CPF MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2013

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CPF Magazine

As always, Canadian Parents for French thanks Canadian Heritage for its continued support and dedication to our organization.
Like many organizations, Canadian Parents for French has been working to scale back its print production to focus instead on electronic communication. In recent years, the national office and some branches have even successfully produced an electronic-only newsletter. All of CPF’s newsletters have been well-received by our readers, and we are so pleased to be able to reach the majority of our members and stakeholders through these publications. However, it has become more and more evident that reaching most of CPF’s members is not good enough—not when we can reach all of our members and others who are interested in FSL issues in Canada.

With this new goal in mind, we encountered some new questions. What should we send? Are we becoming too repetitive in all of our communications? What is the best way to send information to you, our members? After careful consideration of what our members want, CPF’s National Office and Branches agreed that it was time to create a single publication, which paints a picture of what FSL looks like across Canada. We want CPF Magazine to paint that picture.

We knew this magazine would be a flagship publication and are thrilled with the result: a beautiful, professional quality magazine that we are proud to attach to the CPF name. Our move away from a more traditional “newsletter” approach towards a publication with higher editorial standards and a more sophisticated layout signals CPF’s commitment to a new type of organization: one that captures the attention of all Canadians, and compels them to take notice of FSL issues in their community.

The decision made by the national office and the branches to join together to create CPF Magazine was also a big one for CPF, and we will strive to ensure that each issue represents the vibrant regional diversity of Canada.

The CPF Magazine is a truly pan-Canadian cooperative effort, a vivid portrayal of everything our organization represents. We decided this magazine would focus on issues regional and national in scope, traditional and experimental programs, standard and exceptional student demographics, pan-Canadian changes to FSL and Official Language bilingualism, and interviews with and profiles of interesting figures in FSL.

We want to address all of these issues and more, and we are excited about this next step in our organization’s history. I hope that you are all as pleased as I am with the magazine, and happy reading!

CPF wants to hear from our members to find out what you think of the new magazine. Please let us know what you think! Send comments, questions, or letters to the editor to cpf@cpf.ca or by mail to 1104-170 Laurier St. West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V5.
With the growing interest for the DELF in Canada, the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers asked Dr. Larry Vandergrift to research the perceptions of stakeholders of the DELF in Canada. Here is a summary of the research. You can find the full version of the research paper at www.acpi.ca.

The Diplôme d’études de langue française (DELF) has recently gained attention in Canada for its potential as a national French-language proficiency test. There has been much anecdotal evidence about the benefits of the DELF; however, there is very little empirical evidence for the perceived incentives and real advantages of this test, nor any investigation of potential barriers to participation and success of Canadian students.

This study documented the current state of affairs with regard to the DELF Scolaire in Canada by: 1) gathering information about experiences with the DELF from students, teachers and parents from a number of school jurisdictions across Canada; 2) determining policy positions with regard to the DELF by university French departments, French-language universities and faculties, Ministries of Education in Canada, and; 3) discussing the implications of the findings for FSL proficiency testing in Canada.

Methodology
Students, parents and teachers in jurisdictions involved in the April 2012 sitting of the DELF were invited to participate, either by letter or e-mail. Those who accepted the invitation to participate were provided with an electronic link to the appropriate questionnaire. In the case of university French departments and ministries of education, appropriate contact people were identified and sent an e-mail invitation to participate, along with an electronic link to the appropriate questionnaire.

Student perceptions
A high percentage of the student respondents: 1) judge the DELF to be a fair or very fair measure of FSL proficiency (over 94%); 2) report that the test has either some impact or a strong impact on their attitude to learning French (over 74%), and; 3) recommend the DELF test to other students (over 93%). Student comments mention not only the usual intrinsic motivators such as future job prospects, travel and reward; they also highlight motivators such as personal challenge and affirmation of their FSL proficiency against an external benchmark.

Students were also able to provide insight into some of the challenges of the DELF. Overall, they deemed reading and writing tasks to be the least difficult. Listening tasks were deemed to be most difficult. When asked about the degree to which classroom learning activities were similar to DELF tasks, the students rated reading and writing tasks to be most similar and listening as least similar. Approximately one-half of the respondents indicated some cultural interference, of which a large majority described this interference only as ‘somewhat’. Students cited many strategies for overcoming any unknown references.

Teacher perceptions
Similar to the students, a very high percentage of the teacher respondents (over 93%) judge the DELF to be a fair and appropriate tool for measuring French-language proficiency, deem a DELF certificate to be helpful for future prospects and would recommend the DELF to their students.

Teachers also highlighted some challenges. They rated the DELF listening tasks as the most difficult compared to the other skill tasks which they rated continued next page
DELF and DALF, French reference diplomas in Canada and around the world

The DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française – Diploma in French Language Studies) and the DALF (Diplôme approfondi de langue française – Advanced French Language Diploma) are diplomas issued by the French Ministry of National Education to certify the qualifications of individuals whose first language is not French. They have been developed by the Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (CIEP), a public institution located in Sèvres, near Paris.

There are six versions for various publics:

- The DELF Prim (for primary schools)
- The DELF Scholastic (for high school students, in a school setting)
- The DELF Junior (for adolescents, outside a school setting)
- The DELF for everyone (for all adults)
- The DELF Pro (for professional integration or promotion in a Francophone setting)
- The DALF (for advanced learners).

They are harmonized with the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the result of joint work by all European countries in the 1990s and 2000s, with a view of adopting a common tool for evaluating language skills. The CEFR is associated with education based on communication, situational exercises and action. The principle is that learners are actors in their own learning through real or realistic activities anchored in everyday life. In preparing the DELF/DALF, there is necessarily contact with this type of education, and this is a feature that students and their teachers at the schools particularly appreciate.

As part of the DELF/DALF, all qualifications are evaluated: oral and written understanding and expression. As with any diploma, receipt of a DELF or DALF improves an individual’s résumé and highlights their proficiency in French on an international scale (there are DELF/DALF examination centres in 167 countries). The DALF gives access to French universities and to a growing number of universities around the world, and a DELF B2 eliminates the need to pass pre-admission language tests at French universities.

In Canada, the DELF/DALF is becoming increasingly popular, with registrations rising from 80 in 2007 to 5,300 in 2012 (85% of which are DELF Scholastic, which has been adopted by several school boards or departments of education). It is anticipated that there will be more than 6,000 candidates in 2013.

There are currently 26 examination centres open in Canada:

- 6 universities (3 in Alberta, 2 in Ontario, 1 in Quebec)
- 2 departments of education (Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island)
- 8 French alliances (2 in Ontario, 2 in Alberta, and 1 in British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia)
- And 10 centres totalling dozens of school boards in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador

The last two centres to open are located in Yellowknife (NWT) and in northwestern Ontario.

As well, an increasing number of Canadian universities (particularly faculties of education and French departments) are beginning to take them into consideration and include them in some way in the assessment of students’ French language skills on registration, mid-way through their studies, and upon graduating from University, or by attributing credits. The situation varies from one university to another, but six Canadian universities are already DELF/DALF examination centres (McGill, Ottawa, Western Ontario, Lethbridge, University of Alberta, University of Calgary). Other universities are naturally familiar with the DELF/DALF, and many are considering how to take it into consideration in their curricula.

For more information:

**CIEP site:**

**French Embassy in Canada site:**

**CAIT (Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers) site:**
www.acpi.ca/ressources/delf-c-est-quoi
about equal in difficulty. With regard to cultural references, a higher percentage of the teachers (compared to the students) indicated that these references may have interfered ‘somewhat’ with student success. Overall, teachers judge their classroom activities to be similar to the DELF tasks. Only listening activities are ranked as dissimilar at a noteworthy level.

Parent perceptions
An overwhelming 94.5% of the parent respondents recommended the DELF and many elaborated on their response with written comments. Parent comments reiterate many of the same benefits of an internationally-recognized test/diploma, as cited by the teachers and students. Some parents reported needing more information.

