A CASE STUDY OF COMPACT CORE FRENCH MODELS:
A PEDAGOGIC PERSPECTIVE

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Doctor of Philosophy, 2011 
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Abstract

The overriding objective of core French (CF) teaching in Canada since the National Core French Study (NCFS) is that of communicative competence (R. Leblanc, 1990). Results from the traditional form of CF, though, suggest that students are not developing desired levels of communicative competence in the drip-feed (short daily periods) model (Lapkin, Harley, & Taylor, 1993). The present study aims to investigate the role of compacted second language program formats in promoting higher levels of language proficiency and achievement among elementary core French students; in particular, the study investigates the pedagogic approach, based on the principle that longer class periods should facilitate a more communicative/experiential teaching approach.

Students in three Grade 7 classes served as participants. Two of the classes served as the compacted experimental classes, and the other as a comparison class. Pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests recorded differences in student achievement. A multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach was implemented in all three classes, and was recorded by teacher observations in her daybook and daily journal. Student attitudes toward their CF program format and their self-assessed language proficiency were measured during recorded focus group sessions and on student questionnaires. Parental and teacher perceptions of student attitudes were measured using a short survey.
Results indicate that students in both the compact and comparison classes performed similarly, with few significant differences in measured language growth or retention over time. Parents of all classes indicated satisfaction with the teaching and learning activities, and with the program format in which their child was enrolled. Excerpts from the teacher daybook and reflective journal demonstrated that communicative activities fostering student interaction in the target language were more frequently and readily implemented in the longer compact CF periods. Students generally stated a preference for the program format in which they were enrolled, although only students in the compact classes outlined pedagogic reasons in support for their preference. Additionally, most students self-assessed a higher level of language competence than in previous years, which students in the compact (experimental) classes attributed to the longer class periods, stating that they promoted task completion, group work, in-depth projects and communicative activities.
Acknowledgements

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My father had planned to be with me as I finished my dissertation; unfortunately, he passed away while I was in my final thesis preparations. I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, Richard Allan Marshall.

Finally, I thank Him who gifted me with the talents and wisdom necessary to undertake and complete this doctoral dissertation. To God Almighty be all glory, honour and praise!
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<td>APEF</td>
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<td>Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers</td>
<td>CASLT</td>
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<td>Canadian Parents for French</td>
<td>CPF</td>
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<td>Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching</td>
<td>COLT</td>
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<td>Core French</td>
<td>CF</td>
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<td>Extended French</td>
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<td>FSL</td>
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<td>FI</td>
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<td>Intensive English</td>
<td>IE</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: 
INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to investigate the role of compact second language program formats in promoting higher levels of language proficiency and achievement among elementary Core French (CF) students.

French as a Second Language (FSL) Instruction in Ontario: 
An Overview

The overriding objective or principle of the teaching of CF in Canada since the National Core French Study (CASLT, 1994) is that of communicative competence (see also R. Leblanc, 1990, for a synthesis). According to the recommendations of the National Core French Study (NCFS), students should be expected to learn French as a means of communication, learning both receptive and productive language skills: “The general objectives of the Core French program must be the learning of French as a means of communication and the contribution it makes to the general education of the student” (pp. 7-8). Here in Ontario, this recommendation is echoed in the French as a Second Language (FSL) Core French curriculum document, which outlines the teaching and learning expectations of all CF programs across the province: “The aim of The Ontario Curriculum: French As a Second Language — Core French, Grades 4-8, 1998 is to develop basic communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language, as well as an appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other parts of the world” (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, p. 2). In order to meet the mandated 600 total hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8, many boards offer French instruction in daily 20- to 40-minute periods of CF from Grade 4 on.
However, results from this traditional form of CF suggest that students are not developing desired levels of communicative competence in the drip-feed (short daily periods) model (Lapkin, Harley, & Taylor, 1993). Stern (1985), addressing the trend of introducing French in the primary schools for daily periods of 15 or 20 minutes, noted that, “This minimal approach to language learning stretched over several years has proved not to be nearly as effective as it had been hoped” (p. 17). In her national survey of Canadian FSL educators, Howard (2006) reports that teachers found traditional 40-minute periods to be too short for effective language instruction, and prohibited the introduction of certain activities. Also, Lightbown (2000) reviewed the language teaching practices of the past 50 years, and concluded that current research literature indicated that the age at which instruction begins is less important than the actual intensity of the instruction. As she explained, “The most important reason for incomplete acquisition in foreign language classroom settings is probably the lack of time available for contact with the language” (p. 449). Intensive French (IF), French immersion (FI) and extended French (EF) programs\(^1\) in Ontario have been attempts to address the issue of insufficient time for French language instruction; however, these courses are optional, and the majority of Ontario students are enrolled in the more traditional CF courses. As Netten and Germain (2004b) explain:

Core French, which usually begins in Grade 4 (at about 9 years of age) and consists of 30- to 40-minute periods of French for a set number of periods in a cycle, is offered to about 85% of students learning FSL. French immersion, of which there are several varieties (early, middle, and late), teaches French through

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\(^1\) Intensive French is a program which is characterized by a concentrated study of French in the first half of a student’s academic year, usually in grade 5 or 6, followed by a return to a regular schedule, including a period of Core French, in the second half of the year. In French Immersion programs, French is not only taught as a subject, but is also used as the language of instruction in other content areas. In Ontario FI programs, French must be the language of instruction for a minimum of 50% of the day. An EF program is similar to a FI format in Ontario, with the difference being that the language of instruction must be French for a minimum of 25% of the day (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).
the learning of other subjects, such as mathematics and social studies. Only about 15% of the population learning French is enrolled in this option. (pp. 275-276)

According to the Canadian Parents for French (CPF, 2000), Ontario is experiencing declining enrollment in FSL programs at the secondary level, poor attitudes toward FSL education on the part of students, parents, communities, school boards, and the media, a lack of teaching resources, and funding cutbacks (p. 28). In support of the report’s findings, Caron (2000) noted that French instructional time may be cut or decreased in some school boards due to the need to implement the provincial educational reforms, such as the challenging Ontario curriculum:

The implementation of educational reforms in the classroom can sometimes prove detrimental to FSL programs. Instructional time in French is critical in determining achievement outcomes. In accommodating provincially or locally mandated reforms, instructional time frames may be reduced without any concern for the negative repercussions on either program integrity or learning outcomes. (p. 29)

In a subsequent CPF (2006) survey of 105 Canadian university students, the majority of participants indicated dissatisfaction with their French language learning, indicating that they did not perceive much growth in language proficiency, and that they would be ill-equipped to apply for bilingual jobs at the end of secondary school. Of the participating students, 99 of the 105 were graduates of CF programs. A regional study by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF, 2004) surveyed 2,989 students in Grade 11, all of whom had discontinued CF studies. Of those surveyed, 36% indicated their perceived lack of progress as the reason for dropping French language studies.

The recent trend in Canadian FSL education is a declining enrollment in CF programs. The Government of Canada released Plan 2013 in 2003 with the expressed objective of doubling
the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language by 2013 (Canada, 2003, p. 27). In order to meet this goal, CF programs must undergo revitalization and improved implementation to promote greater language learning among Canadian FSL students.

**Researcher’s Experiences and Beliefs Regarding FSL Teaching Practice**

In my own teaching practice, I had grown increasingly discouraged by the traditional format of CF classes, which ranged from 10 to 40 minutes in length. These short periods, although they did provide daily exposure throughout the 10 months of the school year, were often insufficient to permit a more experiential, communicative approach to teaching FSL. My experience as both an FSL educator and an English as a first language teacher prompted comparison of my own implementation of language teaching strategies in the different periods of time. I noticed that I used more experiential, learner-centered teaching strategies in the English language classes, which consisted of more intensive periods of time ranging from 60-90 minutes daily, than I did or was able to do in the 30-minute CF periods. In the CF classes, I struggled to unite my own pedagogic beliefs, which demanded a more experiential program, with the restrictions imposed upon me by the short FSL periods (many of which were shorter than 30 minutes due to the rotary nature of CF).

Also, as a result of my own teaching experience in a rural board, I questioned whether results similar to those of a pilot study of compact CF (Lapkin, Harley, & Hart, 1995; Lapkin, Hart, & Harley, 1998) or of intensive programs (e.g., Germain & Netten, 2002) would occur in a region of Ontario with little exposure to francophone language and culture outside of the classroom.
Thus, after having read the research on time and timing in second language (L2) education, and particularly in CF, I proposed to implement a compact CF model at the Grade 7 program level within a central Ontario school board. My principal focus was on the pedagogic approach, as I hypothesized that longer class periods should facilitate a more communicative/experiential teaching approach within a multi-dimensional framework.

**Research Questions**

1. Will a compact CF program, in which only the distribution of time changes, have a positive impact on French language outcomes (i.e., greater demonstrated proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing) when communicative and experiential teaching strategies are implemented in the alternative format?

2. Can a “communicative/experiential” approach to teaching and learning be implemented in similar ways in traditional and compact CF formats?

3. What are the perceptions and attitudes of all stakeholders toward the CF format, and the implementation of a multidimensional, project-based approach?

Based on earlier studies (Lapkin et al., 1995; Lapkin et al., 1998), I hypothesized that the French language proficiency of students in the experimental, compact CF classes would be significantly higher than those of students studying CF in the traditional, regular format. Further, I expected that the longer class periods would facilitate the implementation of communicative and experiential teaching strategies and project-based learning.
Overview of Thesis Organization

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. This first chapter provides an overview of the research, including an introduction to and rationale for the research, researcher experiences and beliefs, as well as the research questions and this overview of the thesis organization. Chapter Two presents a contextualization of the research in a literature review that focuses on CF in Canada, the role of time in L2 education, an overview of intensive and compact language programs, and relevant research. In order to contextualize my study, I also review research related to the early adolescent learner and the multi-dimensional curriculum model. In Chapter Three, I outline the results of a feasibility study, and in Chapter Four, I discuss the methodology for data collection as well as a description of the study setting, participating board and the participants. Chapters Five and Six present the results of the quantitative data collection, and Chapter Seven outlines the findings of the qualitative data measures. In Chapter Eight, I discuss the findings and the limitations of this research study. References and appendices follow Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin with a definition of CF, as well as an overview of its status in Canadian education systems. I continue with a discussion of time as a variable in the L2/foreign language acquisition research literature, followed by an investigation of two program formats that vary the intensity of time — intensive and compact language courses. Relevant empirical literature related to each of these formats is reviewed and discussed in order to determine implications for the present study. Next, I review research literature relevant to the early adolescent learner, in order to develop a profile of the student participants in this present study. Finally, I discuss the development of the multidimensional curriculum model (R. Leblanc, 1990), and the implementation of project-based learning in CF classrooms, in order to contextualize the pedagogic practices in this present study.

Core French (CF) in Canada: Definition and Status

Core French is a L2 education program in which French is taught as a subject in short, daily class periods of 20 to 50 minutes in length (R. LeBlanc, 1990, p. 2). According to Turnbull (2000), the implementation of CF programs in Canada varies across provinces and territories; they might be optional or compulsory, begin at different grade levels, and vary in amount of total instructional time. However, on average, Canadian students receive approximately 600 hours of instructional time in CF by the end of their elementary school program (Grade 8), and often begin their studies at the junior grade level (Grades 4 to 6) (p. 174).
In Ontario, CF education is compulsory, beginning in Grade 4 (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998); however, local school boards may implement CF studies in the primary grades, beginning as early as kindergarten. In either case, Ontario students must receive a total of 600 instructional hours of CF by the end of Grade 8. At the secondary level, students must complete one Grade 9 course in CF, after which French language study becomes optional.

The Role of Time in Second Language (L2) Education

Stern (1992) drew attention to the importance of time aspects in L2 education research, noting that “many experiments since World War II have related to the possibility of varying the amount of time given to language instruction, the degree of concentration, and the starting age for language learning” (p. 32). J. B. Carroll’s (1975) study of the teaching of French in eight countries was one such project, from which he concluded that although many factors may have determined the level of proficiency attained by the students, such as teaching methods, motivation, the student’s general aptitude (p. 266), the most influential factor appeared to be the amount of instruction students had received (p. 276). Stern (1985), summarizing Carroll’s research, posited that, “time for learning provides the opportunity to learn. If this model is applied to language teaching, it leads to the hypothesis that, if all else is equal, the more total time is made available the higher the level that can be reached in a L2” (p. 19). He cautioned, however, that it must be considered as one variable among many that might impact language learning: “Time does not operate alone. It merely provides an opportunity for learning. Such factors as age or maturity, aptitude and previous language learning experience, the characteristics of the target language (TL), the curriculum, and teaching methodology, all play a part as well” (p. 20). Lightbown (2000), who reviewed the language teaching practices of the past 50 years, concluded that current research indicated that the age at which instruction begins is less
important than the actual intensity of the instruction. As she explained, “The most important reason for incomplete acquisition in foreign language classroom settings is probably the lack of time available for contact with the language” (p. 449).

Lapkin, MacFarlane, and Vandergrift (2006) posed an open-ended question to Canadian FSL educators about the challenges associated with teaching CF. Among the responses, teachers indicated that the instructional time for CF was too short and insufficient for effective language teaching. They indicated that lack of time affects program delivery, in particular those teaching and learning activities involving listening and speaking, or oral communication skills. Also, they noted that much class time is lost as teachers are often required to move room to room to teach CF, and instructional time is taken up by transitional activities.

In a review of CF literature across Canada, Mady (2008) explored several research studies in which CF teachers were participants. Like the results in the Lapkin et al. (2006) study, Mady noted that inadequate time for CF instruction was a recurring concern among the teachers in the various regional studies. The initial time allocated for CF instructions was often determined to be inadequate for introducing effective oral language opportunities. As well, teachers noted that the CF instructional time was further limited by frequent interruptions, time lost travelling from class to class, and time spent setting up activities in each new classroom.

