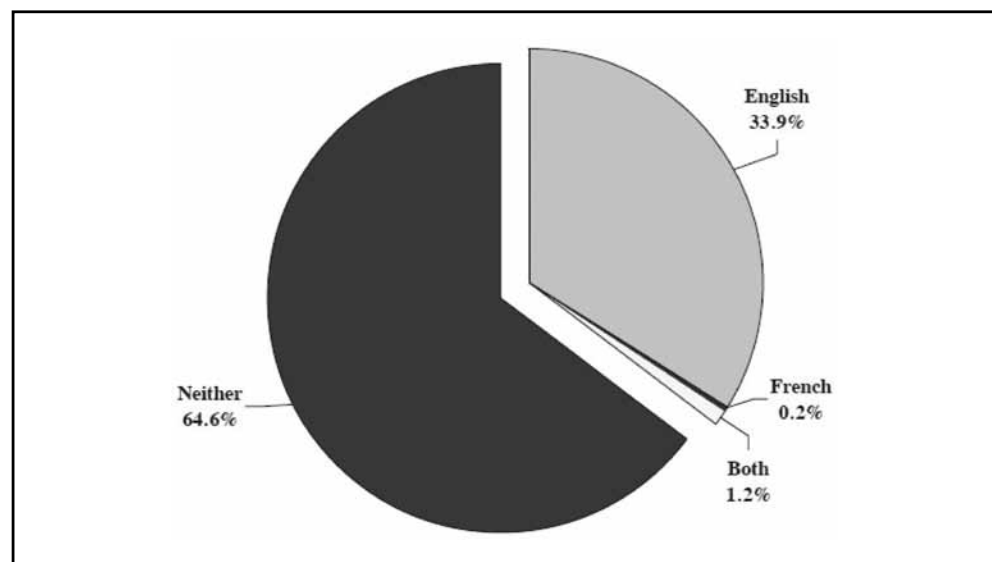
The *2010 Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report* highlighted that 2,424 immigrant children and youth (19 years of age and younger) landed in Saskatchewan in 2009 compared to just over 700 students in 2008. Two-thirds of these students had no prior knowledge of either of Canada's official languages. Forty-four percent of the students were originally from the Philippines, 5.5% from Germany, 4.9% from the Ukraine, and 4.4% from China (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 14). The majority of the immigrant students arrived in Saskatoon or Regina, hence the increase in our school division. Table 2 outlines the growth according to the major urban centres in the province while Figure 2 clearly shows that the majority of students immigrating to the province do not speak either of the official languages.

**Table 2**

*Immigrant Children Landing in Saskatchewan, by Community Destination and Age Group, 2008 and 2009 (2010 Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report)*

	2008	2009				
		Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19
Saskatoon	714	832	187	237	201	207
Regina	457	700	163	216	175	146
Lloydminster	48	99	23	36	25	15
Swift Current	54	85	13	30	30	12
North Battleford	25	74	13	18	26	17
LeRoy	26	69	23	22	17	7
Humboldt	6	49	15	15	10	9
Moose Jaw	47	45	11	13	9	12
Prince Albert	47	43	11	17	8	7
Estevan	9	36	7	10	12	7
Other Communities	280	392	78	120	122	72
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,713</b>	<b>2,424</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>511</b>

Copyright 2010 by Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.



*Figure 2. Official language knowledge of immigrant children landing in Saskatchewan in 2009. Data is for the calendar year. This data reflects immigrants who landed in Saskatchewan through both provincial and federal immigration categories. Copyright 2010 by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.*

Since more immigrant families have recently been choosing French immersion programming, teachers have been called upon to adapt and to differentiate their teaching practices to support our new immigrant learners. This adaptation has been a reactive response, as opposed to a research-based and systematic approach, to address the challenges unique to students acquiring French as the initial target language of instruction in a majority English environment.

## TIMELINE

An invitation to participate in the research committee was extended to all teachers in the six French immersion elementary schools. The committee was established in March 2010. The first meeting occurred in September 2010 to outline the year's work and to review group norms and roles as outlined in Appendix C. Throughout the project and until the end of May 2011, there were a variety of data collected. We gathered perceptions of our committee members regarding ELLs prior to and after professional reading and presentations. The research team shared reflections based on common resources supplied to committee members.

In November and December 2010, committee members created questions for an online survey intended for our elementary school immersion colleagues within our school division, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (see Appendix D). Questions were intended to reveal teacher perceptions and knowledge of ELLs. By the end of January 2011, the collection and analysis of the survey was completed. Appendix E outlines the quantitative data collected from the survey while Appendix F provides an overview of the qualitative data.

By March 2011, we had collected guidelines and policies regarding EAL services in French immersion programs from other school divisions within and outside of Saskatchewan. In May and June 2011, we concluded our project by establishing our recommendations for future research and prepared our final submission for dissemination of results.

In the latter portion of the project, teacher leaders had opportunities to experiment with various teaching strategies. They shared their impressions of how these worked with FELLs and were encouraged to share their findings with colleagues in their schools and to assist fellow staff members to implement best practices in teaching FELLs.

The final report will be shared with schools once completed. Our committee intends to make the report available to the Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French, the Student Achievement and Supports Branch, and to our own school division, as well as to other contributing and non-contributing school divisions.

## METHODOLOGY

There were four parts to the methodology:

- Part 1: We wanted to create common ground for our research team. Members would explore existing research and literature about best practices in EAL through literature and research. The committee's readings included:
  - Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting started with English language learners: How educators can meet the challenge*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
  - Rojas, V. P. (2007). *Strategies for success with English language learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Part 2: We developed a survey (see Appendix D) and posted it online for our school division's elementary French immersion teachers. We invited teachers to participate in the survey. Committee members then collected and organized the data to create a summary of responses in order to report the findings back to their schools.
- Part 3: We researched EAL services, guidelines, and policies in French immersion schools in other school divisions in order to advise our division's practices and to increase our awareness of other models.
- Part 4: We researched best practices for developing literacy in ELLs by conducting some action research in our own classrooms to see how successful some of the strategies were in a French immersion context.