An important element of the parent questionnaire was to explore parent perspectives on the cost of the DELF and the relationship between DELF and provincial testing. On both counts, opinions appear to be mixed. Clearly, parents need more information on these questions before they can provide a more informed opinion.

University perceptions
The information provided by the university respondents showed that universities are just beginning to become aware of the DELF (and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and need more information on these tools and how to respond appropriately to students arriving at university with DELF certification.

Ministry of Education (MOE) perceptions
The responses of the MOE representatives from the provinces/territories who completed the questionnaire indicate a divide between those jurisdictions that have taken a positive stance to the DELF and those who remain skeptical or resistant. The former group has decided to work with the DELF to certify student FSL proficiency using an internationally recognized benchmark, whereas the latter group is more focused on ensuring that provincial/territorial FSL outcomes have been met.

Conclusion
The findings of this study suggest that the DELF holds a great deal of promise as an appropriate measure of FSL proficiency; however, there are some factors that will need attention in order for the DELF to realize that potential. The report concludes with a number of recommendations to advance use of the DELF as a national French-language proficiency test in Canada. The Diplôme d’études de langue française (DELF) has recently gained attention in Canada for its potential as a national French-language proficiency test. In order to gain a better understanding of the test and its potential, the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) mandated a study of the perceptions of various stakeholders in Canada on the benefits and barriers to success of the DELF as a national proficiency test. This report offers a current understanding of the DELF in Canada by presenting and discussing the findings of this study and outlining recommendations on how to move forward.
Parents are taking to Facebook to educate, engage, support, and mobilize other French Immersion parents – with great success.

A group of parent volunteers in Chilliwack, BC, for example, have created a Facebook page to drum up support for the creation of a new Early French Immersion program.

The absence of an Early French Immersion (EFI) program in Chilliwack has meant that students who wish to enroll in the program must travel outside their school district to attend classes in Abbotsford, a 30-minute drive away. Because these social-media-savvy parents were successful, the doors to a new EFI program will open in Chilliwack for kindergarten and grade 1 students starting September 2014.

By inviting local supporters of French-language instruction to “like” their “Early French Immersion in Chilliwack” Facebook page, and by posting regular and interesting content or “status updates”, their page has become a large and active forum for discussion in their local parent community. Their Facebook page currently has 164 “likes” or followers.

During a Chilliwack School District meeting where trustees debated the new French Immersion program, a savvy parent used their Facebook page to post regular updates and share feedback, almost in real time. Consequently, everyone who was not able to attend this important meeting in person was still able to follow the meeting’s proceedings – via the EFI in Chilliwack Facebook page – and even chat with other parents!
This is the first time in the 43-year history of French Immersion in BC that parents have led a social-media-based campaign in order to educate, connect, and engage other parents in lobbying school trustees for the creation of a new program.

In a similar vein, the CPF Saanich Chapter has been using its Facebook page to keep parents abreast of the latest news and events in their community. The page administrators post updates from their school district, information about upcoming FSL competitions (like Concours), FSL opportunities and CPF volunteer opportunities with their Chapter. It’s also proven to be an effective peer-networking tool for parents looking for resources and strategies to support their children with their homework, summer camp ideas, and tutoring opportunities.

Needless to say, this is breaking new ground for the way we organize and engage the parent community. For 33 years, French Immersion parents in BC and Yukon have used telephone trees, newsletters, and good ol’ fashioned living room meetings to spread the word and to coordinate initiatives.

These parents in Chilliwack and Saanich—perhaps following in the footsteps of their children—are participating in the evolution of these means of communication and dialogue. Together they are ushering in a new and exciting age of parent engagement and involvement using the latest social media platforms.

Kim Currie, who manages the CPF Saanich Facebook page, says that one of the main strengths of using Facebook for parent engagement within CPF is the visual presence it creates:

“One parent has told me that seeing our CPF Saanich posts pop up every few days on their news feed has created a real awareness that we are out there and active within the community.” Another benefit, Kim says, “is the ability to provide a variety of concise information in a timely manner and use Facebook’s ‘Insights’ feature to determine which pieces of communication spark curiosity and interest in our community.”

After two years of organizing, lobbying, and creating awareness by the CPF Chilliwack Chapter, on May 27th, 2013 the Chilliwack School Board relented and agreed to create an Early French Immersion program at the earliest possible date. This was an incredible success for Chilliwack families—despite considerable resistance by some School Trustees—never gave up in their efforts to bring French Immersion to young students in their community.

#French Is...

#French Is, CPF National’s first social media campaign, engages Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube users in a conversation about what French Is to them. In addition to providing this forum, the campaign features a YouTube video, and posts a “word of the day”.

The response to #French Is has surpassed everyone’s expectations; both the CPF National’s Facebook page “likes” and its Twitter followers have nearly doubled since the campaign began in February.

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and let us know what #French Is to you.
FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE AND BILINGUALISM IN CANADA - BY THE NUMBERS

MOTHER TONGUES IN CANADA
- 57% English
- 21% French
- 20% Other

PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN FRENCH IMMERSION
- 15%
- 8%
- 8%
- 6%
- 7%
- 11%
- 8%
- 36%

OVER 47% OF CANADIAN STUDENTS ARE IN A FSL PROGRAM

CONSISTENT FRENCH IMMERSION GROWTH
FRENCH IMMERSION ENROLMENT HAS GROWN TO 8.7% SINCE 1975

LANGUAGES SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME
- English 67%
- French 21%
- Other 12%

THERE ARE 2X AS MANY STUDENTS IN FSL PROGRAMS AS STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY

CORE FRENCH
FRENCH IMMERSION
NOT IN FSL PROGRAM

ENGLISH 67%
FRENCH 21%
OTHER 12%

13%
21%
12%
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CONTESTS, EVENTS AND CAMPS: CPF ENTERTAINING YOUR CHILD WHILE BUILDING THEIR FRENCH

By Shaunpal Jandu, Communications Officer, CPF

From coast to coast to coast, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) works hard to provide French-second-language (FSL) opportunities for Canadian students. From local summer camps to provincial and pan-Canadian school productions, CPF is proud to help students learn and improve their French skills. Programs such as the Concours d’art oratoire, Bilingualism Rocks!, and our upcoming program O Canada! have helped increase the awareness of the benefits of bilingualism in Canada, while providing fun ways for children to interact in French.

Over the summer, many CPF chapters run camps to help children practice their French. Last year alone, there were over 40 camps across the country! Many of these camps feature some form of French instruction, and have fun activities for children from camping to field trips to crafts, all of which occur in French.

The Concours d’art oratoire is arguably CPF’s most recognized event. The Concours d’art oratoire (or Concours for short) is a French public speaking competition for all levels of FSL students, from grade 3 to high school. Concours provides an opportunity for children to not only participate at local levels but provincial and territorial levels as well, and participants in grades 11 and 12 can participate in the national level. The competition gives children and teenagers a practical means to develop their French language skills and as they progress, they have the opportunity to meet other students from across the province and country.

A few years ago, the British Columbia and Yukon Branch, with help from other organizations, started a traveling production of bilingual entertainers and artists who brought young Canadians together in a celebration, which helped build ties amongst English and French speaking children. This program, called Bilingualism Rocks!, brought French to Francophones and FSL students in rural and remote areas in both provinces. Through music, theatre, and art these students were able to receive a deeper understanding of the richness of French language and culture. After a successful inaugural year, Bilingualism Rocks! expanded to include Albertan communities as well. This year, Bilingualism Rocks! will take on a new name and will visit communities across Canada.

Building on the successes of Bilingualism Rocks!, CPF and Canadian Youth for French will work together to bring students O Canada! This new endeavour will have a bilingual performance piece and create youth-led workshops, showing young Canadians the impact Francophone culture has and will have in Canada.

These are only a few of the programs CPF is currently working on. We are proud of these activities, because not only do they allow children to practice the French they have learned in school, they also allow children to make new friends who are learning French and show them that they are not the only ones in FSL programs.