Intensive and compact language programs are two program formats that address the issue of time in L2 instruction. Each program format is defined by an increase in the intensity of L2 teaching and learning; however, the manner in which each program intensifies the time varies. Intensive language programs increase the total instructional time in the L2 during a single academic year (usually Grade 5 or 6); whereas compact language programs redistribute the total time available (see Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Description of IF and Compact CF Programs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Intensive French</strong>&lt;br&gt;(see Germain, Lightbown, Netten, &amp; Spada, 2004)</th>
<th><strong>Compact Core French</strong>&lt;br&gt;(see Lapkin et al., 1998)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total duration of intensive/compact classes in 1 school year</td>
<td>One semester of intensive period (5 months); usually first semester; an approximate 25% of the total school year instructional time</td>
<td>Five months to 3 months (depending on daily length of classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily length of intensive period</td>
<td>50 to 80% of school day</td>
<td>80-minute to half-day periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total duration of traditional CF classes in 1 school year</td>
<td>One school semester of regular CF classes (5 months); usually second semester</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily length of regular CF periods during non-intensive/compact months</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student grade level</td>
<td>Usually Grade 5 or 6</td>
<td>Grade 7 (although it could begin earlier)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time change</td>
<td>Increase of instructional time</td>
<td>Redistribution of instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total annual hours</td>
<td>Increased total annual hours (three to four times the usual amount – 300 to 400 hours)</td>
<td>Remains fixed (usually 100 – 130 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of program</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 or more years</td>
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Intensive Language Programs

Intensive language programs are characterized by an increase in total instructional time in the L2, as well as an increase in intensity (i.e., longer instructional time), usually for one year in the student’s academic life. In Ontario, at the end of the year, students return to the previous format of L2 instruction. Support for this type of increased time argument is found in studies by Spada and Lightbown (1989) and Lightbown and Spada (1991, 1994, 1997), who investigated several intensive English (IE) programs in Quebec (see also Collins, Halter, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999). In these models, students in Grades 5 and 6 studied English all day for 5 months of the school year, and in the remaining 5 months completed their other academic subjects in French. Results from these studies demonstrated that the students in these programs developed improved listening skills and a greater fluency in English, more positive attitudes toward learning English, and a greater contact with English and English-language speakers outside of the classroom than demonstrated by those in the regular ESL classrooms. Results of a longitudinal study by Lightbown and Spada (1991) provided evidence that these students continued to improve their English language skills several years after the intensive program ended. In this study, questionnaires and interviews were administered to two groups of students at the end of their secondary school studies. One group consisted of students who had studied ESL in a traditional format (short daily periods); the other consisted of students who had participated in an intensive ESL period in Grade 5 or 6, and who had then continued in the traditional program format. Students who had experience in the intensive program demonstrated a higher rate of grammatical accuracy, and were more fluent in their use of English. Also, students in this group reported a higher use of English outside of academic situations. Lightbown (2000) summarized this body of research, asserting that:
Our research in Quebec has shown that students who have intensive exposure to
the second language near the end of elementary school have an advantage over
those whose instruction was thinly spread out over a longer period of time. That
is, even though students began at the same age and received a comparable number
of hours of instruction, the more compact instruction was more effective. (p. 449)

A similar study was recently undertaken in Newfoundland and Labrador (Germain &
Netten, 2002; Netten & Germain, 2004a); this time, though, in CF classrooms. Students in
selected Grade 6 classes participated in an IF model, which was defined by a concentrated block
of French language studies in the first semester of the year, and was in addition to the 92 hours
normally allotted to Grade 6 French programs. At the conclusion of the intensive period, students
returned to their regular curriculum, which included short 30- to 40-minute daily or near-daily\(^2\)
periods of CF. According to Germain, Netten, and Movassat (2004), after 5 months of IF
instruction, students in Grade 6 were able to communicate orally in French as well as traditional
format CF students at the end of high school French instruction. In particular, the students were
able to communicate with spontaneity, which they note is a result atypical of traditional CF
programs (p. 322) at the end of the Grade 6 level. Netten, Germain and Séguin (2004) reported
that texts written by students in the Grade 6 IF program matched the level of those written by
native French Canadians in Grade 3 Quebec classrooms (p. 345). Of particular interest for the
present study is the fact that in both instances, teaching strategies were cited as likely influencing
factors on the higher student achievement scores. “Tout porte donc à croire que ce sont les
démarches d’enseignement utilisées qui paraissent les plus susceptibles d’expliquer ces
différences” (Netten et al., 2004, p. 347). The researchers therefore concluded that a pedagogic
approach facilitating the use of authentic communication in the classroom was as important as
the number of hours in the intensive classes (Germain, Netten, et al., 2004, p. 328). Similar IF

\(^2\) Some schools offered Core French 5 days in each 6-day cycle.
programs are currently being investigated in nine of the ten Canadian provinces, and two of the three Canadian territories (Lapkin, 2003; MacFarlane, 2005; Netten & Germain, 2004a; Netten & Germain, 2008).

In Ontario, a small-scale case study of CF intensive language instruction was instigated by the Ottawa Board of Education in 1993-94 (Peters, MacFarlane, & Wesche, 2003; Wesche, MacFarlane, & Peters, 1994). In this study, students of a Grade 5/6 class in an alternative school participated in an intensive period of French, increasing their total instructional time for that year from 120 to 450 hours. The researchers reported that the program was successful, emphasizing that “the evident improvement in learners’ oral French skills and self-confidence indicates that the experimental program met its objectives, and that the extra hours spent in the second language were profitable” (p. 16). However, this study did not include a comparison group of those with the same total hours of instruction accumulated over different distributions (Lapkin et al., 1998, p. 6), nor has this particular group been followed to determine long-term effects of the intensive program. Also, such a large-scale, provincial model of IF may be difficult to achieve in Ontario schools since many school boards and teachers may be reluctant to increase FSL instructional time in CF due to the demanding nature of the Ontario curriculum in all other subject areas. As Lapkin et al. (1995) explained:

One cannot increase total instructional time in Core French without entering into the domain of early or late immersion options, and without producing an outcry on the part of regular English program educators that too much time is being taken away from the overall school curriculum. But one can consider a different distribution, in this case a concentration, of the available instructional time (120 hours) in any given year. (pp. 2-3)

In addition, Lapkin et al. (1998) suggested that there was more opportunity to have contact with English in parts of Quebec than there would be for Anglophone students to have
contact with French in most parts of Ontario, and students were motivated to engage in the voluntary program. The challenge, then, was to develop CF models in which the instructional time was massed or compacted into a shorter period of time, yet the total number of instructional hours remained the same. Also, since part of the value in the intensive programs may lie in the pedagogic approach, compact CF models may need to be intensive enough to permit more experiential/communicative, project-based approaches to teaching.

Compact Language Courses

Compact language courses are those in which “the time available for the language course is modified by a different distribution in comparison with conventional language programs, and the courses envisaged are offered in a more concentrated form within a shorter than ‘normal’ or ‘traditional’ time span” (Stern, 1985, p. 14). In other words, these courses offer an intensive period of language study by changing the distribution of available instructional time, rather than increasing total time.

Block Scheduling

In American high schools, the current interest in block scheduling supports the idea of compact L2/foreign language courses. In a traditional schedule, students daily attend six to eight different classes of 40 to 55 minutes in length. A block schedule permits students to attend fewer classes each day for extended periods of time. For example, a common block schedule is a 4 x 4 block in which students attend three or four classes of 80 to 90 minutes in length each day for one semester. Midway through the academic year, students switch to a second block of three or four classes each day. At the end of each year, the amount of time allocated for each class is essentially the same in both the traditional and block schedule, but the distribution of time
differs. An alternating block schedule is one in which students attend three or four daily classes of extended length, and then on the alternating day attend a second set of three or four daily classes. In this format, students study the same subjects for the entire academic year, but alternate two sets of three or four subjects (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

J. M. Carroll (1994) noted that the traditional secondary school schedule of six-, seven- or eight-periods per day, taught throughout the entire year, discouraged learner-centered classrooms and the utilization of various teaching methods: “Virtually all the research concerning better instructional practice emphasizes greater individualization of instruction. But secondary teachers are caught in a structure that fosters lecture-centered, large-group-oriented instruction and sharply limits their efforts to individualize” (p. 106). He offered instead an alternative scheduling plan, labeled the “Copernican Plan,” in which he proposed that high school classes be taught in longer blocks of time and for only part of the school year; thus, students would be enrolled in fewer classes each school term, would engage in more intensive daily periods of instruction, yet would still receive the same number of instructional hours at the end of each academic year. A shift from teacher-centered classes to learner-centered classes, a greater number and variety of teaching strategies and individualization of programming, as well as an increase in usable instructional time were among the many benefits Carroll considered to result from such a plan. In fact, he claimed that research in seven schools provided evidence that when school schedules were organized according to the Copernican Plan, “these schools experienced improvements of a magnitude seldom if ever reported from a group of our nation’s high schools” (p. 112). Other researchers have also criticized the traditional secondary school schedule. However, subsequent research in secondary schools has provided results that are inconsistent with the claim of greater student achievement.
In a recent review of 58 empirical research studies of secondary school block scheduling, Zepeda and Mayers (2006) concluded that many of the findings are inconclusive and non-generalizable. “Because of the paucity of research on block scheduling and the unique characteristics of individual schools, generalizations about the effects of block scheduling are problematic at best” (p. 159). In particular, they noted that results related to effects of block scheduling on student achievement on standardized or research-specific test scores, and effects on teachers’ instructional practices were inconclusive, as some studies reported positive effects and others no positive effects. However, they did note that two generalizations can be made from the research literature, one of which is that students and teachers generally indicated a preference for block-scheduled classes, though the reasons for their preference was unclear and not indicated in the research studies. The second generalization is that block scheduling seems to positively impact on student achievement over time, resulting in greater student overall grades and grade point averages, although again, the research studies did not clearly outline explanations for such an increase.3

Biesinger, Crippen, and Muis (2008) also argued that past research studies have indicated varying effects upon student achievement. In their study of block scheduling and its impact on student motivation and pedagogic practices in mathematics classrooms, they note that results have indicated a range of positive to less than positive effects on student achievement:

Whereas some studies have indicated a positive effect of block scheduling on student achievement (Hughes, 2004), other studies focused on specific academic disciplines have shown small effects (Nichols, 2005) or in some cases, a decrease in student performance (Rice, Croniger, & Roellke, 2002). (p. 192)

3 Grades and grade point averages are indicators of student achievement over time, the result of a body of student work. Test scores are indicators of student achievement at a precise moment in time, on a particular test.
Research studies investigating a block scheduling format at the intermediate grade level (Grades 7 and 8) have demonstrated similar results to those in the secondary schools. One such study was undertaken by Bickel (1999) as part of her doctoral dissertation. In this study, Bickel investigated two junior high schools within the same school district in Colorado; one of the schools was a traditionally-formatted school, and the other made a change to a block schedule. The stated purpose of the study was to determine whether the change to a block-scheduled day had a measurable effect on the learning climate, student achievement and on the instructional methods used within the classroom. In specific terms, Bickel investigated whether a change occurred in attendance rates, grade point averages, scores on mathematics levels tests, student behavior, and instructional practices implemented by the participating teachers. Using a quasi-experimental design approach, Bickel analyzed pre- and post- data for two demographically-similar schools over a two-year period. In the first year, both schools were formatted using a traditional schedule; participating students were beginning their Grade 7 year. The following year, participating students began their Grade 8 year, and one of the two schools changed from a traditional format to a block-scheduling format, thus making this the group with the intervention and the other school the control group. Data collected annually by the school district comprised the quantitative data: discipline incident reports, average attendance rates, grade point averages for the students, and mathematics level test scores. Bickel distributed questionnaires to the teaching staff of the block-scheduled school in order to determine teacher perceptions regarding changes in teaching and learning activities.

Results indicated that there were no significant differences in attendance rates, overall grade point averages or mathematics test scores. Descriptively, Bickel (1999) noted a 34% decrease in discipline incidents in the block-schedule school between pre and post
implementation periods, suggesting that fewer behavioral incidents occurred in the block-scheduled classes. The teacher survey responses indicated a statistically significant difference in only two categories: management/discipline and preparation/cleanup. The perception that classroom management and discipline was facilitated by block scheduling seems to be supported by the fewer incidences of behavior reported, which Bickel attributed to the longer class periods and the resulting fewer transitions between classes (p. 62). Also, teachers perceived that a greater amount of class time was used on the teaching and learning activities, instead of on preparation and cleanup, therefore facilitating time on task for the students. “In a traditional schedule up to one third of each class period was used up getting ready for class and putting things away. For those reporting, a greater percentage of total class time was now spent on the learning activity rather than on preparation/cleanup” (p. 62).

Bickel did note that a third category, cooperative learning, approached significance. Despite a low return rate, the teacher survey responses seemed to corroborate some of the advantages noted in other studies (e.g., Hays, 1998), in that the more intensive periods in the block scheduling format permitted more time on task and time for the learning activity. Additionally, teachers perceived that a cooperative learning methodology was implemented more frequently than in the previous year of traditional scheduling. A limitation of the study is that it does not represent the beliefs, perspectives and opinions of various stakeholders, in particular the students themselves. Although the increase in cooperative learning practices was not statistically significant, as reported on the survey by the teachers, it would be of interest to know why teachers used more of this teaching methodology, and what the student response was to the more cooperative teaching practices in the classroom.
In another research study related to block scheduling and conducted at the intermediate level, Lewis et al. (2003) investigated the effect on achievement in science and language arts programs formatted differently: two formats of block scheduling (4 x 4 and AB or alternating block scheduling) and one traditional scheduling. In addition, they investigated the extent to which the effects varied depending on student gender and prior student achievement. Participants were 111 junior high students who attended two different junior high schools in a small city in Colorado. The first junior high school was selected as the school with the intervention, as it simultaneously implemented two formats of block scheduling: a 4 x 4 plan and an AB block schedule. The second high school acted as the comparison group, in that it implemented a traditional schedule. Lewis et al. noted that the two schools were comparable in that they had similar proficiency scores on state examinations, and were within the same school district, thus drawing a similar student population.

Language and science outcomes across the three classes remained the same, as did curriculum, instructional formats, projects and other in-class activities. All groups wrote an achievement test near the end of their instructional cycle. Results from the language arts achievement test scores indicate a small to moderate effect of the AB scheduling on student achievement over the traditional format, but no significant effect of the 4 x 4 plan over traditional scheduling. However, they did note that in both forms of block scheduling, a significant effect was noticed in the scores of students identified as lower achievers at the start of junior high.

In their science study, 340 students, from the same two schools, served as participants. In a reverse of the language arts study, results indicated a moderately-strong significant effect of the 4 x 4 block scheduling over that of a traditional schedule, but no significant effect was noticed.
for the AB block scheduling format. Again, however, the most significant effect was in the comparison of the results of students identified as lower-achieving students. In this study, this group demonstrated significantly higher test scores than those in the traditionally-scheduled classes.

Across the two studies, the researchers concluded that block scheduling formats held a definite benefit for those students who were lower-achieving at the start of junior high or at the start of their study. They noted that they,

...consistently found sizable gains in favor of block scheduling. These gains persevered across both the language arts and science domains of achievement; and these gains were largest consistently in favor of lower achieving students while consistently holding harmless upper achieving students. (p. 19)

However, as the researchers acknowledge, these results are those of a small-scale study in one school district, and therefore may not be generalizable to other junior high or middle schools. Also, this study focused primarily on the effects of block scheduling on achievement test scores, without considering the perceptions and beliefs of the stakeholders toward the block scheduling. It would be of interest to investigate the perceptions and beliefs of those students who made the greatest gains in the block scheduling format, those students identified as lower achieving, in order to ascertain to what they attributed the greater gains, and whether any impact was made on student self-assessment of proficiency and motivation to learn.