## SURVEY DESCRIPTION

Approximately 100 elementary French immersion teachers and administrators were invited to participate in a survey entitled English Language Learners in French Immersion Schools. The survey consisted of 22 questions with a combination of open and closed questions. The questions were categorized as follows: demographics, perceptions, knowledge, practice, and support. Questions included basic demographic information, such as teaching experience, grade level experience, and specific experience, as well as level of comfort teaching ELLs. Perceptions were gathered around the topics of culture shock, acquiring social and academic language, and ELLs' success in French immersion, as well as the effects of educational and cultural background. Educators were asked to identify effective instructional, assessment, and differentiated strategies used in teaching ELLs in French immersion settings. The survey provided educators with the opportunity to comment on the use and the availability of support in the area of human resources, professional development, and learning resources.

Seventy educators responded to the survey. The quantitative and qualitative data were categorized under the four main areas: perceptions, knowledge, practices, and support (see Appendices E and F).

# SUMMARY AND SURVEY RESULTS

**Introduction of demographic overview.** There were a total of 70 respondents to the survey from a potential of approximately 100 French immersion educators. The survey was open to all professional educators (teachers, learning assistance teachers, teacher-librarians, and administrators) who teach French immersion.

The survey commenced with four questions pertaining to the demographics of our respondents. The questions inquired about years of teaching experience, current teaching assignment, grade level presently teaching, and if they had experience with ELLs.

The majority of respondents were teachers with one to five years of teaching experience (37.1%), followed by teachers with 21 plus years of experience (27.1%). All grade levels from kindergarten to Grade 8 were represented in the respondents. The greatest response came from classroom teachers (72.9%), with Grade 4 being the most common grade taught (32.9%). Respondents who taught Grade 3 followed closely behind with 30%, and Grade 2 teachers came in third with 28.6%.

A large percentage (80%) of kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers responded that they had experience teaching ELLs. That percentage falls significantly to 61.3% when the respondents are Grades 3 to 5 teachers and drops even lower (58.3%) when the respondents are Grades 6 to 8 teachers.

**Perceptions.** Ten questions were elaborated on to provide an overview of teachers' perceptions of the dynamics that surround an ELL. The following results were obtained:

- There was an even split between teachers' levels of comfort and discomfort in teaching ELLs.
- Overall, ELLs can be successful learners in a French immersion setting, however, some support would be of great benefit to the learner.
- Seventy-four percent of teachers believed they require more information about an ELL's educational and cultural background.
- Over 68% saw use of first language in the classroom as a means to enhance the ELL's progress in allowing the ELL to make connections, to demonstrate prior knowledge, and to feel safe to communicate. However, 32% believed the use of the ELL's first language is only detrimental to his ability to learn French.
- Only a quarter of the teachers truly understood that it takes more than five years to acquire academic language.
- Ten percent of teachers believed that academic language is learned in an EAL or LAT classroom setting. The majority believed that academic language is learned in small group settings or classroom setting.
- Forty-six percent of teachers agreed that social language is not a sign of academic language acquisition.
- Overall, most teachers agreed that differentiated instruction and assessment are important for ELL students.
- Over 75% of the teachers believed there is not enough adequate support for ELLs in the form of human resources, professional development, and learning resources.

- In the early learning years, support for the ELL should be in French only. From Grade 3 and up, the intervention should be given in French and English.

**Knowledge.** Six questions related to educator knowledge of culture shock, educational and cultural backgrounds and effects on learning, the acquisition of social and academic language, and knowledge and support to differentiate instruction. When asked if educators could identify a student experiencing culture shock, 68.1% were either unsure they could identify culture shock or would not be able to identify it. However, approximately 75% of the respondents were aware of their students' cultural background and 92.8% of respondents said they were aware that the educational and cultural backgrounds affect student learning. When asked how long it takes students to acquire academic language, the highest percentage of respondents (42.9%) knew that it took more than five years. When asked if they agree that social language is a good sign of academic success, respondents were approximately evenly divided in their responses. When asked if they possess the necessary knowledge and support to differentiate instruction and assessment of ELLs, 84.1% of respondents disagreed that they had the necessary knowledge and support.

**Practices.** Teachers of FELLs use a wide variety of classroom teaching strategies—the top three being oral activities, vocabulary strategies, and use of graphic organizers. When asked what strategies were most effective in teaching ELLs in French immersion, the top three were similar, however a decrease in the use of strategies for ELLs was noted. When questioned about differentiated instruction and assessment for ELLs, while the majority said it is important, only 66.7% of the teachers said they do it, stating that they do not have the necessary knowledge and support needed in order to differentiate instruction and assessment.

**Supports.** The last section of the survey pertained to the perceived support available for ELLs in French immersion. Respondents were asked if they had the knowledge and support to differentiate for ELLs. A strong majority (84.1%) responded that they did not have the necessary knowledge or support to differentiate instruction and assessment.

Our survey also queried about adequate support for ELL students. Respondents were able to answer *yes* or *no* to three categories: human resources, professional development, and learning resources. The overall response to all three categories was a resounding *no*: 77.9% of respondents felt they did not have adequate human resources support, 88.2% of respondents felt they did not have adequate professional development, and 74.2% felt there was an inadequate amount of learning resources.

A common thread that appeared throughout the comments was more support is needed in French immersion schools at the primary level. Other comments pulled from the survey to explain the high negative response were: “need more people power”, “teachers need help to differentiate”, and “need more professional development and time”. In regards to adequate learning resources, respondent comments that summed up the overall feelings were “lack of knowledge of available support” and “need to know what is available”.

# Action Research: Our Journey into the Classroom

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For the action research portion of our project, the research team wanted to explore various strategies identified as being useful and successful to ELLs. We were particularly interested in seeing if the application of these strategies would be just as successful in a French immersion setting. From the resource *Strategies for Success with English Language Learners* (Rojas, 2007), teachers selected strategies that were new or of interest to them to try in French with their students. Below are descriptions of the types of strategies used and the results chronicled by our members. Appendix G outlines the task upon which committee members embarked.

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

**Description:** Cooperative learning strategies are meant to allow students to work in partners or in small groups in order to complete or to solve problems in cooperation with others. Use of this strategy helps students to become engaged, to interpret information, to make inferences, and to connect with others. In cooperative learning, students may work in heterogeneous or homogeneous groups, depending on the objective of the activity.