For more information on any of these programs, please contact your local CPF chapter or branch, and keep your eyes peeled for news on O Canada!

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ABSTRACT
The St. Lambert immersion program and Professor Wallace Lambert have been connected more closely than in name alone. Those involved in the initiation of the St. Lambert immersion program in the 1960s asked Dr. Lambert to evaluate its outcomes. The research questions guiding the evaluation and the research design Dr. Lambert devised became a blueprint for others researching immersion programs in later years. Furthermore, Dr. Lambert provided support and encouragement to those involved in research concerning the acquisition of bilingualism and its social and cognitive impact.
Dr. Merrill Swain is Professor Emeritus in the Second Language Education program of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Her interests include bilingual education (particularly French immersion education) and communicative second language learning, teaching and testing. Her present research focuses on the role of collaborative dialogue and languaging in second language learning. She was President of the American Association for Applied Linguistics in 1998-99; recipient of AAAI’s 2004 Distinguished Scholarship and Service Award; and awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Vaasa in 2011. Her most recent book (co-authored) is Sociocultural Theory in Second Language Education: An Introduction Through Narratives (Multilingual Matters, 2011).

Sharon Lapkin is Professor Emeritus in the Second Language Education program of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Her research projects centre on French second language education in Canada and range from program evaluations of core French and immersion to qualitative studies of language learning in progress through detailed analysis of transcribed learner dialogues. From 1995 to 2004 she was co-Editor of the Canadian Modern Language Review and from 2004 to 2006 she was co-President of the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics. Sharon is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASIT).

THE LAMBERT ‘BLUEPRINT’

At the request of parents in the St. Lambert school district of Montreal (Melikoff, 1972), Wally Lambert and his colleagues (John McNamara and Dick Tucker) designed a systematic series of program evaluations that established a blueprint for assessing immersion programs throughout Canada and beyond. In this brief essay we discuss ways in which the original research questions were addressed, and describe several ways in which researchers refined them to probe more deeply into the effects of the immersion program on academic outcomes.

At the time when the first French immersion program was initiated in St. Lambert, parents, administrators and educators expressed serious reservations. The initial fears are captured in this quote from the Association of Catholic Principals of Montreal: “While we favour bilingualism and the effective teaching of the French language from kindergarten to grade 12, we reject the so-called bilingual school which attempts to give equal or nearly equal importance to two languages as media of instruction. We are of the opinion that the average child cannot cope with two languages of instruction and to try to do so leads to insecurity, language interference, and academic retardation...” (cited in Lambert & Tucker, 1972, p. 5).

In the face of such attitudes, the Lambert team developed a model for program evaluation designed to address key issues of concern: first and second language development, academic achievement and cognitive development. For the first pilot Kindergarten class, comparison classes of the regular English program and Francophones (first language) were selected based on the similarity of parental backgrounds and therefore socioeconomic status. In addition, an intelligence measure (non-verbal IQ) was administered to check on comparability of the groups and to establish a baseline for future comparisons. The regular English program class was used to check on the progress of the immersion children in their first language, English, and the Francophone comparison class to check on their progress in learning the second language, French. By the time Bilingual education of children was published in 1972, Lambert and Tucker had followed two cohorts of students, the first for 5 years until they were in grade 4, and the second for 4 years, until they were in grade 3.

The positive findings from the Lambert team’s carefully designed research were responsible for calls from other provinces and territories for immersion programs of their own. For example, by 1969, only four years after the St. Lambert experiment began, immersion had come to the National Capital Region. Each of the four school boards there established their own programs. With federal funding, different research teams undertook their own evaluations, based on the Lambert evaluation blueprint.

Of the five main research questions addressed by Lambert and Tucker and subsequent immersion program evaluations across Canada, we explore three, related to the academic outcomes of immersion education:

1. What effect does French immersion have on the students’ first language (English) skills?
2. How well do French immersion students perform in school subjects such as mathematics?
3. How well do French immersion students develop second language (French) skills?

Over time it became clear that the pattern of results that characterized the St. Lambert findings generalized to other Canadian settings. These positive results went a long way to allaying the initial fears of parents, administrators and educators. We briefly consider answers to these questions, noting where they have been adapted as Canadian researchers uncovered more evidence about the academic outcomes of French immersion education. We end with a brief story as evidence of Wally Lambert’s wonderful characteristics as a human being.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Overall the Lambert program evaluation found that at the end of grade 4, having been exposed to instruction in English from grades 2 to 4 for one hour a day, the French immersion students were performing as well as the regular English program students on tests of English word knowledge, word discrimination and language usage. Both classes were well above average (above the 80th percentile) in
terms of national norms. They performed similarly on tests of reading ability, listening comprehension and knowledge of concepts in English (p. 203). Their expressive skills were also comparable on tasks like story retelling where the stories were equally complex and rich in vocabulary.

Subsequent program evaluations in other jurisdictions also relied on standardized English achievement tests such as the Canadian Tests of Basic Skills to establish the fact that, aside from a temporary lag in achievement recorded before French immersion students had had any exposure to English language arts in the curriculum, immersion students were holding their own and even outperforming regular English program students in areas such as vocabulary, spelling and usage (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1982).

There was notable consistency in these findings, regardless of where the immersion program was located.

Variation was introduced when the design of the early total French immersion program differed from that of the St. Lambert program: thus, for example, students in programs where only half the instructional day was devoted to French performed as well as but not better than comparison students in the regular English program on English achievement tests. It became clear that a certain level of second language proficiency was necessary for bilingualism to exert a positive influence on English language achievement.

Few large-scale studies of the English language skills of French immersion students have been conducted since the program evaluations of the 70s and 80s. One notable exception is a study sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Education a decade ago. The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is an independent provincial agency funded by the Government of Ontario. EQAO conducts province-wide testing in English and mathematics at grades 3, 6 and 9. Unlike the standardized measures that have already been described, EQAO tests are tied to the Ontario curriculum in English language arts and math, and include a wider variety of test types than typical standardized achievement tests. Researchers at OISE were asked to conduct a re-analysis of data collected in the late 90s, examining results of French immersion students in English in relation to those of the population as a whole (Turnbull, Hart, & Lapkin, 2000). About 60,000 students were involved at grade 3, and over 113,000 at grade 6; of these six to eight percent were immersion students.

The English language tests in the EQAO battery involve literacy skills, reading and writing; there are four levels of achievement with Level 3 representing a high level of achievement and constituting the provincial standard, that is, the level the province would like all students to attain; at Level 4 students exceed the provincial standard. Here is what the grade 6 data show: seventy-one percent of immersion students achieve Levels 3 or 4 on the provincial tests of reading, while 51 percent of regular English program students do so (this excludes gifted students, who perform somewhat better than the immersion students). In writing, two-thirds of immersion students achieve Levels 3 or 4, compared to about half of the regular program students.

Let us revisit the original research question, “What effect does French immersion have on students’ first language skills?” In light of the consistent positive findings, the question evolved to: What is the nature of the benefits that accrue to immersion students in the area of first language (English) skills? It is assumed that early immersion students reach a “threshold” level of proficiency in French (Cummins, 1979) that triggers a positive impact on their first language skills. This is consistent with Lambert’s (1975) notion

continued next page →
of ‘additive’ bilingualism and the “linguistic detective capacity” that Lambert and Tucker (1972, p. 43) postulated in the 70s.

**ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL SUBJECTS SUCH AS MATH**

In the original St. Lambert project, aside from English and French skills, achievement in mathematics was monitored every year. Testing of the lead cohorts in grades 3 and 4 showed that immersion students were performing as well as their respective comparison groups in math. This held true for tests administered in the language of instruction, that is French, and in the home language, that is English. The latter finding confirms that transfer of knowledge was taking place for early immersion students from the target language to the dominant language (English).