**Block Scheduling in the Second or Foreign Language Classroom**

According to Hays (1998), foreign language educators were concerned about the retention of language skills by students studying in classes adopting such a block schedule, and questioned the impact of such a distribution of time in foreign language classes.
One of these critical issues is the retention of learning and course sequencing of foreign language classes. It is possible that under block scheduling a student could complete Spanish I first quarter as a freshman and then not enroll in Spanish II until second semester of tenth grade. There is concern about this gap in learning and the potential impact on lowering achievement. The fear of this loss of learning and excessive review remains an issue for educators as they seek to implement block scheduling. (p. 3)

In her dissertation research, Hays investigated the perceptions and experiences of foreign language teachers who had taught in both traditionally- and block-scheduled classes. Using a qualitative, narrative approach, she conducted open-ended interviews with 12 foreign language educators of either Spanish, French and German, all of whom had had 1 to 4 years experience teaching under a block schedule, and 6 or greater years teaching experience in secondary schools. Two teachers in each of the six participating metropolitan schools were interviewed, during which they were asked questions on their experiences teaching under block scheduling, L2 acquisition, their perceptions of student performance and retention rates, the instructional strategies implemented, and assessment and student learning issues (pp. 55-56). Interviews were audio taped, and field notes were recorded. In addition, demographic surveys and documents (e.g., school schedules) were collected from each of the participating schools.

The teachers in the study perceived that retention was not an issue; rather, the amount of original learning determined the amount of language attrited or retained by the student. As Hays explained, “teachers in this study confirmed the research findings of Canady and Rettig (1995) when they noted that retention over time was most affected by the degree of original learning” (p. 111). In other words, greater levels of language learning also indicate higher retention rates, even over a longer period of time. Also, Hays observed that many of the teachers interviewed preferred the block scheduling format over the traditional format, indicating that the longer periods promoted a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and a more favorable experience
for teachers and students alike. Most noted that they were able to use the longer block of time to implement more student-centered instructional strategies, during which students could more easily engage in communicative situations and activities.

The study has certain limitations. Hays did not indicate how she determined the reliability of identified emerging themes and patterns, nor was any discussion made of coding practices. Also, this study is limited to teachers’ perceptions of student performance, and did not quantitatively assess actual proficiency gains or retention rates. However, the value in this study is the fact that most teachers identified pedagogic concerns as a positive impact of block scheduling. The perception that the longer periods facilitated more communicative, student-centered instructional strategies is of particular interest for this present study.

Hays’ (1998) finding that more intensive periods facilitated the use of more student-centered, communicative instructional strategies is contradicted by Hayes’ (2001) dissertation research, in which he attempted to determine the impact of block scheduling on the achievement and attitudes of English Language Learners (ELLs)\(^4\) in an American suburban high school. Hypothesizing that the longer class periods would permit ELLs to engage in non-traditional, more interactive and experiential ways, thus promoting higher academic and proficiency levels, his study measured the differences in achievement between students in block-scheduled and traditionally-scheduled classes, and investigated student attitudes toward the instructional techniques in both formats. Participants included ELL students from 2 suburban secondary schools, one which was scheduled in a traditional manner, and the other which was scheduled under the block. Forty-six students participated from the block scheduled school, and 85 from the

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\(^4\) English Language Learners (ELL) are essentially English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, in that they are non-native speakers of English, from varying cultural backgrounds and with varying English language proficiency (beginner to more advanced), learning English within the context of English-medium classrooms in American secondary schools.
traditional school, for a total of 131 participating students. The students were a mix of beginners, intermediate and advanced proficiency levels, and had diverse first language (L1) backgrounds. Grade point averages, an English language proficiency test, student attendance rates, and student surveys were used to compare the achievement rates of all students. On the survey, students were asked to rate statements about school climate, academic success, school behavior, schoolwork and teaching. In addition, 2 ESL instructors from each school participated in semi-structured interviews in order to determine teacher perceptions of the student survey responses.

According to Hayes, there was no significant difference in grade point averages of those enrolled in the block and the traditional classes, nor was there a significant difference on test scores of an English proficiency measure. Also, the students in traditional classes reported more satisfaction in their school climate than did those in the block classes. There was no significant difference in most of the teacher perceptions of student responses.

A possible explanation for the contradictory results of these two dissertation studies is the context within which each study is bound. In Hays’ research, she provided evidence of teacher perceptions and experiences in foreign language classes across six schools, whereas Hayes focused primarily on achievement scores and attitudes of ELL in their content classes. In other words, the former focused on teachers and on foreign language classes; the latter focused on ELL in content classes. Hayes’ research did solicit some teacher perceptions; however, the sample size is small. Hayes also acknowledged that the block school was only in its second year under the new format, and that a transitional period might be in effect. The teachers in Hays’ study also had experience in both formats, and were thus able to compare and contrast their varied experiences, whereas it is not known whether the teachers in Hayes’ traditional school setting had experienced teaching under the block.
Compact CF Models

In Canada, Lapkin et al. (1998) initiated a study of compact CF models. The purpose was to innovate in the traditional CF program where instruction in French is delivered in daily 40-minute periods from Grade 4 through Grade 8. In the Lapkin et al. study, the researchers compared three Grade 7 classes at the same school. The first class served as a comparison class, with regular 40-minute periods for the full duration of the school year; the other two classes served as experimental classes, each implementing a different compact CF model. The first compact class doubled the traditional period length; therefore students attended 80-minute periods for half the year. The third class attended half-day periods for a 10-week period. The total instructional time at the end of each program format remained the same, so all students accumulated the same number of instructional hours by the end of their Grade 7 year. The results of this study were encouraging, in that the compact classes significantly outperformed the comparison class in measures of reading comprehension and writing; but, there were no significant differences observed in performances on listening comprehension and speaking measures. Also, students in compact classes seemed to enjoy the longer periods and self-assessed greater gains in their language proficiency than did the students in the regular FSL classes. In light of these preliminary results, the researchers concluded that further experimentation with this compact CF model was warranted.

Of particular interest in the Lapkin et al. (1998) study is the fact that the researchers anticipated that any improved learning would have been a result of “alternative teaching strategies” (p. 7) in the classroom, the implementation of which would have been facilitated by the compacted format of the program. Such teaching strategies were expected to be those more closely aligned with the principles of the NCFS (CASLT, 1994; R. Leblanc, 1990); in other
words, they would have been more experiential and communicative in nature. However, in Hilmer’s (1999) follow-up study, in which he investigated the extent to which changes in one of the two compact CF program formats influenced the teaching strategies implemented, he determined that no variations in teaching strategies existed in the different formats.\textsuperscript{5} Both control and experimental groups were taught with a teacher-directed approach, in which little pair or group work existed.

The results of these two studies, as well as Stern’s (1985) caution that time is but one variable in the development of L2 proficiency, led me to question the extent to which the higher level of language fluency recorded in the intensive ESL/FSL studies was a result of alternative teaching strategies implemented in the longer class periods. In other words, could a compact CF program, in which only the distribution of time changes, also yield higher levels of communicative competence if communicative and experiential teaching strategies were implemented in the alternative format? The results of the IF studies (Germain, Netten, et al., 2004; Netten et al., 2004), in which the implemented teaching strategies seemed to impact the higher proficiency scores as much as or in addition to the number of intensive hours, seem to suggest that this would be the case. Although the lower total instructional time in a compact program may not achieve similar results as those in an intensive program, which has three to four times the total instructional time in the L2, it would seem that similar instructional strategies could be implemented in a compact program format (i.e., project-based, communicative-experiential), which would enable the implementation of a multidimensional syllabus, and the achievement of higher language proficiency. Turnbull (1998, 1999a, 1999b) found that it was possible to implement a multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum model within the

\textsuperscript{5} Hilmer investigated the nature of teaching strategies implemented in the comparison group (40-minute daily classes, full year) and an experimental group receiving 150 minutes daily for an approximate one quarter of the school year.
parameters of traditional CF periods;\(^6\) thus, it seems feasible that longer periods would facilitate the implementation of such an approach. The results of these studies also led me to question gap retention levels; would students be able to retain their level of French language proficiency, especially since the break from learning the language would be greater than the traditional 2 months of summer holidays? In the Lapkin et al. (1995) study, students showed good retention of gains in writing even after a gap of about nine months (p. 28).

Another consideration in the present study is the profile of the early adolescent learners who served as participants. It is of value to consider the research regarding early adolescent motivations and perspectives in the classroom.

**The Early Adolescent Learner**

Past research in intermediate or middle grades has revealed a decrease in student motivation during this early adolescent period (Eccles et al., 1993; Eccles, Lord, & Midgley, 1991; Haladyna & Thomas, 1979). In Haladyna and Thomas’ (1979) research over 30 years ago, they demonstrated a correlation between a decrease in students’ attitudes toward school in general, as well as specific subject areas, and the age of the students; in specific, they discovered that attitudes toward specific subject areas, such as science and mathematics, decrease markedly between Grades 6 and 7, which is the transition from the junior grades to the intermediate grade level.

Eccles et al. (1993) undertook to explain this decrease, hypothesizing from a review of current literature studies, that the reason for the decreasing motivation is less a result of developmental changes and characteristics in early adolescents, but rather the disconnect

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\(^6\) In Turnbull’s study, the participating grade 9 classes were an approximate 40 – 50 minutes in length. Traditional Core French classes at the elementary school level typically range from 30-40 minutes in length.
between the developmental needs of early adolescent learners and the educational environment (p. 92).

After the transition to junior high school, early adolescents are often confronted with a regressive environmental change: They experience a decrease in the opportunity to participate in classroom decision making when they move into junior high school. Not surprisingly, there is also a decrease in intrinsic motivation and an increase in school misconduct associated with this transition, and these changes are most apparent among the adolescents who report experiencing the greatest mismatch between their needs and the opportunities to participate in classroom decision making. (p. 99)

Eccles et al. (1993) note that the inability to participate in decision-making in the classroom, and ultimately in their learning, leads to a decrease in the motivation of early adolescent learners to put forth effort to remain or strive to become high-achieving students.

Barber and Olsen (2004) analyzed student data that had been compiled by the National Institute of Mental Health-funded Ogden Youth and Family Project, which was a longitudinal study of families with adolescents in Ogden, Utah (p. 11). Students had been asked to self-report on a variety of variables, among which were perceived changes in school environment. Although the students in the study transitioned from Grade 6 to Grade 7 within the same school environment, students self-reported negative changes in several aspects of the environment. “Students not only generally declined in academic performance but also in personal and interpersonal competence of some form at virtually every post-sixth grade transition” (p. 25). The researchers conclude that their findings are consistent with those of Eccles et al. (1993), in that they indicated that “there is growing evidence that the unfortunate increased inadequacy of school environments are (sic)responsible, to some degree, for declining student functioning” (p. 27).
In recent years, the term “student voice” has entered the realm of educational research, in part to acknowledge the role of students as stakeholders, and to offer opportunities for participation in discussions regarding the teaching and learning practices that directly impact their educational journey. Cook-Sather (2006), in a review of student voice literature over the last two decades, illustrates the increasing interest of researchers in hearing the opinions and ideas of students and young people in relation to school and changes in education and pedagogic practices. As she states, “young people have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling,” and “their insights warrant not only the attention but also the responses of adults,” therefore concluding that “they should be afforded opportunities to actively shape their education” (pp. 359-360).

Corbett and Wilson (1998) used the idea of “student voice” in their research, specifically soliciting the opinions and ideas of adolescents regarding their perceptions of their learning environment. In their study, they interviewed students from five different middle schools over a two-year period. The schools were specifically selected from the participating district as they were among the lowest-performing on standardized measures of academic proficiency, and also represented those schools with the lowest socio-economic population. In the first year of the study, the researchers interviewed 247 Grade 6 students, and 114 Grade 8 students. During the second year of the study, the researchers conducted interviews with 189 students from the first set of interviews, all of whom at that period in time were in Grade 7. During the second round of interviews, the researchers explored issues that emerged from the first year. In their findings, students indicated that good teaching was critical to learning; good teaching was viewed as individual assistance of students to support learning, a strict, but respectful, attitude of the teacher in the classroom, and the ability to explain work clearly. Students also noted that the
following activities facilitated the learning process: (a) activity in the classroom (active assignments); (b) projects for learning and assessment purposes; (c) collaborative opportunities during which students could gain information and learn from and with each other; and (d) interesting activities, such as games, to make the learning enjoyable and fun.

Support for Eccles et al.’s (1993) hypothesis that environment may be the leading factor in students’ decreasing motivation to achieve can be found in the research study by O’Connell Schmakel (2008), whose purpose was to determine the attitudes and perceptions of Grade 7 students toward the instructional activities and environments that impacted on their motivation and engagement in the learning process. In this research study, 67 Grade 7 students from four different Midwestern-urban schools served as participants. O’Connell Schmakel used three data collection methods: (a) essays, in which students were asked to indicate how they might improve the school learning and environment; (b) focus group sessions in which students proffered their beliefs and perspectives on their own motivation and achievement in learning; and, (c) one-on-one interviews, in which the researcher met with ten students, selected by willingness, to further discuss their beliefs and opinions. From the analyzed data, O’Connell Schmakel summarized her findings by noting that generally, and with some probing, students did seem to care about academics and academic achievement, whether they were lower or higher achieving students, suggesting that a decrease in motivation may be linked to environmental factors impacting on achievement. Students indicated that the following constructs would facilitate and encourage active motivation and engagement in learning: (a) making the learning interesting and fun; (b) collaborative group work; (c) project-based learning; (d) more individual help from teachers and peers; and (e) teachers who were strict, with high expectations, yet who treated students with respect and focused on students’ positive qualities. Although this study was a small-scale study,
and therefore may not be generalizable to other schools and students, the results do seem to align with those from some of the other studies of early adolescent student voice, such as an earlier study by Corbett and Wilson (1998).

In her recent research study, Hopkins (2010) used focus groups to elicit the opinions and beliefs of 132 students from the United Kingdom in Grades 7 through 9 regarding effective learning practices. Through focus group discussions, students identified activities they perceived as making learning enjoyable, and what they considered to help them assess their learning. Like the previous studies, students indicated that a fair, respectful teacher who provided students with assistance when required was important, as were activities that engaged the learner in discussion, practical tasks, and collaborative activities.

Clearly, early adolescents consider collaborative tasks, project-based learning, and opportunities for practical, relevant tasks to be among the teaching and learning practices that will enable them to achieve success in the classroom. In the following section, I describe a multidimensional, project-based approach to FSL teaching and learning that promotes some of the stated learning preferences of the early adolescent learners as documented in past research studies, in order to contextualize the present study, in which I adopt this L2 pedagogic approach.

**The Multidimensional Curriculum Model**

The NCFS, a joint initiative of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT, 1994) and the Canadian federal government, investigated the nature of CF programs across the country. From this study, general overriding principles for all CF programs were developed. The principal stated aim of CF in Canada, according to this study, is “the learning of French as a means of communication and the contribution it makes to the general education of
the student” (R. Leblanc, 1990, pp. 7-8). An ability to communicate in a language suggests the need to develop both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) language skills.