**Results:** Different cooperative strategies were employed depending upon whether the concept was being introduced, developed, or, in the latter stages, attained. This form of instructional practice was ideal in a French immersion setting, as it allowed students to practice their oral skills while being exposed to new concepts.

## DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

**Description:** The differentiation strategies presented by Rojas (2007) provide teachers with a wide variety of ideas on how to best serve the ELLs in their classrooms. Many of the outlined strategies were widely used, such as centres where students are grouped according to ability. Other differentiation suggestions included organizing activities in order of difficulty, providing texts for all reading abilities, and offering independent learning opportunities according to personal student interest.

**Results:** All strategies highly emphasized differentiation as a best practice and were very effective to meet individual student needs. Adaptations in the French immersion classroom occurred due to the variations of French language levels in each classroom. Differentiation for FELLs is not uncommon and is highly recommended.

## GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

**Description:** Several graphic organizers were suggested for use in various subjects including language arts, science, math, and social studies. The organizers allowed for the following tasks: categorize/classify, compare/contrast, concept development, evaluation, relational, and sequence.

Results: In the French immersion program, these strategies provided visual supports for oral explanation and helped build background knowledge and vocabulary.

## VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Vocabulary strategies presented in *Strategies for Success with English Language Learners* (Rojas, 2007) have been developed to introduce new vocabulary, to reinforce the meaning and use of this vocabulary, and to provide activities where this new vocabulary will become integrated into the student's knowledge. These activities can be integrated into language arts, science, math, and social studies. Most activities are useful for all grade levels from K-12. Each strategy is presented in an easy-to-read format of one or two pages. Each page is divided into three sections: Why use it? How does it work? and Variation for emergent English learners. These activities are simple to use and require minimal materials and time to prepare. These strategies are easily implemented within a French immersion context. In order for an ELL or any language learner to embrace a new language, the introduction to as much vocabulary as possible in a fun and meaningful way is important to their success in learning that new language. Therefore, these activities help develop vocabulary in all language learners.

## READING STRATEGIES

Description: The purpose of reading strategies was to assist students in their reading comprehension. Two general categories of reading strategies were tried: the first category was to aid ELLs in language acquisition and the second category was to facilitate the reading process. Suggested content areas best suited for each specific strategy were also provided.

Strategies in these categories were used with individual students, allowing them to personally interpret the information. They were also used in small groups, allowing students to share their responses and to listen to those of other students. The strategies facilitated presentations that would allow students to use their language skills. Strategies were used in the prereading, during reading, or postreading stages.

Results: The strategies described were very useful for French immersion. Teachers felt the reading strategies described could be applied in all educational settings. Examples of these strategies are the KWL chart, paired reading, summarizing, reading journals, SQ3R, and story maps.

## WRITING STRATEGIES

Description: The strategies provided in this section were designed to facilitate and to develop writing skills. There were 21 different strategies that targeted two aspects of writing: language acquisition skills and writing process. Each strategy was also correlated to a content area (language arts, science, math, and social science), thus providing ample opportunity to extend and to reinforce the skills in other subjects. Language connections could be made with other subjects,

allowing for continuous reinforcement of the use and development of academic language.

Results: The strategies lent themselves to individual and group work. They permitted sharing of ideas and promoted the use of a second language in a non-threatening environment. The strategies focused on allowing learners to bring in their knowledge and allowing them to feel valued. The teacher's role was then to redirect and to illicit correct forms of language and writing skills.

# Survey of EAL Services in Other Locations

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When EAL services first began in GSCS, it was common to direct students to a unilingual English program where they received EAL support. Now, there is a rise in immigrants registering in the Early French Immersion program. Our research group wanted to seek out practices that support this population in an immersion setting and get a sense of alternative models of service for ELLs in other locations in Canada. We wanted to explore how different locations differ in policies and practices and whether there was satisfaction with the models.

Currently, EAL services in GSCS begin as early as Kindergarten or Grade 1 in unilingual English schools, while services in French immersion begin in Grade 2. The rationale for this difference is that in French immersion, students formally begin English instruction in Grade 2. Waiting until Grade 2 for EAL services honours the principle of immersion by keeping a primary focus on French as the target language in the initial years. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education is in the midst of rewriting the French immersion program for K to 2 and has suggested in their *Handbook for Administrators* (2005) that English language arts be introduced in Grade 3. If our EAL services follow suit, additional language intervention would be further delayed, creating a larger gap in services between immigrants in English schools and those in French immersion.

In our quest to ensure the best language services to immigrants within our French immersion program, our research team wanted to know whether our current mode of delivering services was as good as it could be. We questioned whether there were alternate ways to organize services and therefore contacted consultants from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to get a sense of existing practices. We asked the following questions:

1. At what grade level do you formally introduce English language arts in your early French immersion program?
2. What services do you offer to ELLs in your division for support in French, English, or both languages?
3. Do services vary for ELLs in French immersion as opposed to an English program?
4. Would you happen to have a link to your board's policy on providing services to ELLs?
5. What kind of professional development opportunities have you offered to your teachers to respond to ELLs in immersion?
6. Have you conducted research in this area? Do you have any recommendations based on your experience?
7. Do your current practices seem to be meeting the needs?

From our sampling, we learned that services vary considerably in different locations and that there is no common practice to provide services. Respondents indicated that in a French immersion setting, English language arts was introduced in one of Grades 1, 2, or 3. In a few cases, less formalized EAL supports were put in place for students as early as kindergarten to give play opportunities in English. In another case, students received EAL services but less than their counterparts in an English stream program, while in another location, the additional language support mirrored the instructional language occurring for the particular grades.

In other words, supports began in French in kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2, and English supports were introduced as soon as the English language arts program began in Grades 2 or 3.

The delivery of EAL services varied as well. Examples given ranged from students being pulled out of class to an integrated model where students were supported in class with an EAL teacher or educational assistant, with occasional pull out. There was also mention of a high school model where students were assigned to an EAL classroom as their main classroom.

Some school divisions would not provide any services before cognitive testing could be conducted. Another practice was to provide an informal oral interview to kindergarten and Grade 1 students, to add a reading assessment for Grades 2-7, and to add a writing assessment for high school levels.