Once again, these findings were replicated in the large-scale program evaluations conducted outside the province of Quebec (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Bournot-Trites & Reeder, 2001). In the face of repeated positive results, researchers began to attribute the strong performance of immersion students to their advanced second language proficiency. As Cummins (1979) explained: “as [immersion students] develop high levels of L2 skills, their fluent access to two languages can give rise to enhancement both of L2 skills and other aspects of cognitive functioning” (p. 31).

Enhanced cognitive skills may account for the math results from the EQAO testing in Ontario mentioned earlier. At grade 3, immersion and non-immersion students performed similarly on these curriculum-based tests; at grade 6, French immersion students achieved better overall results than the regular English program comparison group.

**FRENCH LANGUAGE SKILLS**

The main measure of French language skills used by the Lambert team was a French achievement test standardized on a population from the Catholic School Commission of Montreal. Speaking ability was assessed by means of a story retelling task evaluated for overall expressive ability, and aspects of grammar and pronunciation. There was also a French listening comprehension test.

We focus on the lead cohort (at grade 4). The French immersion students’ performance in listening comprehension was comparable to that of Francophone peers; their achievement scores placed them at or above the scores of half of the Francophone comparison class, and their French vocabulary knowledge was somewhat below (but not significantly below) that of their Francophone peers. Immersion students’ French speaking ability were not as advanced as that of the Francophone comparison students, as evidenced for example, in the immersion students’ avoidance of complex grammatical structures in speaking French.

It was difficult to find appropriate tests for secondary school students that were standardized on Canadian French populations for French achievement, but one Ontario-based study (Lawrence, 1996) involved a grade 9 class of French immersion students taking the grade 9 test designed by the Ontario Ministry of Education for Franco-Ontarian French-speaking students. Unexpectedly, French immersion students outperformed French first-language students in Ontario on reading. However they did not perform as well as Francophone peers in writing. Still, about 73 percent of the immersion students performed at or above grade level expectations in writing (for the Francophones, this percentage was 87).

Because exposure to French is limited to the school context, researchers have used benchmarks to measure the French proficiency of immersion students, and in particular, immersion graduates. Thus, for example, with funding from the Public Service Commission of Canada, Lazaruk (2007) conducted a study in 2004-05, in which the Commission’s proficiency tests were administered to a sample of grade 12 French immersion students in Alberta. The test places candidates at levels A, B or C (with C being the most advanced) in reading, writing and oral interaction.

The researchers found that three quarters of the immersion students tested achieved level B, a level required for bilingual positions in the federal public service (Lazaruk, 2007, p. 608). One-fifth of the students reached the highest level (level C). This is an impressive finding!

**CONCLUDING COMMENT**

Wally Lambert’s contribution to French immersion education is inestimable. The program would not have continued to exist and expanded globally, if it were not for the research he initiated with his evaluation blueprint. The questions his team identified in 1965 endured and were refined as subsequent teams of researchers tackled evaluations in their own jurisdictions. Wally’s legacy consists in part of the hundreds of research projects focusing on immersion education over the last 40 or so years.

Wally’s legacy also consists in part of the people he inspired. The first author of this essay, Merrill Swain, was one of those...
people, and was unable to close this essay without providing a brief testimony to Wally Lambert’s mentoring, support and inspiration.

“Wally provided me (Merrill) with so many opportunities to become part of the community interested in bilingualism and bilingual education. This anecdote will indicate what an extraordinary man he was, and how he engaged me completely. The story is set in the late 1960s when I was a graduate student at the University of California (at Irvine). In those days (and even now), Canada was a distant foreign country and Toronto and Montreal were undifferentiated cities. Knowing that my interests were focused on the acquisition of “bilingualism as a first language” and that Professor Lambert was the person who was studying bilingualism in Canada, my thesis supervisor suggested that when I went home for the Christmas holidays, I should give Dr. Lambert a call and tell him about my interests.

Even in 1968, it seemed inappropriate for me to call an unknown professor, out of the blue, at his home, during the holidays. But my supervisor had insisted, and so I called him, long distance, from Toronto. Wally himself answered the phone. Timidly, I explained my Ph.D. research interests and from that moment on, he became my hero. He supported my research in so many ways. Wally had just become a member of the Board of Directors of the newly formed International Research Centre on Bilingualism (CIRB), and told me he would use that position to make sure I was well greeted and treated should I decide to do my research in Quebec City. True to his word, Wally made sure I was, as a grad student, offered office space in the CIRB, plus two offices – imagine that as a graduate student, I was offered two research assistants to help me collect and transcribe data. Wally told me that he believed that I was “heaven sent to the CIRB because the Centre, although doing research on bilingualism, was not doing anything related to Canada!” Until then, I had never met Wally personally. Then, one day, he was at my desk in the Centre, chuckling his famous chuckle, asking me how I was doing, and would I come to visit with the team at McGill, talk to his classes, meet Dick Tucker and John McNamara. Later, as immersion researchers, Wally and I attended many of the same conferences, where we often laughed till tears fell, over Wally’s mischievous behaviour and stories. He mentored me into and through a career associated with bilingualism. Wally was the sort of person whom every academic should have as a guide, a supporter and friend. Wally was all of that for me, and I miss him dearly.”

REFERENCES
French Second Language Education (FSL) is a huge success story in Canada. In any given school year, more than 1,800,000 students are enrolled in various FSL programs across the country. CPF can take credit for part of this success, with our members effectively advocating at the school district, provincial and territorial ministry, and federal government level for more access, better programs, and extra-curricular French language activities.

Yet, too many families across Canada continue to face challenges every day enrolling and keeping their children in FSL programs. Parents are forced to camp overnight to gain a coveted spot in the area’s French Immersion program; children are missing out on the same linguistic opportunities their older siblings had before them because their home address is a few metres outside the boundary line; students with learning disabilities are told that they can’t hope to become bilingual because the school board is not aware of special resources that could help them. From Newfoundland to the Yukon Territory, there are countless struggles taking place.

What can you do as a parent to help ensure your children won’t miss out on becoming bilingual? By helping CPF to make your case through research. Research on education issues is being conducted across Canada every day, and CPF is a major player in commissioning some of the leading research on second-language learning. Solid, research-backed advocacy efforts can be the key to making school administrators understand that bilingualism isn’t just a nice dream: it deserves to be a reality for your child and others in your community.

Most of the research that CPF commissions is published in The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada research report, which CPF produces every other year to help prove that all kinds of students can and do succeed in FSL. With this report in hand, you can prove to local school boards that your family deserves the same transportation options as the students in the English stream (see the 2008 report); that your English-second-language children have as much to gain from that seat in the Immersion classroom as native English speakers in your community (2010); that your child with a learning disability needs special resources, not exclusion from FSL (2012). You know your child can succeed in becoming bilingual—all you need is the evidence to back it up.

CPF’s research activities go beyond The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada. CPF compiles the only comprehensive list of FSL enrolment rates nationwide (Annual FSL Enrollment in Canada), and policy-makers, educators, researchers and school administrators—who those who have the power and influence to potentially effect real change in Canada—often turn to us to make sense of the trends and the numbers. The Research Database is an equally important tool for academics, teachers and students looking to analyze and interpret past research, a crucial step in expanding on work already done and further advancing our understanding of FSL issues. This database supplies members like you with this work, and our staff works to keep it relevant, current, and user-friendly.

CPF’s Proud of Two Languages Circle supports these and other research activities. This monthly giving program is designed so that you can donate as much or as little as you want and CPF is now earmarking these funds specifically for research. Whether you can give $5 a month or $50, your funds are supporting the work that goes towards improving the quality FSL programs Canada has to offer, and providing you with the facts you need to help your child. Consider joining the Proud of Two Languages Circle today, and help deliver evidence-backed advocacy tools directly into the hands of your child’s teacher.

Interested in finding out more about the Proud of Two Languages Circle? Contact CPF at 613-235-1481 x236 to find out more, or email us at dmurphy@cpf.ca.