The NCFS study (CASLT, 1994), inspired and largely based on Stern’s (1982, 1983) multidimensional curriculum design, recommended the implementation of a multidimensional approach to curriculum and assessment design. This approach consists of four syllabuses: (a) communicative/experiential syllabus; (b) language syllabus; (c) general language education syllabus; and, (d) culture syllabus. All four syllabuses must be implemented and assessed in order to have comprehensive FSL learning programs in CF classrooms. However, unlike Stern, who did not prioritize one syllabus over another to organize curriculum development, the NCFS framework underscored the communicative/experiential syllabus as the “organizing principle for teaching units, replacing the linguistic focus of earlier programs” (Vandergrift, 2000, p. 290). As Vandergrift (2000) explains:

Experiential learning exposes students to authentic oral and written texts and encourages students to use the target language in real-life communication as they are learning it. Communication of authentic messages is no longer left until after the linguistic code is mastered; it is emphasized throughout the program . . . The content of the other three syllabi (language, culture, and general language education) is determined by a theme related to the life experience of the students and the objectives of the targeted communication experience or task. (pp. 290-291)

**Communicative / Experiential Syllabus**

The communicative/experiential syllabus was expanded from Stern’s (1982, 1983) concept of the communicative activities syllabus. According to Stern, the communicative activities syllabus reflected a non-analytic, meaning-based and experiential approach to language learning, in which the goal was to bring as many of the characteristics of natural language
settings into the language learning classroom in order to establish personal contact with the TL community. “Where language is emphasized, it is subordinated to the purpose of the message. On the basis of this content area, the learner is enabled to establish a personal bond between himself and the target language, the target community, or some of its members” (Stern, 1992, p. 28).

The NCFS, concerned that the term “communicative” could be assigned various meanings, proposed the term “communicative/experiential” to more clearly reflect Stern’s focus on experience, and the learners’ need to experience or participate in authentic, meaning-based learning situations. “The introduction of a communicative/experiential syllabus into a multidimensional curriculum is the result of the perceived need to have the student acquire communicative skills by doing things with the language rather than simply reflecting on it” (R. Leblanc, 1990, p. 34).

According to Tremblay, Duplantie, and Huot (1990), the authors of the communicative experiential syllabus, the communicative objectives promote student comprehension of oral and written texts, student negotiation of meaning in authentic, communicative exchanges, and student production of oral and written texts which account for both context and personal intentions. The experiential objectives consist of developing student knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes “in relation to a variety of fields of experience” (p. 20). Tremblay et al. argued that the content of this syllabus must be of both educational value and of interest to the learner (p. 25). In order to assure that this is the case, they suggested the content be derived from what they termed “fields of experience,” or “that aspect of reality on which the individual has already developed certain knowledge, patterns of behavior, and attitudes” (p. 26). They further identified five dimensions of “fields of experience,” from which content themes could be developed: (a) the physical
dimension, related to an individual’s physical well-being, such as nutrition or self-protection; (b) the social dimension, related to an individual’s social life, including themes such as friends, family, and school; (c) the civic dimension, related to an individual’s rights and social responsibility, suggesting such themes as the environment and consumerism/shopping; (d) the dimension of leisure, related to an individual’s leisure activities, such as outdoor living, travel, hobbies; and, (e) the intellectual dimension, related to activities of the mind and promoting themes in the sciences and the arts (p. 27).

**Language Syllabus**

The language syllabus represents the analytical, functional study of the language students will require in order to communicate in authentic, natural French (TL) settings (Painchaud, 1990). This systematic study of language is introduced in the context of the communicative situations determined by the fields of experience and themes outlined in the communicative experiential syllabus; the focus is a reflection on the function of language in context, rather than on the study of isolated, decontextualized language phrases. Painchaud (1990) outlines specific content categories of the language syllabus necessary to achieve the principal objective of communication in natural TL settings: (a) lexical content; (b) grammatical content; (c) contextual content, such as when to use linguistic registers of formality and informality; and, (d) discourse analysis, not of isolated sentences, but of exchanges framed within the communicative context (p. 21).

**Culture Syllabus**

The culture syllabus addresses the belief that language and culture interact, and therefore the study of the TL culture is integral to any L2 curriculum (Stern, 1992, p. 27). In this respect,
the study of the TL culture is an essential component of the CF curriculum, rather than an afterthought or sporadic inclusion (LeBlanc, Courtel, & Trescases, 1990, p. 2). The objective, therefore, of the culture syllabus, “must be the acquisition by the learner of an acceptable level of cultural awareness, understanding, and knowledge” (R. LeBlanc, 1990, p. 43) that will enable the learner to engage in contextually appropriate communication with French language speakers. In Canadian CF programs, the content of the culture syllabus should centre on elements of the French language culture, prioritizing local francophone cultures in Canada, as well as on topics classified as the “Francophonie,” comprising of content such as fables and stories, and the workplace (R. LeBlanc, 1990, p. 49). C. LeBlanc et al. (1990), the authors of the culture syllabus, suggest five sources of cultural content from which curriculum developers can draw: (a) Presence of francophone communities in the student’s environment, such as a local minority francophone population or a learner’s French Canadian ancestry; (b) history of French-speaking peoples, as relevant to the study of present-day communities and including items such as media, literature, and festivals; (c) sociolinguistic variations of French language dialects, such as accents and social registers; (d) daily lives of francophone’s; and, (e) Canadian bilingualism (pp. 24-43; see also R. Leblanc, 1990, pp. 50-51).

**General Language Education Syllabus**

Stern (1992) argues for the inclusion of this syllabus in curriculum design, noting that:

This syllabus should also contribute to a better understanding of the three other syllabuses and thereby help the learner to approach the specific L2 with insight into the nature of language and language learning. This deeper understanding should make the learning of a specific language all the more valuable and effective. (p. 244)
The general language syllabus is, essentially, an inventory of linguistic, cultural, and strategic content that will develop both the L2 education and general education of the student. According to Stern, this syllabus should fulfill the following three objectives:

It should enhance the learning of the TL; it should provide the student with a set of techniques and a body of knowledge as well as with the outlook needed for learning other languages; and it should enable the student to relate the target language to other educational and social activities. (p. 251)

Hébert (1990) outlines several sources in each of the three content areas that can be accessed in order to implement this syllabus. Concerning linguistic awareness or content, Hébert lists five characteristics of language: (a) language productivity (how and why a language produces varied interactions); (b) language creativity, such as the creation of new words and literary language effects; (c) the stable, yet changing, nature of language; (d) language social variability; and, (e) language is both form and message (pp. 35-37; see also R. LeBlanc, 1990, pp. 59-60).

In order to address cultural awareness or content, Hébert (1990) again suggests several general characteristics: (a) the dynamic nature of culture; (b) the stable and changeable nature of culture; (c) the diversity of culture, such as seasonal rites and artistic expression; (d) diversity of codes in cultures (for instance, the differing symbolism attached to an owl, which is viewed as a symbol of wisdom in one culture, yet as a precursor of death by another); (e) transmissibility of culture by a variety of means, such as family and media; and, (f) cultural flexibility, which suggests that the learner will only successfully achieve at the cultural level when he/she is at ease with the other culture while maintaining his/her own identity (pp. 37-40; see also R. LeBlanc, 1990, pp. 60-61). Finally, strategic awareness is produced by reflecting on the gradual mastery of
know-how and the strategies associated with this mastery, which include both cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Hébert, 1990, pp. 40-41).

**Project-Based Learning Approach**

In order to implement a multidimensional syllabus that is experiential in principle, CASLT (1994) recommended that a project-based learning approach be used. “If we hope to infuse the central ideas of the C/E [communicative/experiential] syllabus into the classroom . . . we need a model for lesson development that fully engages the individual. One interesting way of achieving this goal is building lessons around educational projects” (Tremblay et al., 1990, p. 57). According to this approach, a final project would be determined at the outset of a teaching unit, which would necessitate certain language knowledge and skills. Then, all teaching and learning activities during the unit would serve to advance the L2 student toward the completion of this project. The project-based approach facilitates the integration of the multidimensional framework, in that it is communicative and experiential in nature, it provides an authentic context for the integration of the general language education and cultural syllabuses, and promotes development of certain linguistic elements (language syllabus).

Katz and Chard (2000) describe the project approach to curriculum development, indicating that it “refers to an in-depth study of a particular topic, usually undertaken by a whole class working on subtopics in small groups, sometimes by a small group of children within a class, and occasionally by an individual child” (p. 2). These authors, whose work focuses on early childhood education, highlight the experiential nature of project work, emphasizing “children’s active participation in the planning, development, and assessment of their own work” (pp. 3-4). Legutke and Thomas (1991) reinforce this experiential focus, noting that “the process
orientation of the project classroom commits its participants to a focus on ‘experience’ as an essential and substantial element of their learning” (p. 214).

According to Legutke and Thomas (1991), project work is defined as “a theme and task-centered mode of teaching and learning which results from a joint process of negotiation between all participants” (p. 160). Drawing on documented case studies of project-based learning in foreign language education, they suggest three categories of project work: (a) encounter projects, in which learners investigate TL communities in their L1 environment, or engage in exchanges with or encounters in the TL environment; (b) text projects, in which learners interact with authentic L2 texts, media, and other native speaker sources; and, (c) class correspondence projects, which promote encounters between the L2 learners and TL speakers from different cultures (pp. 161-165). However, as Turnbull (1998) noted, few studies exist in the research literature that investigated the effectiveness of a project-based learning approach in L2 education. Turnbull’s doctoral research was therefore an inquiry into the effects of a project-based, multidimensional approach to curriculum, in which he resolved to “explore the relationship between multidimensional project-based Core French teaching and student outcomes,” (p. 55) as well as the effects of such an approach on student proficiency and achievement levels. According to Turnbull (1999a), typical characteristics of a multidimensional, project-based approach included the following: personalized activities, L2 use by teachers and students, collaborative work, teacher and student negotiation of activities, and use of authentic materials (p. 18).

In his study, pre-tests and post-tests of general French proficiency served as quantitative data to measure general French proficiency of students in the four participating classes; student questionnaires were administered in conjunction with these tests in order to determine the extent
to which the general language education, cultural, and attitudinal goals had been met. Following the pre-tests, the four participating teachers implemented the same multidimensional, project-based teaching unit. All lessons were observed and recorded by audiotape and researcher field notes. Data recorded during the observation period was coded using an observation scheme designed to reflect the four syllabuses of the NCFS (R. Leblanc, 1990).

Turnbull’s (1998) findings suggest that the four teachers implemented the multidimensional, project-based unit in varying ways, from more to less multidimensional in nature, and more or less project-based. Students in the classes of the 2 teachers implementing the unit more or less as prescribed (i.e., teaching activities organized around a final project and multidimensional in nature), achieved significantly higher proficiency scores on all speaking measures of the achievement tests. In fact, Turnbull notes that the inclusion of a final project was “the main factor that distinguished the pedagogic approaches of Teachers 1 and 2 from those of Teachers 3 and 4” (pp. 169-170). In addition, student questionnaire responses at the end of the unit indicated that students in the more project-based classes were more motivated to continue French language studies in higher grades. However, Turnbull acknowledges the difficulty inherent in this type of research, in that other pedagogic variations existed between the four teachers’ approaches that may also have impacted the results, such as the amount of L1 used by the teachers and the degree of student involvement in curriculum decisions.

In this review, I described the current status of CF in Canadian education systems. I discussed time as a variable in the L2 acquisition research literature, as well as intensive and compact language courses, both of which vary the intensity of time. Relevant empirical literature was reviewed and discussed in order to determine implications for the present study. I examined related research of the early adolescent learner in order to contextualize the participants in the
present study. Finally, I discussed the development of the multidimensional curriculum model (R. Leblanc, 1990), and the implementation of project-based learning in CF classrooms.
CHAPTER THREE: FEASIBILITY STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter I will describe a feasibility study that I conducted to ensure that my research study could be implemented in the school district in which I teach. I will begin with an overview of the context and the participants, followed by the research questions that informed the study. Finally, I will discuss the findings and the relevance to my thesis study.

Context and Participants

This study was designed to determine the feasibility of implementing a compact CF model in a northern Ontario school board. The participating school board spans a large geographic area, approximately 16,000 km$^2$ in rural, north-central Ontario, and is divided by three distinct regions (east, west, and north). Rural communities are relatively homogeneous in nature, composed mainly of unilingual English-speaking people who have little opportunity for contact with French-speaking persons. Students begin CF studies in senior kindergarten; primary classes usually consist of daily 20-minute sessions, and those in the junior and intermediate grades vary between 30- and 40-minute sessions on a daily or near-daily basis.

I conducted interviews with board personnel, school administration and with CF teachers to discuss the needs and concerns of those administering CF programs, the possibility of an alternative administration of CF, and the feasibility of compact CF models in their schools. All participants were selected because of their potential role in the development of a compact CF program within the board.
At the board level, I conducted interviews with one of the 2 superintendents of elementary school programs, and one of the 2 curriculum coordinators to determine the impact of implementing a compact program at the board level, and to address any administrative concerns of such a study. At the local school level, interviews were held with 2 principals of the schools in which a compact CF study could be conducted, and who responded to a request for possible participation. In one of these schools, an interview was also conducted with the CF teacher. Due to lack of response, an interview was not held with the CF teacher of the second school. The 2 schools, both of them senior public schools (Grades 6 to 8) were selected from the board’s 36 elementary schools on the basis of their high student enrollment.  

I recorded all interviews by note taking and audiotape, which I later transcribed. Each in-depth interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, and was conducted face to face with each participant. The format of the interviews was semi-structured, permitting the participant to address any relevant issues as they arose during the interview. I asked participants to identify and describe the conditions under which a compact CF model could be implemented within the board, particularly in each of the 2 schools. I analyzed all interview transcripts to identify issues and emerging themes regarding feasibility of a compact CF study in this school system.

**Research Questions (Feasibility Study)**

The study was informed by two research questions, as follows:

1. Is it feasible to implement a study of compact CF models in a north-central Ontario school board? In other words, what are the conditions under which the implementation of compact CF models could be recommended, and what are the factors that might

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7 My study design necessitated that the participating school have a high enough student enrollment to permit three classes of Grade 7 students.
help or hinder the program delivery (e.g., school organization, staffing, community and parental support/resistance, program concerns); and,

2. Assuming the answer to the first question is affirmative, what, then, are the implications of the results of this study for the development of a subsequent pilot study of a compact CF program in this board? In other words, what compact course model is recommended for study in this board, and how will it be implemented?

Findings

Interviews with Senior Board Personnel

The results of the interviews with senior board personnel demonstrated interest in pursuing the present study. The superintendent of program and schools (hereafter referred to as Margaret)\(^8\) indicated a keen interest in the proposed research study, expressing favorable experiences with concentrated periods of instruction in L1 instruction, such as Reading Recovery and Later Literacy programs.

I’ve always felt that children would benefit from short-term intensive programs rather than long drawn-out kinds of programs. And of course, if you can, there’s some children who have to have an ongoing program, but I’m thinking in programs like Reading Recovery and early intervention programs and those types of programs, that is the model, where you do a short-term intensive program.