Regarding services to immigrants, responses ranged from no EAL support in French immersion to full service at all grade levels in both French and English. In some cases, school divisions indicated their current EAL services met the needs for their current conditions. Some were considering looking for other service delivery models. There may not be one correct way to respond to providing services, but it is clear that school divisions either respond based on established criteria or they try to adjudicate a response based on the circumstances facing individual students.

# Recommendations

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Throughout this journey of learning more about ELLs succeeding in French immersion programs, our research team provided recommendations based on the four elements in the life of a teacher. These four elements have a direct effect on student learning: teacher perception, knowledge, practice, and supports. A teacher's perception will likely influence the manner in which he or she approaches teaching ELLs. It became clear that French immersion teachers required more information about ELLs, such as the difference between academic and social language and the appropriate use of a child's first language. Providing current research in order to verify or to challenge perceptions would further assist educators to learn more about this current reality in our French immersion schools. A high percentage of teachers indicated a lack of knowledge about the cultural backgrounds of their ELLs. A recommendation from the committee was that teachers be provided with such information as early as during the registration process. It became clear that educators could benefit from additional professional development opportunities in the areas of instructional practices. Teachers do need to differentiate their instruction to best meet the needs of their ELLs. School divisions are further encouraged to share best practices with their teachers. Consideration should be given to offering professional development opportunities for all staff members.

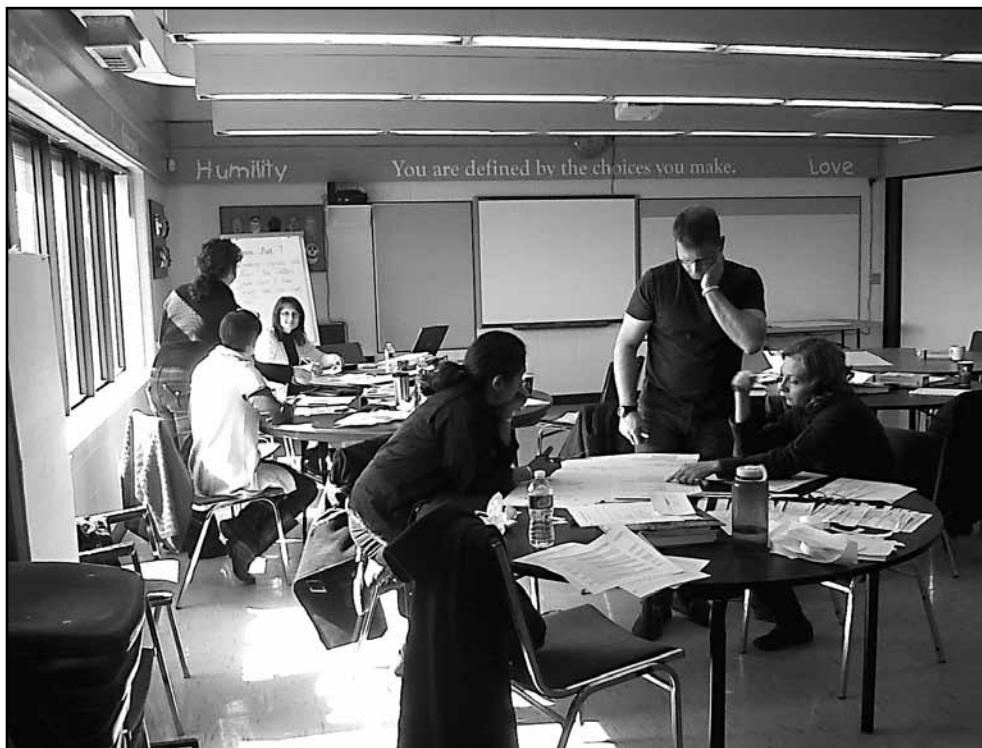
One of the greatest areas of need was clearly that of support for educators as they strive to teach ELLs. It is recommended that school divisions prioritize supporting teachers by providing mechanisms to access other professionals and community organizations in this field. Providing additional human resources to further support FELLs is imperative to effect change in teachers' professional knowledge and development. Doing so would position them to ensure greater academic success. Human resource suggestions provided through our committee work included a FEAL teacher on assignment to support all French immersion schools, mentoring opportunities by teacher leaders, as well as learning opportunities for teachers to network.

Based on the analysis of our survey of teachers, the research team recommended further research in the area of practices to support French immersion teachers with FELLs. In GSCS, 61.4% of our K-8 teachers had experience teaching ELLs. Representatively, 80% of K-2 teachers were the ones who had the greatest amount of experience teaching ELLs. Given the increasing number of immigrant students coming to Saskatoon and to GSCS, the likelihood of our teachers teaching FELLs in French immersion will increase. With approximately half of our teachers expressing degrees of discomfort in teaching this subpopulation, a comparable survey conducted more extensively across Canada might identify school districts where teachers have a greater degree of comfort in teaching FELLs.

A secondary area of research might then be conducted in those school districts where immersion teachers indicate higher levels of comfort, knowledge, and support in teaching FELLs. The purpose of such research would be to reveal models of best practice for professional support, which would, in turn, support FELLs. Data may provide insight into: 1) alternative deployment of human resources to support FEAL teachers and FELLs, 2) ways to provide professional development to FEAL teachers, and 3) learning resources that successfully support teachers and students. Such data could prove to be very insightful to school districts such as ours.

Looking back at our research journey, our team has come to recognize with greater clarity that although there are similarities between all schools providing services to ELLs, there are enough differences between French immersion and English programs to warrant variation in the services provided to our immigrant population. Just as literature suggests the need for teachers to differentiate their approaches to maximize outcomes for students, we would recommend that school districts consider varying their EAL service model in consideration of the program chosen by immigrant parents to further the acquisition of additional languages. Our research team recommended early intervention in French as an additional language (FAL), given that the formal language of instruction is in French for K to Grade 3. EAL support should follow, if needed, when English is formally introduced.

Based on the perceptions of our French immersion teachers, there is a need to build comfort in knowledge regarding the qualities of our ELLs. With increased comfort and confidence, French immersion teachers, who are inherently teachers of additional languages, may feel better equipped to respond to some of the unique characteristics of their FELLs.