OTHER WAYS to help support CPF

The Proud of Two Languages Circle isn’t the only way to put your hard-earned money to good use in supporting FSL education. CPF is present in communities all across Canada. If you’re thinking about supporting FSL in your community, consider making a donation to your local CPF Chapter or your provincial or territorial CPF Branch to help meet programming and advocacy needs for students learning French as a second language.

Camps, tutoring classes, scholarship programs, after-school clubs, contests, games and more are but some of the wonderful projects undertaken by these CPF offices. Administered by our entirely volunteer-run Chapters, and our modestly-staffed Branches, these activities are in addition to the many other tasks managed by regional offices of CPF, from advocacy to promotion to governance concerns. CPF needs the help of individuals like you to ensure that they can continue meeting the demands of a grass roots advocacy body, so consider making a donation to support your local CPF family!

Interested in making a donation? Make cheques payable to Canadian Parents for French, and clarify in the “memo” field whether you’d like your donation directed to your Branch or Chapter. Send cheques to Canadian Parents for French, 1104 - 170 Laurier Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V5. Tax receipts will be provided where applicable.
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It was the first question posed to us on the first day of class. The last word was stressed with typical Parisian repudiation, as if to welcome us and dismiss us simultaneously. The school director, well into her seventies, stood at the front of the class, lit a cigarette and waited for the response. Of the hundred or so students assembled in the room, only a handful raised their hands. A few more then followed until just over three quarters of the room had raised their hands. The rest looked around nervously, fearing being singled out on the very first day. The school director took a long drag of her cigarette and smiled. It was a look of approval, sizing up the latest wave of aspiring fashion designers.

Of the little French I had, all of it I had learned in Montréal. Before moving to Paris, I moved to Montréal to do the groundwork in fashion design and to pick up as much of the language as I could. Growing up on the west coast of Canada, I had never been fully immersed in francophone culture and, despite eight years of French, my proficiency in the language was pathetic at best. Verb conjugation and grammar were solidly ingrained, yet carrying on a conversation was out of the question.

It was shortly after arriving in Montréal that I realized how true this was. I could barely order a cup of coffee without garnering a smile from...
the girl behind the counter. Yet it seemed everywhere I went, people switched effortlessly between the two languages. It was truly something to admire and something to striving towards.

I was enrolled in the fashion design program at Collège LaSalle. A more demanding program and level of instruction I have seldom seen since. It meant, though, that I had little time for additional language courses. I had to learn it any way I could.

Street signs, television, radio—everything became a method of instruction. Most helpful were the free newspapers distributed in the subway. I would take them and go through the articles, underlining all the words I did not understand. My goal was always five new words a day. I would figure out what they meant, write them on my hand and try to use them in conversation throughout the day. Although I became perhaps a bit too familiar with the lives of Quebec celebrities, by the end of three years in Montréal I could safely say that I could “speak” the language.

That first day of school in Paris, I raised my hand. Admittedly not straight in the air, knowing full well that there were going to be many things over the coming year that would go clear over my head. But it was a defining moment, nonetheless.

Over the next few months, however, I came to realize that my mother tongue would play just as critical a role. The school that I attended was well known for its connections within the fashion industry. All the major French fashion houses turned to this school first for interns, short-term work placements and to help out with fashion shows and showrooms—the sort of connections that every young designer hopes for, a foot in the door.

But for all these opportunities, it was a question of English. “Est-ce que vous parlez couramment l’anglais?”

For the tens of thousands of buyers, journalists and industry professionals that descend upon Paris each season, a perfect level of English was absolutely essential. Stumbling over words at the Louis Vuitton showroom or losing precious seconds backstage at Dior simply could not happen. Even working in the design studios themselves, one had to talk with other designers while contacting suppliers from all over the world.

I realized that a proficiency in both languages was key. I have witnessed many hopefuls, some of them wildly talented, turned away due to a lack of proficiency in both French and English.

I believe that we Canadians are extremely fortunate to have the two most predominant languages of the fashion industry at our fingertips. Time and again I have seen Canadians rise to top positions within the industry, with proficiency in these two languages playing a critical role. People like David Dessureault, who went on to become a senior buyer at Saks Fifth Avenue. Or Calla Haynes, who became a senior designer at Nina Ricci and now has her own label. I would argue that Canadians are better equipped than any to really excel in this industry.

I would also argue that the true scale of Canadian talent has not yet been seen on the international stage, and I strongly believe that language will be a vehicle that will enable this to happen.
A DOZEN THOUGHTS ON LANGUAGE

1 “I didn’t know at first that there were two languages in Canada. I just thought that there was one way to speak to my father and another to talk to my mother.”

This candid admission comes from Louis St-Laurent, twelfth prime minister of Canada, whose mother was Irish and whose father was Québécois. The story goes that he was a teenager before he realized that speaking both languages at home was not the norm for every Canadian family. It’s not surprising, then, that he was supported and admired by both language groups!

2 “In any world menu, Canada must be considered the vichyssoise of nations: it’s cold, half-French, and difficult to stir.”

Although this culinary metaphor by Canadian journalist Stuart Keate may not stir up national patriotism, the image still brings a smile to any self-effacing Canadian.

3 Speaking of gastronomic stylings, here’s another one! Queen Elizabeth II, on a visit to France, was speaking about England and France, but the image is also a fitting description of Canada.

[Translation] “The Latin tradition is to the Anglo-Saxon tradition as oil is to vinegar. You need both to make the dressing, otherwise the salad is not complete.”

“La tradition latine est à la tradition anglo-saxonne ce que l’huile est au vinaigre. Il faut les deux pour faire la sauce, sinon, la salade est mal assaisonnée.”

Reprinted with permission from the Commissioner of Official Languages’ newsletter Beyond Words: Canada’s Official Language Newsletter.
Sometimes, your second language can be your refuge, as evidenced by this excerpt from a work by Franco-Ontarian playwright Michel Ouellette.

"When you have two languages, you always have the option of hiding behind one of them."

« Quand t’as deux langues, t’as toujours la possibilité de te cacher dans l’autre. »

According to Quebec singer-songwriter Plume Latraverse, accents are like beauty: they’re in the eye (or ears) of the beholder. Maybe this variation will inspire the self-conscious and the self-deprecating to speak up and let their accent be heard, whether in their own language or in their second language!

“An accent is not in the mouth of the speaker, it’s in the ears of the listener!”

« L’accent, c’est pas dans la gorge des uns, c’est dans l’oreille des autres! »

“Of course a bilingual state is more expensive than a unilingual one—but it is a richer state.”

Just before the Official Languages Act was passed, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, then Prime Minister of Canada, fired back this response to critics of official bilingualism. We couldn’t have said it better ourselves, Mr. Trudeau!
These are the words of Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa and symbol of the anti-apartheid movement. Their eloquence shows the strong connection between language and identity, and the power that comes with knowing another language.

7

I think you are fools to speak French . . . I think you are fools to speak English . . . Surrender now surrender to each other your loveliest useless aspects and live with me in this and other voices like the wind harps you were meant to be . . .

This excerpt from *English and French*, a poem by Montréal songwriter, novelist and poet Leonard Cohen, starts with a biting satire of Francophones and Anglophones that includes all the old clichés associated with the two language groups. Having lived in Quebec when language tensions were high, Leonard Cohen calls on English- and French-speaking Canadians to rise above language differences and tired clichés to find a peaceful solution through communication and music.

8

“J’ai tellement peur de commettre un anglicisme qu’il y a des mots que je dis même plus. Tiens, ‘apprécier.’ Avant, j’appréciais certaines choses, plus maintenant. J’ose pas.”

[Translation]

“I’m so terrified of using an anglicism that there are some words I just won’t use anymore. Like ‘apprécier.’ Before, I would use “apprécier” for all kinds of things. Not anymore. I don’t dare.”

Daniel Poliquin is a Franco-Ontarian translator, interpreter and writer who has translated such noted authors as Matt Cohen, Mordecai Richler, Douglas Glover and Jack Kerouac. In this quote, the author describes his paranoia about using anglicisms, the scourge of North American French. If you’d like to learn more about the proper way to use “apprécier,” read the sage advice (in French only) of the Office québécois de la langue française.