The other senior board personnel, a coordinator of curriculum and program (hereafter referred to as Dennis), listed as a potential advantage of the proposed research study the promotion of higher student motivation to pursue French language studies.

\(^8\) All names of places or persons in this thesis are pseudonyms.
I think what I’m interested in primarily is taking a look at some of the data that you have already researched in terms of the kind of impact that we can have on kids in terms of retention, and the kind of impact that we can have as far as interest in Core French, particularly with senior students. . . And I don’t think that Core French really has had, um, you know, the most positive of reputations generally, certainly from a school principal’s perspective. It was always something that was of great concern, trying to keep everybody really learning and growing in, in Core French language. . . and I would be interested in whether or not this kind of movement would have a great impact on kids’ performance in French as well as in their intent for continuing.

Dennis also expressed interest in the possible impact such a program format change would have on students of all ability levels, especially those who do not seem to succeed in the traditional format. He spoke of the current trend in Ontario education to schedule and protect large blocks of time for English L1 literacy and mathematics, noting that these more IE and mathematics periods promote higher student performance.

We certainly see it provincially in language arts and mathematics. There’s a strong emphasis on trying to get these blocks of time for language and mathematics right down into early primary and maintaining good chunks of time for that, and I think the rationale behind it is fairly obvious. You are going to get increased student performance, generally, across the range of kids.

Dennis then questioned whether a more intensive period of L2 learning would also have a positive impact on those students who struggle with this type of language study.

Which is the other piece to this puzzle that I find interesting, is that you’re going to have kids who, for learning another language it’s not that easy. They have a hard enough time with English, which tends to be their native language, if you will. And so therefore you’re going to be able to not only study the block of time
and its impact on the kid’s performance, but what impact does it have on the wide range of kids, and does it have, does it have greater, uh, impact on kids of higher or lesser abilities. And that’ll be very interesting too.

Both administrators identified the professional development of participating teachers, as well as communication with parents and the community, as the greatest concerns and needs to be addressed in this project.

The point I guess is, my, my thinking on it would be that a teacher would have to be really proficient and have a really good background in Core French and the growth of kids within those programs to be able to go in and do the kinds of things that you’re expecting them to do. Because the resources probably are not enough. They are going to have to be advanced. Fortunately you’re going to be there to assist with that. But, um, I, I still don’t know if that’s going to be enough. (Dennis)

I have questions, obviously, and I’d love to know more because my questions would be, for example, if you have, uh, a French teacher in the school, and for 5 months she’s teaching French, she has to be able to teach something else for the other 5 months. (Margaret)

Parents have varying views on this whole French thing. . . And parents, I think a lot of parents are having, I mean I’ve had conversations with parents around that – who wanted the whole French thing scrapped in schools, thought it was a waste of time. . . And some parents hold this near and dear to their heart, and, um, so we have some communities that really have strong . . . for example, should we be having French at JK and SK? (Dennis)

**Interviews with School Personnel**

One principal expressed enthusiasm to work with me in implementing a compact CF program, viewing it as a positive initiative. Regina is the principal of a senior public school in
the eastern region of Cedar Springs DSB. She has been principal of the school for 2 1/2 years, and has administration experience at both the board and school level.

Regina seemed to think students would view a compacted CF program as a positive change, and, like the proponents of block scheduling in American middle and high schools (Canady & Rettig, 1995a, 1995b; J. M. Carroll, 1994), as a positive alternative to the number of transitions and to the number of teachers one sees each day.

And, then they’re not up and moving around a lot. I mean, it might have a better impact on some of the, the children who are less mature and they can’t handle all the travel, so they would have less teachers during the day because they’d have the double French. That might be a positive slant.

Regina didn’t view the community response to a compact CF program as an obstacle, but did note that the teaching staff might require convincing. Her greatest concern was preparing the school’s timetable, although she did not perceive this to be an insurmountable obstacle.

Um, the one thing we may have a problem with is the timetabling, um, because the French teacher that I have now, the main Core French, she also teaches design and tech, so that might have a, create some problems. Uh, the other thing is, when they’re not in French, for the other part of the year, what they would be taking. So we’d have to try to figure out something like that.

Instead, Regina requested assistance with timetabling if such a program were to be implemented in her school, and also requested that I be available to meet with the teachers and parents in order to explain the program and to answer any questions they might have.

The CF teacher of the school initially expressed some doubt as to the viability of the program, citing lack of student motivation to study French as a second language as the main reason. She seemed concerned that the longer class periods would promote higher student
misbehaviors as a result of lack of motivation. However, she seemed to change her opinion of this program after discussing all possible implications, noting that it could have a positive impact as a result of the alternative communicative and experiential teaching activities she could implement in longer class periods, which would perhaps have a positive effect on student motivation to learn French. At the end of the interview, like the school principal, she identified timetabling concerns as a possible deterrent to the implementation of a compact CF program.

**Summary**

Overall, the findings of this feasibility study were positive, in that most participants expressed enthusiasm for the project, and a willingness to participate in the research investigation. In answer to the first research questions regarding the feasibility of a compact CF study in this particular school board, I determined that it was feasible to proceed with the proposed research study. Most participants expressed enthusiasm for the study, noting several possible positive outcomes. One senior administrator noted that compact or intensive language programs have been used with great success in L1 learning. The other senior administrator posited that a compact CF model may increase student motivation to study French, as well as assist those students who traditionally have struggled with learning the language. At the school level, both the principal and the CF teacher seemed to consider this program as having a possible positive impact on student motivation, citing the more communicative and experiential learning activities that would be possible in a compact period.

Several concerns were also voiced by the participants. All were concerned with the need to effectively communicate the study and the program to parents and community members. In addition, the principal worried about staff reaction to the less traditional timetabling that would occur in order to compact the CF classes. In order to address these concerns, letters were drafted
and sent to all stakeholders (parents, students, and teachers) in order to outline the study purpose. In addition, meetings were held at the school with the various stakeholders to permit parents and teachers the opportunity to ask questions about the study and to discuss any concerns. The letters and the meetings will be discussed in further detail in the methodology chapter.

Since one principal seemed more enthusiastic toward the study than the other, I decided to conduct the study in the senior public school in which Regina served as principal. Both Regina and the CF teacher at the school seemed intrigued by the study, and were prepared to work with me to develop compact CF models. At the school level, the primary concern was the timetabling of the school, and how the compact CF program would be implemented. At the time of the study, the participating board was encouraging schools to protect large, daily blocks of time for both numeracy and literacy. As well, blocks for physical education were to be incorporated into each day. Another consideration in determining the model of compact CF to be implemented was that the school already had 2 subjects on a semester or a block schedule (Family Studies and Design & Technology). Regina posited that following a similar schedule for the CF would facilitate acceptance of the program on the part of the teaching staff, as well as by the parents and the community. Therefore, after discussion with the principal, it was decided to implement a model similar to the block scheduled model in the United States, and to semester CF. The compact CF model would consist of 5 months of language study, during which students would receive essentially double the periods of CF than in the traditional model. For the other 5 months of the year, students would study the other subjects which would be semestered along with CF.

The final consideration before implementing the current study was the change in teaching personnel at the participating school. The CF teacher who was interviewed for the purposes of this feasibility study moved into the immersion teaching position at the school, leaving the CF
position vacant. I was transferred to the participating school to teach CF, so the current study was then designed and conceived as an action research study, in which the researcher, me, also acted as the teacher.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I outlined the feasibility study that I conducted to ensure that my research study could be implemented in the school district in which I teach. I determined that such a study would be feasible, as the senior administration and school administration interviewed seemed enthusiastic about the project and willing to have me implement a compact CF model in the participating school.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology of the research design. Following a mixed-methods approach, this case study is an in-depth exploration of compact CF models in an Ontario senior public school. Multiple perspectives and sources of evidence were used to elicit data, all of which were collected in the field. As well, ethical considerations provided the boundaries for my role as teacher researcher to ensure that participants suffered no adverse effects from their participation in the study (Duff, 2008). Finally, the facts and conclusions in this study were articulated both quantitatively and qualitatively (Yin 1997b, 2003a).

This chapter includes the following four sections:

1. Overall Research Design,
2. Description of Pedagogic Approach,
3. Participants, and

Overall Research Design

Research Questions

1. Will a compact CF program, in which only the distribution of time changes, have a positive impact on French language outcomes when communicative and experiential teaching strategies are implemented?

   a. Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate and delayed post-tests of **listening comprehension**;
b. Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate and delayed post-tests of speaking proficiency;

c. Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate post-tests of reading comprehension and writing achievement; and,

d. Will students in the compact CF class perform differently than the comparison class on delayed post-tests of curriculum-specific skills and knowledge in reading comprehension and writing achievement?

2. Can a “communicative/experiential” approach to teaching and learning be implemented in similar ways in traditional and compact CF formats?

3. What are the perceptions and attitudes of all stakeholders toward the CF format, and the implementation of a multidimensional approach?

To address the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was used, which included a quantitative approach to address the first research question, as well as part of the third research question, and a qualitative approach to address the second and the third questions.

In order to address the first research question regarding the possible impact of distribution of time over the course of a year (traditional and compact CF program formats), three Grade 7 classes served as participants in the study: 2 of the three served as experimental classes, and the third served as the comparison class (see Table 2). The first compact CF class was named 7A, the second compact CF class was named 7B, and the comparison class was given the name of 7C.
Table 2
Program Format and Pedagogic Approach of Participating Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Program format</th>
<th>Pedagogic approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Compact CF class (Class 7A)</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional, project-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 76-minute compact class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 4 periods/week for first 5 months of school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Compact CF class (Class 7B)</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional, project-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 76-minute compact class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 4 periods/week for last 5 months of school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Comparison class (Class 7C)</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional, project-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● A regular 38-minute class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 4 periods/week for 10 months of school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests recorded differences in student achievement in French at different points in time. These are described later in this chapter.

To address the second research question, as the teacher researcher, I implemented a multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach in all three classes, and recorded daily teacher observations in my daybook and daily journal. In addition, classroom observations of my teaching practice were collected by videotape and analyzed to determine the extent to which the multi-dimensional approach was implemented in each of the three classes.

To investigate the third question, student attitudes toward their CF program format and their self-assessed language proficiency were measured using student questionnaires as well as
focus group sessions. Parental and teacher perceptions of student attitudes were measured using a short survey. A summary of data collection follows (see Table 3):

**Table 3**  
*Method and Timing of Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2004</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French Test Package – Pre-test (listening; reading; writing tests)</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants 7A (n = 24); 7B (n = 19); and 7C (n = 15)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2004</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French Test Package – Pre-test (speaking test)</td>
<td>Randomly-selected grade 7 participants from each of 7A (n = 8), 7B (n = 8) and 7C (n = 8)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2004</td>
<td>Student Questionnaire – Pre-study</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants 7A (n = 24); 7B (n = 19); and 7C (n = 15)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2004 – June 2005</td>
<td>Teacher Daybook and Journal</td>
<td>Teacher Researcher of 7A, 7B and 7C</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2004 (7A)</td>
<td>Classroom Observation of Teacher Researcher</td>
<td>2 Independent Adjudicators reviewed tapes of teacher researcher of 7A, 7B and 7C</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2005 (7B and 7C)</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French Test Package – Immediate post-test (listening; reading; writing tests)</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants February : 7A (n = 24) |</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2005 (7B and 7C)</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French Test Package – Immediate post-test (listening; reading; writing tests)</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants June: 7B (n = 19); 7C (n = 15)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Method of data collection</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>February 2005</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French Test Package – Immediate post-test (speaking test)</td>
<td>Randomly-selected Grade 7 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7A)</td>
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<td>February: 7A (n = 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7B and 7C)</td>
<td></td>
<td>June: 7B (n = 8); 7C (n = 8)</td>
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<td>February 2005</td>
<td>Student Questionnaires (Post-study)</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7A)</td>
<td></td>
<td>February: 7A (n = 24)</td>
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<td>(7B and 7C)</td>
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<td>June: 7B (n = 19); 7C (n = 15)</td>
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<td>April 2005</td>
<td>Focus Group Sessions</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7A)</td>
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<td>April: 7A (n = 15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7B and 7C)</td>
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<td>June: 7B (n = 19); 7C (n = 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2005</td>
<td>Parent and Teacher Questionnaires</td>
<td>Anonymous questionnaires mailed to parents and teachers for return to school</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French test package – Delayed post-test (listening test)</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7A (n = 24); 7B (n = 19); and 7C (n = 15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>Grade 8 Core French test package – Delayed post-test (speaking test)</td>
<td>Randomly-selected Grade 7 participants from each of 7A (n = 8), 7B (n = 8), and 7C (n = 8)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>Researcher-developed French Reading and Writing Tests</td>
<td>Grade 7 participants (n = 58)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Study Setting

Cedar Springs District School Board (hereafter referred to as Cedar Springs DSB) was formed on January 1, 1998, encompassing three distinct regions in the east, the west and the north. It spans a large geographic area, approximately 16,000 square kilometers, and has approximately 14,187 students. The district consists of several small, independent communities, and one urban centre located in the northern region. The rural communities are relatively homogeneous in nature, composed mainly of unilingual English-speaking people who have little opportunity for contact with French-speaking persons. However, according to the Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs, there is a minority francophone population of 16.8% in the urban centre, and a majority francophone population of 74.8% in one of the small, remote communities at the northern border of the district. The rural communities are primarily dependent on self-employment opportunities such as tourism, logging, and trapping. Thus, economic stability is largely conditional based on cultural and environmental conditions.

Cedar Springs DSB consists of seven secondary schools and 36 elementary schools. Of the 36 elementary schools, four are senior public schools, Grades 6 to 8. Early FI is offered in four of the elementary schools, and continued in one of the senior public schools. Late immersion is offered in one of the JK-8 schools and 2 of the senior public schools. In this board, students begin their CF studies in senior kindergarten, therefore accumulating approximately 750 hours of instruction by the end of Grade 8, which is above the provincially-mandated 600 hours minimum amount of instructional hours. Classes in the primary grades usually consist of daily 20-minute sessions, and classes in Grades 4 to 8 vary between 30- and 40-minute daily or near-daily sessions.
Description of Pedagogic Approach

All three participating classes in this study followed the same syllabus design and multidimensional, project-based instructional approach so that I could examine the implications of implementing such an approach in the two program formats (compact format/shorter, traditional daily instructional periods), as well as measuring the attitudes of all stakeholders toward such an approach.