# Conclusion

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As a research team, we have embraced the challenge of deepening our understandings to meet the needs of our immigrant students in French immersion. Our journey of knowledge was eye-opening. As a collective, we moved from a place of greater ambiguity surrounding the realities of FELLs in French immersion to a place of greater understanding. The biblical quote, “and you shall love (the stranger) as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34) encapsulates how we moved from the unknown to the known. We saw a parallel between our journey and the ones lived by so many immigrant students. They move to a world of unknowns and require our nurturing in order to facilitate effective learning. We recognize that our journey is ongoing and that we will always be called, as educators, to be accepting of strangers and to provide them opportunities to flourish.



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## APPENDIX A

# Myths of Second-Language Acquisition

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Questions	T	F
1. Adults learn a second language more easily than young children.		9
2. According to research, students in ESL-only programs, with no schooling in their native language, take 7 to 10 years to reach grade-level norms.	2	7
3. Many immigrant children have learning disabilities, not language problems. They speak English just fine, but they are still failing academically.		9
4. Previous generations of immigrants learned how to speak English without the special language programs that immigrant children receive now. It was sink or swim and they did just fine!	3	6
5. English language learners will acquire English faster if their parents speak English at home.	6	3
6. The more time students spend soaking up English in the mainstream classroom, the faster they will learn the language.	6	2
7. Once students can speak English, they are ready to undertake the academic tasks of the mainstream classroom.		9
8. Students from other countries should learn to read in their native language first because this helps them succeed in U.S. schools.	2	7
9. Students' culture and background will affect how long it will take them to acquire English.	3	6
10. Students should be strongly encouraged to speak English immediately.	5	4

*Note.* The purpose of this activity is to dispel some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding second-language acquisition. (Highlighted areas indicate correct answers). Questions adapted from statements found in *Getting started with English language learners: How educators can meet the challenge* by J. Haynes, 2007, pp. 110-111.

## APPENDIX B

# Levels of CALP and the Woodcock-Munoz-R as presented by D. Nordick, December 2010

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The Levels of CALP and the Woodcock-Munoz-R:

- Level 6 – Very Advanced CALP: When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 6 demonstrates very advanced cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a Level 6 student will find the language demands of the learning task extremely easy.
- Level 5 – Advanced CALP: When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 5 demonstrates advanced cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a Level 5 student will find the language demands of the learning task very easy.
- Level 4 – Fluent CALP: When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 4 demonstrates fluent cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a Level 4 student will find the language demands of the learning task manageable.
- Level 3 – Limited CALP: When compared with others at the same age or grade, an individual at level 3 demonstrates limited cognitive-academic proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a Level 3 student will find the language demands of the learning task difficult.
- Level 2 – Very Limited CALP: When compared with others at the same age or grade, an individual at level 2 demonstrates very limited cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a Level 2 student will find the language demands of the learning task very difficult.
- Level 1 – Negligible CALP: When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 1 demonstrates negligible cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at Level 1 will find the language demands of the learning task impossible to manage.

Those students who score a CALP score of 3.5 or 4 are often ready for integration into academic classes. (Woodcock & Munoz-Sandoval, 2005, p. 61)

## APPENDIX C

# Group Work: Values & Norms

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### Values:

- Respect group members
- Include everyone in everything
- Valuing risk-taking and the right to make mistakes
- Recognition of expertise, experience, wisdom, and the good will in all members
- Work is accomplished in a pleasant environment

### Norms:

- Respect all members' right to speech
- Display positive verbal and non-verbal communication
- Compare individual perceptions to those of others
- Respect scheduled work times
- Support the processes determined by the group
- Make decisions by consensus
- Be objective with ideas and feedback (focus on content)
- Use electronic means to share documents and stimulate discussion
- Trust that ideas can be openly presented, whether implemented or not
- Validate the work of the group
- Present either individually or in groups the rationale for modifications
- Ask questions (to clarify ideas and performance)

*Note.* Adapted from the Grade 1 & 2 French Immersion Curriculum Team Norms, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009.

## APPENDIX D

# Survey of English Language Learners in French Immersion Schools

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### **FRENCH IMMERSION EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

***TITLE:***

A Review of Educator Perceptions, Services and Best Practices to Enhance Student Success for Immigrant Students in a French Immersion Setting

***PURPOSE:***

The purpose of the survey will be to gather perceptions and best practices in teaching English Language Learners in Greater Saskatoon Catholic French Immersion schools. Further action research and recommendations will follow.

***PERMISSIONS:***

Permission to conduct this research has been given by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division.

Your participation in the research is voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please be informed that the completion of this survey will constitute consent to participate and permission for your comments and responses to be used.

The research will be the property of the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation researchers and of the McDowell Foundation, and may be a part of presentations or publications developed for educational purposes or purposes related to the promotion of educational research and/or the McDowell Foundation.

***DEFINITION:***

ELLs (English Language Learners) - A child whose first language is not English. This child has minimal English skills or is non-English speaking or speaks a non-standard or unpolished form of English.

**EDUCATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. How many years have you taught in a French Immersion program?  
 1-5 years     6-10 years     11-15 years     16-20 years     21+ years
2. Select all categories that apply to your present teaching assignment:  
 Classroom teacher                       Release teacher  
 Learning assistance teacher     Teacher-librarian                       Administrator  
 Other (if you chose Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
3. What grade level do you presently teach? Select all grades that apply to your present teaching assignment.  
 Kindergarten     Grade 1     Grade 2     Grade 3     Grade 4  
 Grade 5     Grade 6     Grade 7     Grade 8     Not applicable
4. Have you had experience teaching ELLs?  
 Yes                       No
5. How comfortable are you with teaching ELLs?  
 Very comfortable                       Moderately comfortable  
 Mildly comfortable                       Not at all comfortable

**EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS IN TEACHING ELLS**

6. Culture shock is experienced, to some degree, by ELLs. Could you identify a student experiencing culture shock?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure
7. Can ELLs be successful in a French immersion setting?  
 Yes                       No  
Why or why not? (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you or have you been aware of the educational and cultural background of your ELLs?  
 Yes                       No                       Not applicable, I have not taught ELLs.
9. Are you aware that educational and cultural background affect student learning?  
 Yes                       No
10. Do you require more information about an ELL's educational and cultural background?  
 Yes                       No
11. Allowing ELLs to use their first language will enhance their learning. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?  
 Agree                       Disagree  
Why or why not? (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