9

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

These are the words of Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa and symbol of the anti-apartheid movement. Their eloquence shows the strong connection between language and identity, and the power that comes with knowing another language.
“The reason I handle English words so easily is because it is not my own language. I refashion it to fit French images.”

Noted American novelist Jack Kerouac was born in the United States to French-Canadian parents and didn’t learn English until he was six years old. As this statement shows, the early predominance of French and the later acquisition of English fuelled the creativity of this literary iconoclast.

[Translation]
"It was only at the moment when nothing was coming naturally from inside—words, syntax, style, especially—at the moment when the false familiarity of the mother tongue had been eradicated, that I found my voice. My career as a writer is intrinsically linked with the French language. And it’s not that I find it prettier or more expressive than English, just its strangeness makes it sufficiently foreign to stimulate my curiosity.”

« Ce n’est qu’à partir du moment où plus rien n’allait de soi – ni le vocabulaire, ni la syntaxe, ni surtout le style –, à partir du moment où était aboli le faux naturel de la langue maternelle, que j’ai trouvé des choses à dire. Ma “venue à l’écriture” est intrinsèquement liée à la langue française. Non pas que je la trouve plus belle ni plus expressive que la langue anglaise, mais étrangère, elle est suffisamment étrange pour stimuler ma curiosité. »

Finnish-American poet and translator Eino Leino once wrote of the importance of foreignness in the creative process, saying, “In my life I have found that a stronger force comes from the foreign.”

And so we let Fred Pellerin (in French only), Saint Élie de Caxton’s storyteller extraordinaire, have the last word. Pellerin is passionate about language and bends the rules with abandon, mixing up all kinds of made-up words, archaic words and plays on words. The result is a rich language, both poetic and playful, that has thrown off the shackles of convention. Listening to Pellerin, you feel suddenly lighter, as if the weight of the grammarian has been lifted from your shoulders.

[Translation]
“I believe in a Québécois language . . . A living language, in any case, a language of invention, a French that explodes in the mouth, that doesn’t taste of grammar, but that opens itself up to evolution, to invention.”

« Moi, je crois à une langue québécoise. […] Une langue vivante, en tout cas, une langue d’invention, un français qui explode dans la bouche pis qui goûte pas juste la feuille de grammaire, mais qui est ouvert à l’évolution, à l’invention. »

For Nancy Huston, an Anglophone Canadian author who has published more widely in French than in English, the situation is the same as Jack Kerouac’s, only different. The learned language provides freedom of expression; its foreignness offers a safe place to be uninhibited, experimental.
There has been an increase in the number of students in Canadian schools with autistic spectrum disorders (Leblanc, Richardson and Burns, 2009). This increase seems to be reflected in immersion programs. It is therefore important that immersion program teachers understand these problems and are able to respond to the needs of students with these kinds of problems. However, very little research regarding immersion programs focuses on students with problems and even less so on students with autistic spectrum disorders. To remedy this shortfall, this article describes the writing process used by a grade 7 student in an early immersion program with Asperger syndrome and then makes suggestions for pedagogical measures in the classroom.

Asperger syndrome is a neurological development disorder that is part of the broader family of autistic spectrum disorders. This syndrome affects the normal functioning of the brain. To diagnose it, health care professionals use the following criteria: a change in social behaviour, behaviour consisting of limited, repetitive and concentrated activities and interests and no cognitive or language delays (Griffin, Griffin, Fitch, Albera and Gingras, 2006). There are also reported problems with resolving problems, planning, organizing thoughts, beginning and completing tasks, using pragmatic language, thinking in an abstract and creative manner and adopting different perspectives (Church, Alisanski and Amanullah, 2000). Since these skills are essential to the writing process, students with Asperger syndrome have particular problems with writing.

Many see writing as a problem solving exercise. In the planning stage, writers must develop a plan regarding content and transpose it into a linguistic format. In order to do so, they must set objectives to successfully carry out their plan. This is problematic for students with Asperger syndrome since they have problems organizing their thoughts and setting goals to develop a plan regarding their writing intention. Writing also requires pragmatic knowledge, i.e. the knowledge needed to adapt the content of the text to the audience as well as to the form of the text. Narration is also a particular problem for writers with Asperger syndrome given that this kind of writing requires them to adopt a perspective and describe thoughts, emotions and actions, as well as interpreting them (Losh and Capps, 2003).

Molly1, a grade 7 student in an early immersion program, had difficulties when trying to write a story in her second language that were similar to those of her peers with Asperger syndrome who were writing in their mother tongue. Molly had to write a story, verbalizing her thoughts out loud while writing it. From the list of proposed topics, she chose to write a story about a superhero dog. Animals are an obsessive interest for Molly. In planning the story, she had difficulty focusing on her topic. The theme of her story reminded her of experiences she had had with various animals and she went into long soliloquies regarding her experiences that had very little to do with her writing assignment. The planning component consists of three cognitive processes: generating ideas, organizing ideas and setting writing goals. Molly had no problem generating topics. In total, she came up with 16 major ideas for her story. However, she was unable to get beyond this sub-component of planning. At no time did she set any writing goals and she could not organize her ideas. Despite being prompted several times to begin putting her ideas down on paper and prepare a writing plan, Molly was unable to do so, making her anxious. In fact, anxiety is quite often present in students with Asperger syndrome. In order to manage her anxiety, Molly began drawing on the sheet that was to be used to write her story. After 31 minutes of a 50-minute class, Molly was stressed and exhausted. She thus only devoted five

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1 Pseudonym
minutes to transposing her ideas in a linguistic form. She wrote a text consisting of four sentences, two of which were complex and two were extensions. Molly did not revise her work, saying she was incapable of doing so.

Like her peers writing in their mother tongue, the writing produced by Molly was of poor quality. Linguistic conventions were an enormous problem for her (Brown and Klein, 2011). Molly’s sentences were short and lacked complexity (Myles, et al, 2003).

To meet the writing needs of immersion students with Asperger syndrome, the following practices are often effective: These students have difficulty with oral instructions. Therefore, very explicit instructions and explanations are needed. It would be useful for the teacher to break the large task down into smaller ones and explain the steps one at a time. These students could then complete one task at a time before the teacher explains the next task.

In line with the first suggestion, index cards with written instructions can be very useful. For example, the teacher could write each step in the planning process on a card. Another card could describe the steps for the revision process.

As for planning, students with Asperger syndrome generally have good visuospatial skills. Organizational charts are therefore an effective teaching strategy.

Only a few strategies can be presented here given the limited space. However, students with Asperger syndrome in immersion programs have the same writing difficulties as their peers in their mother tongue. Several other effective strategies for writing in one’s mother tongue can be found to help immersion students with Asperger syndrome.

REFERENCES
SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS AND BURSARIES: CPF HELPING YOUR CHILD AND YOUR SCHOOL

By Nicole Chatelain, Communications Officer, CPF

CPF MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED TO QUALITY EDUCATION, AND DOING WHAT WE CAN TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS MAKE THE MOST OF FRENCH-SECOND-LANGUAGE STUDIES.

Whether by supplementing the academic curriculum with extra- and co-curricular activities, continuing education past secondary school, or simply celebrating all that is FSL through contests, events and other special projects, you need to know what options are out there, and CPF is here to offer you special members-only rewards that can help your children—or your students—succeed.

CPF grants, bursaries, and scholarship programs are offered Canada-wide to individual members and their families, as well as Associate Member Organizations (AMOs) and Chapters of CPF. A few select examples include:

BURSARIES for FSL students:
Many chapters and branches across the country offer scholarships and grants to graduating FSL high school students entering into post-secondary education, such as the CPF Award offered by CPF Halifax, or the Mary Joyce Booth program administered by CPF Saskatchewan (not to be confused with the CPF National program of the same name). These scholarships may range from several hundred to several thousand dollars.