All teaching and learning activities were determined according to the following five principles, as outlined in the literature review:

1. The curriculum was designed with a multi-dimensional approach, based on the NCFS;
2. The learning activities were designed according to a project-based, interactive approach;
3. Opportunities for authentic communication were implemented and authentic learning materials were used whenever possible;
4. The primary purpose of language teaching and learning was to develop communicative proficiency, and
5. The syllabus was designed according to the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines and expectations for Grade 7 CF programs.
Multi-Dimensional, Project-Based Approach

Lyster (1998) defended the use of a multidimensional approach, noting that “the multidimensional model is helpful in developing materials because it provides a characterization of instructional options. In other words, the model does not only present lists of content” (p. 198). Turnbull (1998) also used this framework to develop curriculum materials and teaching strategies, describing the teaching unit implemented in his study of four Grade 9 CF classes in Eastern Canada, as “multidimensional, given that its objectives are based on all four syllabi of the multidimensional curriculum (R. Leblanc, 1990), and project driven . . . All activities in the unit prepare students, either directly or indirectly, to complete this final project” (pp. 94-95). His study suggested that a multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach may lead to higher student achievement in language proficiency, as well as more satisfactory outcomes in the area of the general language education syllabus.

As part of his study, Turnbull developed the Multidimensional Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT)\(^9\) observation scheme. Modified from Part A of the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995), the MOLT was designed to document the classroom activities of the four participating teachers in his study and the extent to which a multidimensional approach, as advocated by the NCFS (R. LeBlanc, 1990), was implemented in each classroom. Turnbull then developed a revised MOLT (Turnbull, 1999) to be a shorter, practical tool that would be more user-friendly for educators, thus facilitating observation in L2 classrooms in order to effect positive change in pedagogy (see

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\(^9\) The MOLT referenced in the present study is the multidimensional orientation of language teaching observation scheme developed by Turnbull (1998) and is not to be confused with the motivation orientation of language teaching (MOLT) observation scheme developed by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008).
Appendix A). For the purposes of this study, the revised MOLT will be used as a data analysis tool. Details will follow in the analysis section of this chapter.

**Authentic Communication**

This was the most difficult to plan for, since the community was so homogeneous and very few opportunities existed for students to meet and speak with French-language speakers. However, whenever possible, opportunities to engage in authentic communication were developed. For example, the use of French was encouraged outside of the classroom, during regular daily routines (such as recess activities) and when speaking with the custodian of the school, who was a French L1 speaker. In addition, students were encouraged to use the computers during planned class computer time to conduct research for class using French language websites (during an investigation of *Cirque du Soleil*, for one). Unfortunately, due to board policy at the time of the study, students were unable to establish email communication or chat line communication with other francophone speakers.

**Language for Purpose of Communication**

In order to address this principle, opportunities for oral, authentic and spontaneous communication were planned and developed in all teaching units of the year. Students engaged in role play tasks, open-ended discussion periods, interviews, debates, and other communicative games. French was considered the language of the classroom, and students were encouraged to speak French at all times, whenever possible. Open-ended dialogues were an important element of most CF periods, to provide students with opportunities to use the learned language structures and to activate prior knowledge.
Ontario CF Curriculum

A necessary consideration in the development of any alternative teaching strategies had to be the mandatory content of the Ontario curriculum guidelines for CF (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998). This document echoes the communicative principle of the NCFS: “The aim of The Ontario Curriculum: French As a Second Language — Core French, Grades 4-8, 1998 is to develop basic communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language, as well as an appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other parts of the world” (p. 2). However, unlike other provincial FSL curricula (e.g., Alberta), it does not profess to follow the multidimensional approach recommended by the NCFS. Instead, it organizes the teaching of FSL into three strands: oral communication (listening and speaking), reading, and writing. Specific grammar, vocabulary and language conventions are outlined in a separate section, and should be incorporated into each of the three strands. The primary emphasis of this guideline is the communicative nature of the CF program (communicative/experiential syllabus) and the specific language skills to be developed (language syllabus). Since Ontario mandates the adherence of teachers and curriculum developers to the expectations and guidelines outlined in this document, it was obviously a consideration in the development of the new materials. For example, thematic units of study and content were developed according to the suggested topics and expectations outlined in the Grade 7 curriculum, such as outdoor and leisure activities, current events, food, films, television, and radio. Necessary language structures were incorporated into the language aspect of the multidimensional syllabus. An outline of a sample unit is provided in Appendix B.
Participants

In order to measure the possible impact of the different program formats and alternative teaching strategies, three Grade 7 classes from one senior public school (hereafter referred to as Lakeview S.P.S.) were selected to serve as participants in the study. Lakeview S.P.S. had an approximate population of 300 students, and, during the academic year (September 2004 to August 2005) in which this study was conducted, consisted of six Grade 7 classes (3 regular Grade 7 classes, one FI class, one Student Success class, and one self-contained class\(^{10}\)). Only the three regular Grade 7 classes were enrolled in CF studies, and therefore these three classes were selected for the study. Study participants, therefore, were recruited from the three intact classes selected to be part of the study. In previous years, CF at Lakeview S.P.S. had been taught in 38-minute instructional periods, 4 days of a 5-day cycle, over a 10-month period, totaling an approximate 100 hours of annual CF instructional time. Although the three classes had been created by the principal and school staff to be as equal as possible (i.e., similar number of learning and behavioral needs), I perceived differences among the classes as the academic year progressed. In particular, I perceived a greater number of behavioral incidences in one of the classrooms that will be presented and discussed in the results from the teacher journal.

Recruitment of Student Participants

Participants were recruited from the three regular Grade 7 classes, who were the only three Grade 7 classes to study CF. The composition of these classes was determined in the summer months, at which time the students were grouped into one of the three classes according to the information received from the feeder schools, student needs, and parental requests. Every

\(^{10}\) The Student Success class consisted of 12 to 15 students identified as at risk academically or socially, and therefore potential drop-outs in high school. The self-contained class consisted of students identified as having a mild to severe intellectual disability.
effort was made by the principal and the staff to build classes that were heterogeneous, and similar in nature.

After obtaining administrative consent (see Appendices K and L), parental meetings were held early in September to discuss the rationale and nature of the study. During the first day of classes, the study was explained to all students in each of the three regular Grade 7 classes, and a set of consent forms was sent home with each student; one an assent form for students to complete, and the second a consent form for parents to read and sign (see Appendices M to P). In order to ensure confidentiality, and since I taught all three participating classes for the duration of their Grade 7 CF program, all signed forms were returned to and collected by the school principal. The names of students participating in the study were not known to me until all final report grades had been entered into the system and turned into the office. All students in the class therefore participated in the learning and assessment activities; however, all data collected for the purposes of this study were stored in a locked cabinet until the end of the program period (5 months for the compact CF classes; 10 months for the comparison class), and were not analyzed until all final grades had been turned in, at which time the names of the participating students were made known to me and their tests scores were therefore separated from those of non-participants. Only the data collected from consenting (participating) students were coded and analyzed. In total, 58 students consented to participate in the study, meaning that they consented to the analysis and study of their test results and student questionnaires: 7A consisted of 24 participating students (16 girls and 8 boys); 7B consisted of 19 participating students (9 girls and 10 boys); and, 7C consisted of 15 participating students (10 girls and 5 boys).

In addition to the data collected from all students, 8 students from among the participating students in each of the three regular Grade 7 classes were selected to participate in
the speaking test. Students from each class were randomly selected to complete this task during the second week of school. In order to maintain confidentiality, the principal of the school, who collected all sets of consent forms, separated all consenting participation forms into the three classes, and then further separated all forms by male and female students. Then, each set of forms for each class was placed into a box, at which time four forms were randomly selected. Thus, a total of 8 students (4 males and 4 females) were selected from all consenting participants in each class to participate in the speaking test.

In addition to the questionnaire and achievement test participants, student focus group participants were recruited near the end of each class’ CF program. During a CF class period, the nature of the focus groups was explained to all students and an information letter and assent/consent form was distributed to all students in the three participating Grade 7 classes and to their parents/guardians (see Appendices Q and R). In order to ensure that confidentiality was maintained, I did not collect the signed forms; instead, all signed forms were returned by the students and placed in a box in the office. At the end of the one-week period allotted for the return of forms, the principal separated all forms from consenting students and parents from those without consent. Once final grades had been submitted to the office, I retrieved the forms of consenting students, then arranged two to three dates per class for focus group sessions, depending on the number of participating students: 7A consisted of 15 total students willing to participate in the focus groups; 7B was the largest group with 19 participating students; and, in 7C only 10 students were willing to participate in the discussions. When possible, focus group sessions were split into groups of five to six students, with the exception of the 7B focus groups, in which one group consisted of seven participants, due to the high numbers of consenting students.
Profile of the Student Participants

At the start of the study in September 2004, most students had already accumulated between 550-600 hours of CF instruction, since the majority of students participating in the study had begun their CF study in kindergarten. Student profile data were collected as part 1 of the pre-study student questionnaire completed on the second day of school. The results indicated that English is the dominant language in the homes, with French or other languages a small minority. French is most likely spoken as it is studied in school and students complete homework, whereas the other languages are spoken by grandparents or parents (in one case, one participant’s mother is deaf and therefore the other language used frequently in his home is American Sign Language. In general, students self-assessed their French competency to be average in relation to that of their Grade 7 peers, and self-assessed their general academic competency to be average or above average in relation to that of their peers. The frequency of use tables are presented in Appendix C.

Since the students at Lakeview S.P.S. completed their Grade 6 year at one of five different feeder schools, I did not include a cross-comparison of student grades in CF upon entry into Grade 7. The participating students had had a variety of CF teachers previous to attending Grade 7, and, in some cases, students had had more than one teacher in an academic year. The grades would not demonstrate consistency in learning activities or in assessment practices. However, I did have access to student standardized test scores in English L1, which enabled me to compare the students across the three classes in order to determine whether any significant

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11 It is provincially mandated in Ontario that students begin their French as a Second Language (Core French) studies in Grade 4. Also, students must have accumulated a total of 600 hours by the end of their Grade 8 period of study. However, individual school boards may opt to begin CF studies in the primary grades. Cedar Springs DSB begins CF instruction in Senior Kindergarten, and, in some individual schools, as early as Junior Kindergarten. Traditionally, students in the primary grades study in 20-30 minute periods, whereas the junior grades study in 30-minute time blocks.
differences in language and math were present. A comparison of this data indicated that no significant differences in achievement were present, suggesting that the academic distribution of the student population across the three classes was similar.

**Recruitment of Parent and Teacher Participants**

At the end of each program format, short surveys were mailed to parents of all students in each of the three participating CF classes. Each mailed survey also included a self-addressed, stamped envelope, so all surveys could be returned to the participating school anonymously. Each returned survey was placed by the school secretary into a box in the office, and was not opened until the end of the academic year.

Short teacher surveys were placed in the mailboxes of all Grade 7 teachers at Lakeview S.P.S. in order to assess their perceptions of the program throughout their daily contact with the participating students. Again, these surveys were anonymous, and teachers were requested to deposit their completed surveys in the box in the office, along with the parental surveys.

**Profile and Role of the Teacher Researcher**

As previously noted I acted as both researcher and participating teacher in all three classes of this study. The participating school was selected according to the criteria outlined in the feasibility study, and because of the willingness of administration and the previous CF teacher to participate and incorporate the study into the timetable. Before the study began, however, the CF teacher moved into an EF classroom, and I was transferred to the participating school to serve as the CF teacher, and therefore, was both teacher and researcher for the purposes of this study.
At the time of the study I had been teaching in the Ontario public elementary system for 8 years, all of which were in the participating board. In addition, I had taught CF for 5 of the 8 years, across all grade levels in the elementary system (Kindergarten to Grade 8), and in three different schools. I had also taught a self-contained class for behavioral students for two of those years, teaching across all subject areas of the Ontario curriculum: English language arts, mathematics, social studies/history and geography, visual arts, dance and drama, health and physical education, and Core French. Professionally, I completed several additional qualification courses, including a special education course, the principal’s qualification course, and qualifications enabling me to teach primary grades to Grade 10. I acted as co-chair of the Core French curriculum council and worked with a small group of teachers to advance the interests and needs of Core French students and teachers, write supplementary curriculum expectations for the primary grades, and develop assessment profiles for CF classrooms.

During the present study, my teaching assignment consisted of 50% of the day, during which I taught the three participating CF classes as well as the Grade 5/6 EF class. I worked with the resource teacher to understand the needs of identified students in the classroom, and to differentiate learning opportunities accordingly. Many of the strategies and accommodations devised to assist students with learning difficulties were offered and implemented with all students. For example, all new language vocabulary and structures were introduced and practiced orally before introducing them in reading and writing situations. When preparing written and reading comprehension tasks, I introduced a variety of graphic organizers for students to use. Students selected the graphic organizers that best suited their learning styles. Additionally, I promoted student choice in learning and assessment opportunities. Timelines and assessment criteria were co-constructed with the students.
I also interacted with the students outside of the classroom. I co-organized and oversaw a student nutrition program at the school to address the need for healthy breakfast before the beginning of the day, acted as teacher advisor for the student parliament and its school-wide activities, and designed and prepared all costumes for the school musical.

Methods

Data Collection

Quantitative Instruments

Students in each of the three classes completed pre-study questionnaires and pre-tests during the first week of school (September 2004), post-study questionnaires and immediate post-tests during the last week of their CF instruction, and delayed post-tests during the first week of school in September 2005 (the start of their Grade 8 year). Assessment materials from the *Grade 8 Core French Test Package* served as the pre-tests and immediate post-tests, as well as two of the delayed post-tests. Curriculum-specific, researcher-developed reading and writing achievement tests completed the set of delayed post-tests administered. (Please see Appendices D to I for all assessment instruments).

Parental and teacher perceptions of student attitudes were also measured using a short survey handed out at the end of the school year in June. A summary of all quantitative instruments is provided in Table 4.

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The *Grade 8 Core French Test Package* was developed by researchers in the Modern Language Centre at OISE/UT, and in association with the National Core French Study. The package was designed to facilitate evaluation of Core French programs at the Grade 8 level. Turnbull (1998) used this package in his study to assess student achievement before and after the implemented multidimensional, project-based curriculum unit. This test package was also used by Lapkin, Harley and Hart (1995) and Lapkin, Hart and Harley (1998) to assess student proficiency in their compact Core French study.
**Table 4**

**Summary of All Quantitative Instruments**

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<tr>
<td>Writing Achievement Test</td>
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<td>Speaking Test</td>
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<td>8 randomly-selected participants from each class</td>
<td>8 randomly-selected participants from each class</td>
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<td>Researcher-developed, Curriculum-specific Reading Achievement Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Questionnaires</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and Parental Questionnaires</td>
<td>Handed out to all teachers and participants’ parents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Student questionnaires**

Student questionnaires (see Appendix J) were administered during both the pre-testing and immediate post-testing periods. These questionnaires measured student attitudes toward the CF program format in which they were enrolled, as well as the various teaching strategies. Also, they measured student self-assessment of language proficiency and improvement. As part of the
initial questionnaire, students were asked about their language background (years in CF and/or FI), French language heritage or other language learning experiences. This questionnaire was adapted from the one used in the Lapkin et al. (1995) study, as well as the one used in the Turnbull (1998) study, in order to ensure that the students in the three classes were comparable.