12. An ELL acquires social language (language used in the playground) in 1-3 years. How long do you think it takes for this student to acquire academic language (language for formal academic learning and for written text in content areas)?
- 1 year       2 years       3 years       4 years       5 years  
 More than 5 years       I do not know
13. Where do you feel our ELL students are learning most of their academic language?
- In the classroom       In small classroom groups  
 In the EAL classroom       In the LAT classroom
14. An ELL's acquisition of social language is a good sign of their academic success at school.
- Agree       Disagree

***FAMILIARITY AND USE OF RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES***

15. Check the strategies you use in your classroom:
- Oral activities (such as read-alouds, debating, presentations, sharing, etc.)  
 Graphic organizers (such as categorized/classified organizers, compare/contrast, concept development, evaluation organizers, relational organizer, sequence organizers, etc.)  
 Vocabulary strategies (such as cloze activities, word sorting, word family trees, vocabulary story maps and graphics, word walls, etc.)  
 K-2 reading/writing strategies (such as guided reading, choral reading, echo reading, independent reading, writer's workshop, literacy centres, etc.)  
 Gr. 3-8 reading/writing strategies (such as guided reading, anticipation/prediction guide, group summarizing, key concepts, RAFTS, story maps, writer's workshop, journals, etc.)  
 Cooperative learning strategies (such as carousel, check and compare in pairs, think-pair-share, etc.)  
 Differentiation strategies (such as jigsaw, literacy circles, group investigations, etc.)  
 Co-teaching strategies (such as peer teaching, team teaching, station teaching, etc.)  
 Other (if you chose Other, please specify)
-

16. Which strategies do you find most effective in teaching ELLs in French immersion?

- Oral activities (such as read-alouds, debating, presentations, sharing, etc.)
- Graphic organizers (such as categorized/classified organizers, compare/contrast, concept development, evaluation organizers, relational organizer, sequence organizers, etc.)
- Vocabulary strategies (such as cloze activities, word sorting, word family trees, vocabulary story maps and graphics, word walls, etc.)
- K-2 reading/writing strategies (such as guided reading, choral reading, echo reading, independent reading, writer's workshop, literacy centres, etc.)
- Gr. 3-8 reading/writing strategies (such as guided reading, anticipation/prediction guide, group summarizing, key concepts, RAFTS, story maps, writer's workshop, journals, etc.)
- Cooperative learning strategies (such as carousel, check and compare in pairs, think-pair-share, etc.)
- Differentiation strategies (such as jigsaw, literacy circles, group investigations, etc.)
- Co-teaching strategies (such as peer teaching, team teaching, station teaching, etc.)
- Other (if you chose Other, please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you differentiate instruction and assessment for ELLs?

- Yes     No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you feel that differentiated instruction and assessment are important for ELLs?

- Yes     No

19. Do you have the necessary knowledge and support to differentiate instruction and assessment for ELLs?

- Yes     No

**AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS**

20. Do you feel you have adequate support to meet the needs of ELLs?

- |                          |                              |                             |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Human resources          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Learning resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

21. In your opinion, language support for ELLs in French immersion should consist of intervention in:

- French     English     Both French and English  
 Other (if you chose Other, please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Feel free to add any additional comments related to ELLs in French immersion:

# Survey Summary of Quantitative Data

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## ELLs IN FRENCH IMMERSION SCHOOLS: SURVEY ANALYSIS

### CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION CATEGORIES

#### **A. DEMOGRAPHICS**

- questions 1, 2, 3, 4

#### **B. PERCEPTION**

- questions 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21
- comfort
- success
- first language
- social language/academic
- language support
- intervention
- different assessments

#### **C. KNOWLEDGE**

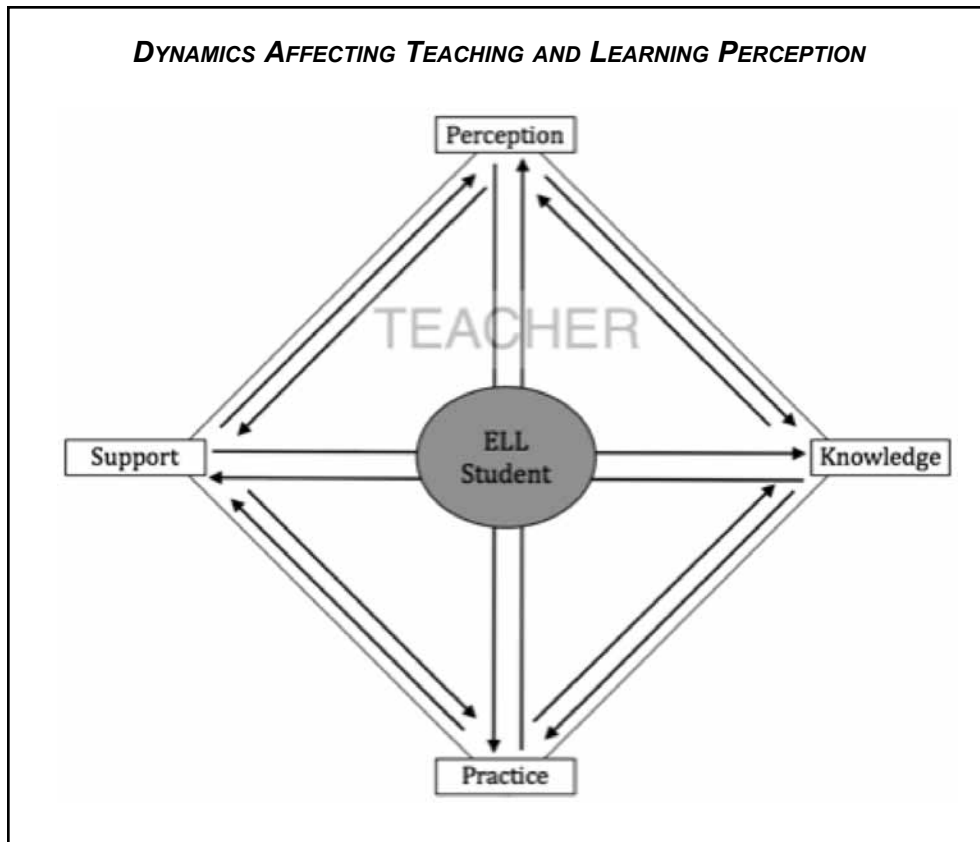
- questions 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 19
- culture shock
- education and cultural background
- first language
- social language/academic