CONTESTS run by CPF:
Many CPF contests and programs are offered in partnership with schools across the country, and some of these schools offer scholarships as prizes. Most notably, the pan-Canadian Concours d’art oratoire helps fund dozens of admission fees across the country: CPF branches partner with schools such as the University of Ottawa, Université Ste-Anne, Université de Moncton, and York University to award scholarships to regional winners, while the CPF National Office partners with the University of Ottawa and La Cité collégiale to offer similar prizes at the national level.

GRANTS for AMOs and CPF Chapters:
If you represent an AMO or CPF chapter, your regional CPF branch may offer grants that will help finance the delivery of camps, clubs, events, and other extra- and co-curricular programs and activities. The British Columbia and Yukon Branch, for example, receives a subsidy from the Ministry of Education specifically earmarked for funding of socio-cultural activities throughout the region; the Branch uses a portion of this subsidy to fund regional programs such as travelling French theatre groups that perform in area schools. CPF National also runs its own Mary Joyce Booth Endowment Fund program, which finances FSL activities in communities across Canada.

If you would like to know more about what is offered in your community, contact your provincial or territorial branch or local chapter today! Visit us at cpf.ca to select your region and find out what we can do for you as a CPF member.
FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE ACROSS CANADA

For many years, Canadian Parents for French branches provided a biennial overview of the state of FSL education in their respective province or territory in the State of French Second Language Education in Canada report. In 2012, wishing to make them available annually, CPF National incorporated these overviews in its 2012 Annual Report. Now, with this first issue of the CPF Magazine, we believe that we have found the perfect, new home for these accounts of the incredibly hard work CPF branches are doing across the country.

Alberta
CPF Alberta is uniquely positioned to work at local and provincial levels with educators, administrators, elected officials, Alberta Education, and a variety of other stakeholders to obtain quality accessible French-second-language (FSL) education programming for students.

French Immersion (FI) enrollment continues to grow in Alberta. Between 2010 and 2012, there was a four percent increase in students enrolled in FI. Core French enrollment was down by just over six percent; this was an anticipated decrease, which was primarily due to the change of a second-language education policy by the Calgary Board of Education.

CPF Alberta is facing three major challenges, the first being the acceptance and adoption of an internationally recognized language proficiency benchmark by Alberta Education. The second is a shortage of teachers with excellent French-language skills and training in second-language pedagogy. Finally, a small, fragile Immersion program, which continues to be highly susceptible to factors such as demographic shifts, a failure to attract or keep good teachers, and education funding shortfalls.

CPF Alberta plays a unique role in promoting linguistic duality and creating opportunities for further educational and community experiences for young Albertans and is a key player in providing and promoting activities that advance the recognition and the use of French in Alberta. We have strong connections to Anglophone parents and students, and when possible, strive to link these with the Francophone community by making activities as inclusive as possible.

British Columbia & Yukon
2012-2013 marked the 15th year of consecutive French Immersion enrollment growth in BC. More than eight percent of the entire student population is registered in the popular second-language program. Moreover, demand for French Immersion has reached a record high. As of February, parents in 12 communities were lobbying school trustees for the creation of new and or additional Immersion programs.

Unfortunately, BC’s Core French enrollment is continuing to decline. Between 2003 and 2011 there has been a 17% decline in the number of BC students participating in Core French. CPF BC & Yukon believes that a lack of French-language proficiency amongst educators, coupled with no requirement for students to take FSL, has weakened the Core French program. This will be an area of advocacy focus for CPF BC & Yukon in the years ahead.

In April, the BC Francophone school board passed a unique resolution that broadened their schools’ admission criteria to include families who are able to speak French. The threat of losing students and funding to the Francophone school board has already compelled school districts to increase their focus to attract and retain French Immersion students. CPF chapter volunteers in Chilliwack and Tri-Cities used this new admission policy as an argument for their school districts to create and or strengthen their local French Immersion programs. The full implications of this new policy are yet to be seen; however, CPF BC & Yukon will continue to monitor the situation closely.

For the first time CPF BC & Yukon witnessed a social-media-based campaign lobbying elected officials to create new FSL programs. For two years parents in Chilliwack have been lobbying their school district to create an Early French Immersion program. A group of parents used Facebook and Twitter to connect, support, and help keep everyone abreast of developments. These parents’ efforts were a success: a new EFI program will be created at the earliest possible date.
Manitoba

Challenges related to the provision and access to a broad range of quality FSL programs continue to vary from community to community, between urban and rural locations, and between single track and dual track schools. Most result from factors such as a shortage of qualified Basic (Core) French home room teachers province-wide, and a need for qualified, linguistically competent French Immersion teachers. Also of note, the rate of enrollment in intensive French – which currently has 151 students – is indicative that much remains to be done in raising the profile of Intensive French.

Despite these challenges, the overall view of FSL education is quite positive. French Immersion enrollment is at an all-time high (with over 20,000 students). A new Basic French curriculum with a focus of French Communication and Culture has been developed. Due to the significant growth of Manitoba’s new immigrant population, there is acknowledgement of the need for more French Immersion entry points. An increased demand for an internationally recognized assessment tool has prompted four school divisions to collaborate and establish the Centre DELF des divisions scolaires du Manitoba.

Videoconferencing technology in more remote areas is providing greater access to FSL courses and support for students and professional development opportunities for FSL teachers. This has resulted in an increase in the number of high school students graduating with a French Immersion Diploma.

Many aspects of such progress can be attributed to the impact of Manitoba’s FSL Revitalization Program, which has served to support the province in its endeavors to achieve the goals for second-official-language education. Indeed, this program has enabled improvements to FSL learning programs and the increased provision of engaging and motivational FSL opportunities for youth. Additionally, the program has fostered community partnerships by encouraging FSL stakeholders to collaborate on mutual projects, share responsibility, and make the best and most economic use of joint resources to advance and promote FSL learning.

New Brunswick

Since the Report of the French Second Language Task Force, the Government implemented only one of the six recommendations in the report; this has delayed changes to the entry point for the 2012 school year.

In May 2013, the Department of Education announced it would again delay the entry point decision for the 2013 school year stating “The recommendations of the task force report are being considered in the full context of the education system and in the best interest of students and staff.”

The consultation result concerning the questions: What is best for a child who wants to learn a second language; grade 1 or grade 3 entry? and What do parents want? was in favor of Early French Immersion grade 1.

Perhaps returning to the result is needed for this Government to move ahead on the French Immersion entry point decision. In any event, CFN NB is still working towards bringing back French Immersion at kindergarten/grade 1 level and meeting resistance at local and provincial levels.

Every year since the introduction of Intensive French (three years ago at grade 5) a Post Intensive program has been increasing and is now up to grade 8.

New wording in Policy 309 states that teachers should have an advanced proficiency level for Intensive French and a superior proficiency level for French Immersion. School Districts are now advocating that “should” does not mean “must”, therefore new teachers being hired can be below proficiency expectations.

Despite a decreasing enrollment of 1169 students, the Immersion program enrollment increased by 431 students. Since the elimination of the French Immersion grade 1 entry level, parents’ involvement and membership has declined as our greatest numbers came from that group.

Newfoundland & Labrador

In Newfoundland and Labrador French-second-language (FSL) programs have been decreasing slightly each year since 2007. However, the number of students enrolled in French Immersion (FI) has increased; as of 2011, 13% of students in NL were enrolled in FI. Due to the limited number of teachers and sizes of FI classes in NL, it is difficult to increase numbers further.

In 2001, the province introduced an Intensive Core French program to four schools, as a means to improve the transition for students entering Late French Immersion. Today, the program is implemented in over 50 schools across the province.

CPF NL is working on a Post-Secondary Committee with Memorial University language faculties and local FSL stakeholders, investigating the courses offered at post-secondary institutions for FSL students. The goal is to have more FI high school students complete a Bachelor of Arts in French in university.