**Grade 8 Core French test package**

The test package was developed as part of the OISE project entitled “Testing Outcomes in CF: The Development of Communicative Instruments for Curriculum Evaluation and Research” (Harley, Lapkin, Scane, Hart, & Trépanier, 1988), which was conducted in close association with the NCFS. The test was intended for use in the evaluation of CF programs at the Grade 8 level, and was designed to evaluate French communication skills in both receptive and productive language, which reflected the principal stated aim of CF programs in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada (Harley et al., 1988). This test was designed to facilitate evaluation of CF programs, and was used by Lapkin et al. (1998) to evaluate the compact and regular CF programs. Although originally developed for use at the Grade 8 level, the test could be administered to the participating Grade 7 students, since the test was intended for students who had received approximately 600-800 hours of CF instruction. In this research study, the participating Grade 7 students had accumulated an approximate 550-600\textsuperscript{13} hours of CF instruction at the start of their Grade 7 year, and would have accumulated between 600-650 hours by the end of their CF program format for that year.

Among the main strengths of the test package was its age-appropriate communicative content, and its practicality, in that I was able to administer all but one of the tests within the

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\textsuperscript{13} This number is approximate because some students begin their primary instruction in junior kindergarten, whereas other schools only offer Core French in senior kindergarten. Also, any student transferring to the participating board from another board may not have begun their French language instruction until their grade 4 year, and may therefore have recorded a different total number of instruction hours in French.
timeframe of the CF classes, with the exception of the pre-tests for Compact CF Class B, which I did not teach until the second half of the year. In this case, I administered the pre-tests within the timeframe of English classes, in cooperation with the English teacher. The speaking test was the only test usually administered on an individual basis by someone other than the CF teacher. In this case, to maintain confidentiality of participating students until final grades had been assigned, I did not administer the pre-test component of this test. The Grade 8 CF teacher at the school agreed to administer the test.

All tasks were designed to reflect a communicative approach to language teaching and assessing; thus, the basic theme of the tests was life in Montreal as viewed through the eyes of 13-year old Francophone’s, which was the approximate age of the participating Grade 7 students. The accompanying test manual clearly outlined the processes for administering and scoring the test, ensuring consistency in administration. In addition, this test package was designed to evaluate CF programs, which was the nature of this study. In order to determine interrater reliability, a second rater scored a subsample of each set of tests. An interrater reliability analysis using the kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among raters.

Since the test developers were concerned that the test package contain precise scoring criteria that would not be subject to variation depending on the scorer, all tests were therefore widely piloted in six provinces and the Northwest Territories, and were revised according to the feedback received from the test results, students and teachers. Baseline data for the revised listening, reading and writing tests were obtained in 1994 from approximately 480 students in 19 Grade 8 classes across six Canadian provinces. The baseline data for the speaking test were obtained from the administration of a pilot speaking test to 112 students selected from 14 of the original classes.
Listening test

The listening comprehension test was designed to evaluate students’ global comprehension of conversational French, and required students to listen to an interview with two Francophone students from Montreal and complete 15 multiple choice questions. All tests were administered by the teacher researcher.

Participants listened first to a mini-conversation, and then to a question relating to what they had just heard. The conversation and question was then repeated, after which students were instructed to turn the page and select the correct response from the list of multiple choice answers provided (see Appendix D for a sample of the listening test script). Participants therefore had an opportunity to hear each conversation and question twice during the administration of the test before being asked to respond. Participants received 1 point for each correct response, for a total possible score of 15 points.

Reading test

The reading test was designed to assess students’ ability to comprehend various types of written discourse in French. The test consisted of three tasks. In the first, students matched an information sign with an appropriate picture, with a total possible score of ten. The second task consisted of a set of 4 postcards written by students on a bicycle tour in Quebec. Students read the set, and then completed five multiple-choice questions, for a total possible score of five. In the third task, students again answered five multiple-choice questions, this time based on the dialogue of an interview involving skateboarding, for a total possible score of five. Each of the reading tasks was scored individually, and then totaled for an overall reading comprehension score, and a total possible overall score of 30. Norms for class average comparisons were
provided for each individual comprehension test, as well as for the total score of all three tests. All tests were administered by the teacher researcher.

**Writing test**

The writing test was also divided into three tasks. In the first, a partial-dictation task, students listened to a dictation about a bicycle race around Montreal, and then filled in any missing words in the corresponding written passage. That task was scored for general comprehensibility as well as for accurate grammatical form or spelling of the missing words. In the second task, students were asked to write an advertisement for a magazine in which they described themselves in order to find a pen pal. The third part of the writing test required students to state and justify their opinions on the issue of mandatory school uniforms. Both composition tasks were scored based on the students’ ability to carry out the requirements of the task with a majority of words in comprehensible French. Although the scoring manual recommended totaling the two composition scores together to arrive at an overall composition score, due to the high number of incomplete samples for the second composition, the composition tasks were scored independently from each other and results are reported for each task. All tests were administered by the teacher researcher.

**Speaking test**

The speaking test was designed to assess the student’s ability to give a peer comprehensible instructions in French. Unlike the other tests, this test was administered on an individual basis to eight students randomly selected from the whole class, and was administered outside of the classroom. These students then participated in the speaking tests. All responses for this task were recorded on audiocassettes which were scored after all tests were completed and students completed their CF program. Like the writing and the reading tests, the speaking test
was also divided into three parts: two picture tasks and a role play. The picture tasks required students to look at an image, and then give comprehensible instructions to a classmate so that he or she could draw the same image. These two tasks were scored for the student’s ability to communicate the key information. In the third task, the role play, the student ordered an item from each section of a menu, which was then scored for sociolinguistic elements and correct pronunciation. All pre-tests were administered by the other CF teacher in the school, in order to protect the confidentiality of participating students. All post-tests and delayed post-tests were administered by the teacher researcher.

**Curriculum-specific reading and writing tests**

Reading and writing achievement tests were developed based on the curriculum units under study, and were administered during the delayed post-testing period, as was done in the Lapkin et al. (1998) study. Each test was similar in structure and form to the tests in the *Grade 8 Core French Test Package*, in order to maintain consistency and familiarity with the tests, therefore decreasing student anxiety. The content of each test, however, was specific to the curriculum units and projects that had been studied during the participants’ Grade 7 year. To ensure that the test package was appropriate, it was piloted at the same school during the pre-testing period of this current study.

**Pilot test methodology**

The pilot test aimed to determine the validity and reliability of the researcher-developed reading and writing achievement tests.

The proposed reading and writing achievements tests were developed according to provincial curriculum expectations implemented in Grade 7 classes, as well as to the program
and thematic materials used in this school. The tests were developed as delayed post-tests, and were intended to be implemented at the start of the Grade 8 year, after the completion of the Grade 7 program (see Appendices H and J). The number of participants, thirty, was chosen to represent an average class size in this school board, and at the participating school. The purpose of this pilot testing study was to test the test, and not the students, to determine the reliability of the assessment scheme as well as student comprehension of the required tasks. Therefore, a representative number of students was all that was required. Fifteen male students and 15 female students were randomly selected from the regular Grade 8 classes at Lakeview S.P.S.

After obtaining administrative consent for the pilot testing, information and consent forms were distributed to the three Grade 8 core teachers at Lakeview S.P.S. to request permission to withdraw students from their classes for a total of two periods over 2 days.

Once teacher consent had been obtained, I distributed to all Grade 8 students (all those in the consenting teachers’ classes) and their parents/guardians an information letter and consent form detailing the study. Students were given 3 days in which to return their consent forms. At the end of the 3 days, all returned forms were sorted into two piles: one for males, and one for females. Then, all names of consenting students were placed in two ballot boxes (again, one for males and one for females). From each box, 15 names were randomly selected, and those students were contacted directly by me to inform them of their selection and the testing dates.

I withdrew these students from their core classes during one period each on 2 days during the second week of school during the study period. On the first day, participants wrote the reading achievement test, which was implemented during one 40-minute period. On the second day, participants wrote the writing achievement test, again implemented during a 40-minute period.
Revisions were made to the tests on the basis of test items producing low or high averages or of parallel items producing substantively different results from each other.

_Curriculum-specific reading and writing tests implementation_

Each test was administered during one, 40-minute period on 1 of 2 consecutive days, by me as the teacher researcher, during the first 2 weeks of September when the student participants were beginning their Grade 8 year. Since I did not teach these students in Grade 8, I arranged with the Grade 8 CF teacher and Grade 8 core teachers to administer the tests during one or two of their regular classes.

The reading test consisted of three components. In the first task, students were required to read recipe instructions, and place them in the correct order, according to the clues in each sentence. The second task consisted of five multiple choice questions, based on the dialogue of an interview with a street performer in a francophone festival. The third task consisted of a set of four letters written by students to a dietician and his responses. Students read the set, and then completed the five multiple-choice questions. Each of the reading tasks was scored individually, and then totaled for an overall reading comprehension score. This test was completed by the student participants during one class period, in which students were given 30 minutes to complete the test.

The writing task consisted of two composition tasks. The first task required students to write a recipe card for the perfect pizza, including a list of ingredients and preparation steps. In the second task, students were asked to write five recommendations for leading a fit and healthy life. Both composition tasks were scored based on the students’ ability to carry out the requirements of the task with a majority of words in comprehensible French. Although a dictée component was part of the CF test package writing test, due to an oversight on my part, it was
not included in the researcher-developed writing test, and was not administered during the delayed testing period. The two composition scores were scored independently, and then totaled together to arrive at an overall composition score. The writing test, like the reading test, was written during one class period, in which students were given 30 minutes to complete the two assigned tasks.

**Pre-test administration**

At the start of the data collection period in September 2004, I administered the pre-study student questionnaires and pre-tests to all three classes. Since I taught both 7A and 7C in September, I was able to administer all tests during CF periods. For 7B, who did not begin their CF program until the second half of the academic year, I arranged with their core teacher (English, math, geography and history) to administer the tests during one core period each day.

I distributed the student questionnaires to all classes on the second day of school. All questionnaires were completed and collected during a 30-minute period. Then, I administered all but one of the pre-tests during the next 4 school days, in the following order:

1. Listening Comprehension Test (total of 2 periods)
2. Reading Test (total of 1 period)
3. Writing Test (total of 1 period)

Although the listening test was designed to be administered in one class period, or during one sitting, I used a total of two periods to administer this test. Students demonstrated great anxiety when presented with this test, and required much explanation to understand how to complete the test itself. I was therefore unable to complete the test within one, 38-minute period, and therefore opted to break the test into two segments. In order to maintain consistency, and to
also reduce anxiety in the compact CF classes (who did have enough time in one period to complete the test), I also chose to break the test into the same two, manageable chunks.

The reading and writing tests were administered in one class period each, since they were both timed tests of 30-minutes each, and seemed to require less explanation and produced a lower level of anxiety in the students.

Since the speaking tests were administered to a random sample of eight students in each class, these were undertaken during two periods for each class in the second week of the school year. To protect the confidentiality of participating students until all grades had been submitted to the office, the Grade 8 CF teacher, with the cooperation the other Grade 7 teachers at the school, withdrew students from pre-arranged class periods to administer this test. Two students were withdrawn at one time: (a) the participating student who completed the speaking test; and, (b) a classmate to assist the testee with the tasks by acting as the recipient of spoken instructions. All speaking tests were recorded on audiotape, and the student worksheets were coded and collected.

Since the pre-test was completed in the same format across all three classes, this test was also used to determine the comparability of students in the three classes and to determine any differences among proficiency by class. In addition, a sample of the pre-tests was also scored by a colleague at Lakeview S.P.S., who has experience teaching both CF and FI, and who has a high level of proficiency in French. Another colleague, an EF teacher, scored a sample of 15% of the listening and reading tests, since they were scored against precise criteria (e.g., multiple choice). Further, a sample of 25% of the writing and speaking tests were scored since the scoring criteria could be considered more open-ended and subjective. An interrater reliability analysis using the kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among raters.
**Immediate post-test administration**

I administered all post-tests during the last 2 weeks of each class’s CF study period, and once all final grades had been submitted. The student questionnaire was given to students to complete during one class period, and the CF test package was again administered in the same order and format as during the pre-testing period. All tests except the speaking test were written during regular CF periods. 7A wrote their immediate post-tests at the end of January, which was the end of their compact CF period; however, final grades had not yet been submitted, and therefore my teaching colleague administered the speaking immediate post-tests to students in 7A. Unfortunately, my colleague permitted the students to switch roles during this test so that the student who was the speaker, and therefore the testee in September played the passive role of listener on the immediate post-tests. Since each test had a different speaker, the immediate post-tests were rendered invalid.

Immediate post-tests were administered to 7B and 7C during the second and third weeks of June after final grades had been submitted. I therefore administered the immediate post-tests to these two classes. I arranged other Grade 7 teachers to withdraw students for a short period of time during other subjects and periods. All speaking tests were administered within a timeframe of 2 class periods for each class and to the same students who had completed the speaking pre-tests. Again, all speaking tests were audiotaped for scoring, and student worksheets were collected.

**Delayed post-test administration**

All students completed the delayed post-tests during the first 2 weeks of the school year in September 2005, at the start of their Grade 8 academic year. I administered all tests in the same order as the pre- and immediate post-tests, but omitted the reading and writing components
from the test package in order to administer curriculum-specific reading and writing tests to evaluate the retention of curriculum-specific language material. These tests were developed to be similar in style to the tests already written, and were completed within one class period each during a time limit of 30 minutes. Students completed the listening comprehension tests and the speaking tests from the Grade 8 CF package. A 15% sample of the reading and writing delayed post-tests were scored by my colleague at Lakeview S.P.S. in order to determine interrater reliability of the scoring.

**Analysis of pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests**

Tests were scored according to the precise scoring criteria included in the package materials. Correlation coefficients were computed for portions of the CF tests including multiple sections. For example, the composition portion of the writing tests consisted of two written tasks. Spearman’s correlation was used to examine the association between the two tasks and the skill or skills that were assessed on the test to determine whether tests results should be presented as tests of one skill, or separately as tests of different skills. The Spearman approach was chosen over Pearson’s correlation since some of the test results showed significant outliers, which could influence the Pearson approach. Also, the sample size is relatively small, due to the case study approach. Since the sample sizes changed according to the specific test implemented (as a result of student absence during test administration), the sample sizes used in each analysis will be reported.

All statistical analyses planned for this study require normally distributed variables. Therefore, before running the planned analyses, a normality assumption was checked for all variables. If normality assumption was met, then analyses were run with the original variables. If
the assumption of normality was not met, then alternative statistical techniques were employed. Unless otherwise reported in the results section, the assumption of normality was met.

For the listening test, which was the same test across all three testing periods, changes in listening proficiency were measured using a one-way, repeated measures analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

The results of the three classes on the reading comprehension and writing achievement pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using a one-way ANCOVA. Differences in the delayed post-test scores for the researcher-developed reading and writing tests were analyzed using ANOVA in order to assess retention of curriculum-specific language acquisition and whether retention differed between the classes.