#### **D. PRACTICE**

- questions 15, 16, 17, 19
- instructional practices
- differentiation/assessment

#### **E. SUPPORT**

- questions 19, 20



### **A. DEMOGRAPHICS** (questions 1, 2, 3, 4)

- Total number of respondents was 70
- Respondents having 1 to 5 years of French immersion teaching are 37.1% and those with 21+ years are 27.1%
- Present teaching assignment
- Greatest response from classroom teachers at 72.9%
- All grade levels, kindergarten to Grade 8, represented
- Highest number of respondents, 32.9%, presently teaching Grade 4
- 30% teaching Grade 3 and 28.6% teaching Grade 2

**QUESTION 4:**

Experience Teaching ELL Students							
Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
61.4%	38.6%	80%	20%	61.3%	38.7%	58.3%	41.7%

**B. PERCEPTION** (questions 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21)**QUESTION 5:**

Comfort in Teaching ELL Students				
Answer Options	Overall	Gr. K-2	Gr. 3-5	Gr. 6-8
Very comfortable	10%	11.4%	12.9%	12.5%
Moderately comfortable	38.6%	34.3%	45.2%	37.5%
Mildly comfortable	37.1%	40%	35.5%	37.5%
Not at all comfortable	14.3%	14.3%	6.5%	12.5%

**QUESTION 7:**

Perception of ELL Student Success							
Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
89.9%	10.1%	85.7%	14.3%	86.7%	13.3%	95.8%	4.2%

**QUESTION 10:**

Information Required Regarding Student's Educational and Cultural Background							
Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
73.9%	26.1%	77.1%	22.9%	63.3%	36.7%	66.7%	33.3%

**QUESTION 11:**

ELL Student's First Language Will Enhance Learning							
Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
68.1%	31.9%	60%	40%	60%	40%	75%	25%

**QUESTION 12:**

Acquiring Academic Language

- Academic language: language for formal academic learning and for written text in content areas.
- Highest percentage of respondents (24.6%) did not know or believed it would take more than 5 years (24.6%).

**QUESTION 13:**

Where ELL Students Learn Most Academic Language				
Answer Options	Overall	Gr. K-2	Gr. 3-5	Gr. 6-8
In the classroom	53.6%	57.1%	40%	50%
In small classroom groups	36.2%	34.3%	40%	45.8%
In the EAL classroom	5.8%	5.7%	10%	4.2%
In the LAT classroom	4.3%	2.9%	10%	0%

**QUESTION 14:**

Social Language as a Sign of Academic Success							
Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
53.6%	46.4%	51.4%	48.6%	50%	50%	54.2%	45.8%

**QUESTION 18:**

Importance of Differentiated Instruction and Assessment for ELL Students

- Overall, 92.8% of respondents agreed that differentiated instruction and assessment are important for ELL students.
- 100%, the highest percentage, of Grades 3 to 5 responders agreed with the statement.
- 95.8% of Grades 6 to 8 and 88.6% of the kindergarten to Grade 2 responders also agreed.

**QUESTION 20:**

Adequate Support for ELL Students								
Answer Options	Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Human Resources	22.1%	77.9%	17.6%	82.4%	13.3%	86.7%	25%	75%
Professional Development	11.8%	88.2%	11.8%	88.2%	16.7%	83.3%	15.9%	84.1%
Learning Resources	25.8%	74.2%	28%	72%	32.2%	67.8%	27.3%	72.7%

**QUESTION 21:**

Language of Support for ELL Students in French Immersion

- Overall, 64.7% of respondents believed both French and English should be a part of language support for ELL students in French immersion.
- 78.3%, the highest percentage, of the Grade 6 to 8 respondents believed both French and English should be part of language support.
- 68.6% of kindergarten to Grade 2 and 66.7% of Grades 3 to 5 also believed both languages should be part of educational support.

**C. KNOWLEDGE** (questions 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 19)

**QUESTION 6:**

Experiencing Culture Shock

- Overall, 31.9% of respondents agreed that culture shock is experienced by ELL students and that respondents can identify with this experience.
- Overall, 68.1% of respondents were unsure or disagreed with this statement.
- Lack of knowledge to identify culture shock.

**QUESTION 8:**

Educational and Cultural Background of ELL Students

- Overall, 75.5% of respondents have been aware of the educational and cultural background of their ELL students.
- Overall, 24.5% of respondents have not been aware of their ELL students' backgrounds.
- 29% of respondents said they have not taught ELL students.

**QUESTION 9:**

Effects of Educational and Cultural Backgrounds on Learning

- Overall, 92.8% of respondents said they were aware that education and cultural backgrounds affect student learning.
- Overall, 7.2% of respondents said they were not aware that backgrounds affect student learning.

**QUESTION 12:**

Acquiring Academic Language

- Academic language: language for formal academic learning and for written text in the content areas.
- Question demonstrates that 24.6% of respondents are aware that it could take more than 5 years for an ELL student to acquire academic language.

**QUESTION 14:**

Social Language as a Sign of Academic Success

- Overall, 53.6% of respondents agreed that an ELL's acquisition of social language is a good sign of academic success at school.
- Overall, 46.4% of respondents disagreed that an ELL student's acquisition of social language is a sign of academic success.

**QUESTION 19:**

Knowledge and Support to Differentiate Instruction and Assessment

- Overall, 15.9% of respondents agreed they had the necessary knowledge and support to differentiate instruction and assessment of ELL students.
- Overall, 84.1% of respondents disagreed they had the necessary knowledge and support.