Transportation issues affecting FI students arose in some large centres in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Department of Education Busing Policy states that parents are responsible for transportation of French Immersion students. In small towns the schools are nearby and traffic is low so the policy is not an issue, however, in larger centres with rush hour traffic, busing is a necessity.

This year the Eastern School District introduced online registration to parents of kindergarten students, in order to avoid lineups for enrollment into FI kindergarten programs. In recent years,
parents have been lining up at 5 a.m. to register their children for the kindergarten programs. While the high interest in these programs is fantastic news, the reason for the lineups is due to capped class sizes. For parents unable to wait in line it can be disappointing to have their children rejected from the FI program. The Eastern School District’s new online registration was a great success.

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

French is one of eleven official languages in the Northwest Territories (NWT). French-second-language (FSL) instruction is available for some students, but is not compulsory at any level. It is difficult to offer FSL programs beyond Yellowknife because of low student populations and a lack of qualified FSL teachers. FSL in the NWT comprises 29.1% of enrollment (2010-11). Only six communities in the NWT offer FSL programming. Despite the challenges of supporting FSL across the NWT, Early Immersion rates have increased almost two percent over the past six years. 2007-08 was the last year that an entry point for Middle Immersion was provided, so enrollment in this FSL program has been decreasing each year. Initial analysis of trends indicates a small but stable FSL environment in the NWT, with the bulk of activity occurring in Yellowknife.

A new Late Immersion program has recently been added in Yellowknife. Furthermore, Yellowknife high schools have begun to offer a French Advanced Placement Program. Some Yellowknife schools have recently implemented the Diplôme d’études en langue française. Overall, FSL program development continues at a measured pace in Yellowknife, but is still experiencing significant challenges in other NWT communities.

The Northwest Territories is isolated and travel is expensive. Given that there are ten other official languages in the NWT, and French comprises a fairly low percentage of the population, there are some unique challenges in advocating for FSL programming. Despite these challenges, parents are generally keen to work together. Additionally, CPF NWT has been seeking to strengthen ties with the NWT Francophone community, as well as building connections with Aboriginal language and cultural programming.

Over the course of the past year, CPF NWT worked with the Minister of Education’s office, a Member of the NWT’s Legislative Assembly, and with CPF Alberta to successfully reverse the decision to disallow students to challenge French 30 exams.

**NOVA SCOTIA**

French-second-language programs are well-established in Nova Scotia. Immersion programs are available in each of the seven English school boards. Despite a student decline rate of two percent per year, the Immersion program continues to maintain growth at just over one percent per year. Core French is mandatory in the province from grades 4 to 9. For the majority of students, Core French is their introduction to a second language.

The Department of Education has embarked on an impressive restructuring of the Core French program. Using research and results from its Intensive French program, the Department of Education has designed and committed funding to a province wide Core French revitalization plan. Through the use of Classe expérimentale, a teacher mentoring program, pedagogical workshops, and teacher support the typical Core French class in the province is changing rapidly.

The greatest challenge in the province presently is declining student enrollment. Student decline has a variety of impacts from class sizes to school board budgets. The Department of Education and school boards are meeting this challenge by realigning budgets and priorities to adjust for smaller school populations. The challenge for FSL programs is the continued growth of Immersion within declining school populations.

Another challenge for FSL programs is still the retention rates of Core and Immersion at the high school level. With a successful International Baccalaureate (IB) program in the province, students are able to combine Immersion with the IB program to complete both requirements to graduate. By increasing access to credits through distance education and cultural courses, students in Immersion are now able to access more options to complete their certificates. With the revitalization of Core French, Nova Scotia students will be encouraged to continue their FSL studies past grade 9 to complete a Core French certificate.

**ONTARIO**

French-second-language (FSL) education in Ontario is growing and strengthening. Enrollment in the French Immersion (FI) program over the past five years has enjoyed a steady average annual growth rate of over five percent. During the 2011-2012 school year, 975,935 children were enrolled in FSL programs in public school boards in Ontario.

School boards are adopting inclusive practices for Allophone students wishing to participate in FSL programs. Statistical analysis shows a sharp increase in popularity of the FI programs in school boards with a rising number of new immigrants.

In April 2013, the Ministry of Education introduced A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools. This framework presents the overarching principles of FSL education in the province. Following the release of the Framework, the Ministry called upon all 60 English school boards to submit three-year plans to support the identified provincial FSL goals. September 2013 will mark the launch of a new FSL Curriculum with a revised focus on oral interaction and will support the provincial FSL goals.

Recently, CPF Ontario has worked with the Ministry on two initiatives – the
**FSL Homework Toolbox website and the 12 Reasons to Stay in French project.** CPF Ontario has provided input on the new FSL Framework document and the new FSL curriculum, and participates in the FSL Provincial Working Group which continues to strengthen parent, educator and community engagement in FSL.

Over 4,000 students graduated with a Grade 12 FI certificate, representing only 36% of the original Grade 1 cohort, and the influx of Middle and Late Immersion students. Very few Core French students continue in grades 10-12. Effective retention strategies are required to retain secondary students in all FSL programs.

There has been little improvement in school boards’ barriers to access FI programs. Students are denied access or families face the decision of having their children attend different schools where FI spots are still available, often without transportation provided.

**Prince Edward Island**

PEI now has two school boards, one English and one French, and Core French remains mandatory from Grade 4-9. The percentage of students enrolled in French-second-language (FSL) programs in PEI has always been significant; we retain the third highest percentage in Canada (behind QC and slightly behind NB). Unfortunately, French Immersion (FI) is not accessible in all Families of Schools and Allophones are not fully aware of FSL education as a realistic choice. Also, in PEI it is apparent that there is a need for more bilingual graduates to fill vacant positions in all aspects of employment.

Provincially, the Department of Education and Department of Innovation/Advanced Learning has set up a committee to look at the gap between high school and post secondary access to French-language education. A new Core French program which is being piloted is in its last year and will be reviewed for results and compared to the Intensive French program. Also, the International Center for French Studies Diploma in French Studies (DELF) is now part of the high school graduation process for FI and French-first-language students.

There appears to be a surplus of FSL teachers in PEI and across Canada, especially in Ontario where they have halved their intake into teaching programs. This surplus of teachers has CPF PEI working on protecting a FSL teacher specialization program offered at the University of Prince Edward Island. While the program is not in any immediate jeopardy, CPF PEI is proactively engaging stakeholders to ensure the program will not be terminated by the university.

CPF PEI continues to meet with Ministers responsible for Education and Higher learning twice a year, maintains a solid reputation of being an “expert” in FSL education, and of being a strong parent advocate.

**Saskatchewan**

The overall presence of French-second-language (FSL) in Saskatchewan is strong, with continued growth, especially in the French Immersion program. Over the last ten years, enrollment in French Immersion has increased by 30%, with consecutive increases over the last eight years. During the 2012-2013 school year seven percent of the overall school population was enrolled in French Immersion across the province.

There has been a great deal of fluctuation in Saskatchewan’s Core French program, which houses the majority of FSL students in the province. Only in recent years has the Core program seen incremental increases. This is due to two main factors – the growth in Saskatchewan’s overall population, and the implementation of a renewed Core French curriculum in the province. The curriculum now encourages conversational learning, rather than the traditional memorizing of verb conjugations. Teachers are also receiving more in-service training and are teaching in modules that build a stronger foundation in learning French.

Saskatchewan’s large geographical size, its sheer number of rural schools, and the retention and recruitment of qualified FSL teachers are some current challenges facing FSL numbers. While French Immersion is burgeoning in larger urban centres such as Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, Yorkton and Swift Current, rural municipalities continue to face difficulties acquiring access to FSL programs and trained educators.

Interest in the Baccalauréat en éducation – a French education degree program at the University of Regina – is encouraging. In 2011-2012, registrations in the program jumped 18% from the previous year, and have seen steady increases in subsequent years. The goal now is to ensure that these prospective French teachers remain in Saskatchewan to meet the growing demand.

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