## D. PRACTICE (questions 15, 16, 17, 19)

### QUESTION 16:

Classroom Teaching Strategies				
Answer Options	Overall	Gr. K-2	Gr. 3-5	Gr. 6-8
Oral activities	92.8%	97.1%	93.3%	95.8%
Graphic organizers	62.3%	54.3%	76.7%	70.8%
Vocabulary strategies	76.8%	85.7%	73.3%	70.8%
K-2 reading/writing	56.5%	82.9%	53.3%	33.3%
Gr. 3-8 reading/writing	59.4%	37.1%	86.7%	95.8%
Cooperative learning	49.3%	40%	46.7%	54.2%
Differentiation strategies	59.4%	45.7%	66.7%	79.2%
Co-teaching strategies	56.5%	57.1%	63.3%	62.5%
Other	11.6%	5.7%	13.3%	16.7%

### QUESTIONS 15 AND 16:

Teaching Strategies and ELL Students								
Answer Options	Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
	Class	ELL	Class	ELL	Class	ELL	Class	ELL
Strategies								
Oral activities	92.8%	76.1%	97.1%	91.4%	93.3%	73.3%	95.8%	63.6%
Graphic organizers	62.3%	34.3%	54.3%	34.4%	76.7%	40%	70.8%	40.9%
Vocabulary strategies	76.8%	53.7%	85.7%	62.9%	73.3%	66.7%	70.8%	36.4%
K-2 reading/writing	56.5%	50.7%	82.9%	71.4%	53.3%	46.7%	33.3%	31.8%
Gr. 3-8 reading/writing	59.4%	35.8%	37.1%	22.9%	86.7%	56.7%	95.8%	50%
Cooperative learning	49.3%	40.3%	40%	34.3%	46.7%	46.7%	54.2%	36.4%
Differentiation strategies	59.4%	32.8%	45.7%	25.7%	66.7%	40%	79.2%	36.4%
Co-teaching strategies	56.5%	38.8%	57.1%	42.9%	63.3%	43.3%	62.5%	36.4%
Other strategies	11.6%	19.4%	5.7%	14.3%	13.3%	16.7%	16.7%	36.4%

*Note.* Question 15 refers to strategies used in the classroom and question 16 involves strategies used for teaching ELL students French immersion. There is a decrease in the use of strategies for ELL students.

## E. SUPPORT (questions 19, 20)

### QUESTION 19:

#### Knowledge and Support to Differentiate Instruction and Assessment

- Overall, 15.9% of respondents agreed they had the necessary knowledge and support to differentiate instruction and assessment for ELL students.
- Overall, 84.1% of respondents disagreed they had the necessary knowledge and support.

### QUESTION 20:

Adequate Support for ELL Students								
Answer Options	Overall		Gr. K-2		Gr. 3-5		Gr. 6-8	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Human Resources	22.1%	77.9%	17.6%	82.4%	13.3%	86.7%	25%	75%
Professional Development	11.8%	88.2%	11.8%	88.2%	16.7%	83.3%	15.9%	84.1%
Learning Resources	25.8%	74.2%	28%	72%	32.2%	67.8%	27.3%	72.7%

## APPENDIX F

# Survey Summary of Qualitative Data

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### **QUESTION 7:**

Can ELLs be successful in a French immersion setting?

a) Yes

- Students' use of first language can assist them in learning
- Like other children, they can learn too
- Effort required
- Skills in first language will transfer over
- Children pick up languages quickly
- Must begin in kindergarten
- Effort required

b) Yes, with support

- ELLs can succeed with support (school resource - LAT, EA, EAL) and parental (family, tutor)
- Method of instruction and interest are factors
- Keen innate desire to learn and interest must be there
- FI for all but support is needed
- Teachers need effective strategies/PD and background information
- Program adaptations and differentiation needed (instruction and assessment)

c) No

- Difficult for children, should learn English first
- Hindrance, slows down others
- Unfamiliar with structure of French language
- Should not be only child in K class

### **QUESTION 11:**

Allowing ELLs to use their first language will enhance their learning. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

a) Agree

- To make connections
- Skills from first language are transferred to French acquisition
- Skills are used as a reference
- Makes ELLs feel comfortable and more welcome
- Helps them communicate/share
- Needed for optimum learning success

b) Disagree

- Teacher will not understand student
- If students are to be fully immersed, they must speak French
- First language to be used at home
- If allowed to use their first language, they will rely on it
- Overuse for extended periods could hinder the learning of French
- Effort and emphasis should be on French speaking

**QUESTION 15:**

Check the strategies you use in your classroom. Provide other suggestions.

- Effective strategies include: auditory and visual, independent and home-based reading programs, individual instruction (e.g., precision reading), and music

**QUESTION 16:**

Which strategies do you find most effective in teaching ELLs in French immersion? Provide other suggestions.

- Differentiation for all students
- One-on-one
- Small groups

**QUESTION 17:**

Do you differentiate instruction and assessment for ELLs?

- a) Yes – should be the norm, accepted best practice, based on specific student needs to achieve student success
- b) No – not necessarily for ELLs

**QUESTION 20:**

Do you feel you have adequate support to meet the needs of ELLs?

- a) No
- Need more people power to work one-on-one
  - Teachers need help to differentiate
  - Need resources to help understand child's culture
  - Need more PD and time
  - Less support in French immersion schools
  - More support needed in FI schools at primary level

b) Yes

- Lack of knowledge of available supports
- Need to know what is available

**QUESTION 21:**

In your opinion, language support for ELLs in French immersion should consist of intervention in: French, English, Both French and English, Other.

- a) Focus on French first until English is actually taught
- Early intervention
  - If pulled out, only for French instruction not English
  - K to Grade 1 – French intervention
- b) Grade 3 and up – English intervention
- c) French and English support is required
- d) Assessment in native language

**QUESTION 22:**

Additional comments related to ELLs in French immersion

1. Supports Required

- a) Human resources
- Suggestions: full time EAL teacher in schools with high ELL numbers
  - Support French as the target language
  - Lack of support in schools with few ELLs
- b) Professional development for teachers
- Assistance with differentiation
  - Receive cultural and learning background information
- c) Family support

2. Student Success/Challenges

- Teaching methods required

3. Family Engagement and Commitment

- Integrate/involve parents
- Finding ways to more effectively communicate with parents

## APPENDIX G

# Action Research in Literacy and Instructional Strategies

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Literacy and Instructional Strategies Teaching ELLs in French Immersion

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Strategies I find effective in teaching ELLs. List and explain.

New strategies used in this action research period:  
Name of strategy (explanation)

Target student (brief description)

Grade level

Subject/content area of study

Results (What was the purpose of the strategy? How was the strategy used?  
How effective was it?)









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