Finally in order to examine changes in proficiency level on the two parts of the speaking achievement test, I conducted confidence intervals explorations. Since I was missing data for 7A for the immediate post-test due to invalid collection procedures, the repeated measures techniques that I used for the other test analyses would not permit me to use only partial data for an analysis, as repeated measures ANOVA analyses only complete measures. Therefore, data from 7A was excluded from all speaking test data analyses. In using confidence intervals, I followed recommendations from Cumming (2007) to explore growth in proficiency and to visually represent growth over time.

**Parental and teacher questionnaires**

In addition to the student questionnaires, short surveys were sent to parents (see Appendices T and U) at the end of each program format in order to assess their perceptions of student experiences in the CF classes and French language learning. Teacher questionnaires (see
Appendix V) were placed in teacher mailboxes at the school. All questionnaires were returned anonymously and were collected in a box in the office. At the end of June, then again at the end of August, I collected all returned parental and teacher questionnaires. Although 24 parental questionnaires were returned to the school, no teacher questionnaires were returned. In subsequent chapters, I will therefore report only on the data from the parental questionnaires.

All quantitative data on the questionnaires was recorded into a data file in SPSS. Qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. All qualitative responses were analyzed in search of patterns.

**Qualitative Instruments**

To address the second research question, I implemented a multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach in all three classes, and recorded daily teacher observations in my daybook and daily journal. In addition, classroom observations of my pedagogic approach in each of the three classes were collected by videotape and analyzed to determine the extent to which the multi-dimensional approach was implemented consistently in all three classes. To investigate the third question, student attitudes toward their CF program format and their self-assessed language proficiency were measured using student questionnaires as well as in focus group sessions. A summary of qualitative data collection methods follows in Table 5.
Table 5

**Summary of Qualitative Data Collection Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher daybook and reflections</td>
<td>Daily entries from September 2004 to June 2005</td>
<td>Classroom teacher/researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation (DVD)</td>
<td>7A (November 2004 – 6 sessions)</td>
<td>Classroom teacher/researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7B, 7C (April 2005 – 6 sessions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group sessions</td>
<td>7A (April 2005)</td>
<td>Volunteer participants (students) from each of the three classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7B, 7C (June 2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher profile, daybook and journals**

In order to describe the implemented teaching strategies and learning activities, I maintained a detailed daybook, in which all planned activities were outlined, as well as notes regarding the extent to which the activities were actually implemented. This daybook was updated on a daily basis, and notes regarding changes to the class activities were recorded at the end of most classes. In addition, at the end of each day, I wrote more detailed reflections in a professional journal, in which I recorded not only a more detailed description of the day’s events (including any interruptions, changes or additions to the plans in the daybook), but also my thoughts, feelings, frustrations, joys, questions, explanations and reflections on my pedagogic approaches in the classroom and the response of students to the teaching and learning activities.

Each journal entry was recorded using word processing software (Microsoft WORD). Using NVivo software, I read through each journal entry, highlighting and subsequently coding potentially relevant comment statements. These statements were then grouped together according to common, underlying themes (Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).
**Classroom observation**

In order to determine reliability of the qualitative teacher data (daily journals, daybook), I videotaped 6 periods of instruction in each of the three participating classes. The first two recorded sessions acted as practice recording sessions for the students (to get used to being videotaped) and therefore were not analyzed; the following four were used for formal analysis. These six sessions occurred at the mid-point of each of the classes’ program (i.e., during the same unit and the same lessons). 7A was recorded in mid-November, 7C in mid-February, and 7B in mid-May. The videotapes were viewed by 2 independent adjudicators in order to determine the extent to which I implemented and taught the curriculum in the same manner across the three classes, and scored according to Turnbull’s (1998) revised MOLT checklist. This checklist requires the adjudicator to record a description of the learning tasks and activities observed (i.e., language, discipline, management, project), as well as the teacher and student TL usage, the role of the teacher in the classroom, the materials, the pedagogy and the student experiences.

**Student focus groups**

In order to elaborate on the questionnaire responses and to elicit more detailed information regarding student attitudes toward their particular CF program format and learning activities, I conducted noon hour focus group sessions with students in each of the three participating classes. For each of the three participating groups in the study, I facilitated two to three noon-hour focus groups, on 2 to 3 consecutive days. Participating students needed to attend only one of the focus group sessions. Each focus group ran for a 40-minute period, during which time I facilitated the discussion introducing a set of previously-prepared questions (see Appendix
S). All sessions were recorded by audiotape, and were then transcribed. Responses were then coded and analyzed for emerging themes.

**Summary**

This chapter described the overall design of the research study. The study contexts, a detailed description of the participating students and school board, as well as the pedagogic approach used in this study were all outlined. Both the quantitative and the qualitative research methods used in this mixed-methods case study were detailed. Quantitatively, the French language proficiency tests and the student, teacher and parental questionnaires were described. Similarly, the qualitative instruments consisting of the student focus groups, teacher journals and daily reflections, and the classroom observations were clarified.
CHAPTER FIVE:
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: FRENCH PROFICIENCY TESTS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the quantitative findings of the French proficiency tests. In the first section, I discuss the proficiency test scoring. Then, in order to answer the first research question regarding the impact of teaching and learning on general and curriculum-specific French language proficiency outcomes, I compare the proficiency test results of the two groups (compact CF and comparison), by class, at the start and the end of their study period, and discuss the results according to each of the four sub questions (see Table 6). Statistical tools appropriate to address each part of the first research question were selected based on the properties of the data and the design of the study. For example, when the dependent variables were continuous and normally distributed parametric statistical techniques like repeated-measures ANOVA and ANCOVA were used. However, when the assumption of normality was violated, non-parametric tests were used. In addition, since some of the speaking test data collected for the immediate post-test was invalid, in order to keep all three groups in the analyses, confidence interval estimation was used. Table 6 summarizes the breakdown of statistical analysis by each subsection of the first research question.
Table 6

Summary of Research Question One Subquestions and Statistical Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question one: Subquestion</th>
<th>Strategy for analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate and delayed post-tests of listening comprehension?</td>
<td>One-way, repeated measures ANCOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.b Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate and delayed post-tests of speaking proficiency?</td>
<td>Means and confidence intervals to explore the extent to which they differ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.c Will students in the compact CF classes perform differently than the comparison class on immediate post-tests of reading comprehension and writing achievement?</td>
<td>One-way ANCOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.d Will students in the compact CF class perform differently than the comparison class on delayed post-tests of curriculum-specific skills and knowledge in reading comprehension and writing achievement?</td>
<td>One-way ANCOVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interrater Reliability of Proficiency Test Scoring

The interrater reliability for the raters was found to vary across the test package, from a kappa value of 0.6 to a high value 0.95, $p < 0.001$. The reliability rate may have been impacted by the range of scores across the different tests. Some of the tests had low scores (e.g., possible total of 5 for a reading test), whereas other tests had high possible scores (e.g., total possible score of 75 points for the partial dictation task). The low kappa values indicate that the instructions may not have been perfectly clear for the raters. Table 7 presents the kappa values and the confidence intervals for all tests administered.
### Table 7

*Kappa Values and Confidence Intervals for Reliability Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kappa value</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening test</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading test</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher-developed reading test</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial dictation task</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition Tasks</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher-developed writing composition tests</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking test</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Listening Test Results

The listening test was the first of the testing materials to be administered to the students. Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations of listening test proficiency scores by class. A one-way, repeated measures ANCOVA was run: the repeated measures were the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test; the independent variable was the class; and, the covariate was the pre-test. The results for the repeated measures ANCOVA indicated no significant differences.
Table 8

*Means and Standard Deviations for Listening Test Scores, by Class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test (max = 15)</th>
<th>Immediate post-test (max = 15)</th>
<th>Delayed post-test (max = 15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>N = 24</td>
<td>M = 3.67, SD = 1.34</td>
<td>M = 4.74, SD = 1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>N = 19</td>
<td>M = 4.74, SD = 1.82</td>
<td>M = 4.87, SD = 1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>N = 15</td>
<td>M = 4.87, SD = 1.64</td>
<td>M = 5.91, SD = 1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>N = 23</td>
<td>M = 5.91, SD = 1.76</td>
<td>M = 6.28, SD = 1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>N = 18</td>
<td>M = 6.28, SD = 1.87</td>
<td>M = 5.07, SD = 2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>N = 15</td>
<td>M = 5.07, SD = 2.79</td>
<td>M = 4.87, SD = 1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Test Results

The reading test was the second of the four tests to be administered to the students. Correlation coefficients were computed among the scores for the three parts of the reading test to determine whether the test results should be presented individually as indicators of different skills, or comprehensively. Using the Spearman approach, the correlations were not significant at the .05 level; correlations between Part A and Part B were .005, correlations between Part A and Part C were -.046, and correlations between Part B and Part C were -.083. Since there was no significant correlation demonstrated among the three parts of the reading test, results are reported for each separate section of the test. Table 9 presents the means and standard deviations for the reading comprehension proficiency scores by class.

Part A Reading Comprehension Scores

A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test scores for part A of the reading comprehension test and the post-test scores. The dependent variable was the immediate post-test and the covariate was the pre-test written at the start of the study. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption indicated that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable did not differ significantly as a function of the independent variable, $F(2,52) = 1.54$, $MSE = 3.66$, $p = .22$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. The ANCOVA revealed no significant differences between groups.
Table 9

*Means and Standard Deviations for Reading Comprehension Test Scores, by Class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>7C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N = 24</td>
<td>N = 19</td>
<td>N = 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part A</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(max = 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(max = 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part C</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(max = 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part B Reading Comprehension Scores**

A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test scores for part B of the reading comprehension test and the post-test scores. The dependent variable was the immediate post-test and the covariate was the pre-test written at the start of the study. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption indicated that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable did not differ significantly as a function of the independent variable, $F(2,52) = .01, MSE = .85, p = .99, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$. The ANCOVA indicated no significant differences between groups.

**Part C Reading Comprehension Scores**

A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test scores for part C of the reading comprehension test and the post-test scores. The dependent variable was the immediate post-test and the covariate was the pre-test written at the start of the study. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption indicated that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable did not differ significantly as a function of the independent variable, $F(2,52) = .15, MSE = 1.49, p = .86, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$. The ANCOVA indicated no significant differences between groups.

**Writing Test Results**

The writing test is also divided into three tasks. Although the two composition scores are totaled together to arrive at an overall composition score, there is not an overall writing score; instead, the partial-dictation task and the composition tasks are scored independently from each other.
Spearman correlation coefficients were computed among the scores for the two composition tasks to investigate the relationship between them. The correlation coefficient indicated moderate strength of relationship between the two tasks, \( r = .35, p < .01 \). This may be a result of the varying level of language required to complete each of the two compositions. The first task necessitates students write factual information about them, whereas the second task, an opinion piece, requires a higher level of language and thinking. Therefore, although statistically sound to present a combined writing test score, I have chosen to analyze and present the results separately, in order to reflect the varying level of language required (see Table 10).

**Partial Dictation (Dictée) Test Scores**

A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test scores for part A of the reading comprehension test and the post-test scores. The dependent variable was the immediate post-test and the covariate was the pre-test written at the start of the study. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption indicated that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable did not differ significantly as a function of the independent variable, \( F(2,44) = .22, MSE = 128.24, p = .80 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .01 \). The ANCOVA indicated no significant differences between groups.
Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Writing Test Scores, by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th></th>
<th>Immediate post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>7C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 24</td>
<td>N = 19</td>
<td>N = 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictée (max = 71)</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.79</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>22.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition 1</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(max = 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition 2</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(max = 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Composition Task Writing Scores

An assumption of normality was not met for the pre-test results of the first composition task; therefore, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test for differences among classes. The test was not significant, suggesting that the three classes performed equally poorly on the pre-test, and therefore post-test analyses would not need to control for differences. I conducted an ANOVA to evaluate the relationship between the post-test scores and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable was the class in which students were enrolled, and the dependent variable was the post-test score. The ANOVA indicated significant differences, $F(2, 50) = 4.43, p = .02$.

Tukey multiple comparisons performed at a .05 significance level found that the mean post-test score for 7A ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.83, N = 23$) was significantly higher than that for 7B ($M = 2.53, SD = 1.91, N = 17$) but not significantly higher than 7C ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.63, N = 13$).

Second Composition Task Writing Scores

An assumption of normality was not met for the pre-test results of the second composition task; therefore, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test for differences among classes. The test indicated differences among the three classes, $\chi^2(2, N = 57) = 13.51, p = .001$.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the three classes. The results of these tests indicated a significant difference between 7A and 7B, the two compact CF classes. The mean pre-test score for 7A ($M = 1.13, SD = .34, N = 24$) was greater than the mean pre-test score for 7B ($M = .67, SD = .49, N = 18$).

Since there is no direct method to control for the initial differences between the groups in nonparametric analyses, I decided to run repeated measures analyses for each of the classes to
explore the extent to which the three classes differed in the amount of change in mean scores that occurred between the pre-test and the immediate post-test. The results indicated that the mean score for the 7B immediate post-test ($M = 1.50, SD = 1.03$) was significantly greater than the mean score for the pre-test ($M = .75, SD = .45$), $t(15) = -3.00$, $p < .05$, suggesting a significant growth in language proficiency between the two tests. There was no significant difference between the pre- and post-test mean scores for either 7A or 7C.

**Speaking Test Results**

Correlation coefficients were computed among the scores for the first two parts of the speaking test (the image tests). Using the Spearman approach, the correlation between each of the two picture tasks (part A and part B), demonstrated a strong relationship between the two tasks. The correlation between the two picture tasks was significant at the .05 level; correlations between Part A and Part B were .52. Given the high correlation, I have chosen to present the results of the first two parts of the speaking test as a combined score (Section 1). However, I have chosen to present the results of Part C of the speaking test separately, in accordance with the precise scoring criteria in the manual (Section 2). Table 11 presents descriptive statistics for sections 1 and 2 of the speaking test.
Table 11

*Means and Confidence Intervals for Speaking Test Scores, by Class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>18.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Post-test</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>19.29</td>
<td>14.03</td>
<td>24.54</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed Post-test</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>19.85</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>14.70</td>
<td>23.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Post-test</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed Post-test</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The confidence intervals are calculated using a 95% confidence level.
In order to examine changes in proficiency level on the two sections of the speaking achievement test, I conducted confidence intervals explorations. Since I was missing data for 7A for the immediate post-test, the repeated measures techniques that I used for the other test analyses would not permit me to use only partial data for an analysis and therefore excluded 7A from all speaking test data analyses. Although missing one time point, there is still valuable pre-test and delayed post-test data to examine whether growth had occurred over the year of study. Therefore, I used confidence intervals to explore this growth and to visually represent growth over time.

I began by exploring the confidence intervals for each of the three classes at each of the time periods in order to determine whether the scores from each class were similar or different at each of the testing periods. Using the mean and the 95% confidence intervals (see Figures 1 to 4), I explored any overlap between means. If the overlap between the confidence intervals was greater than the distance between the means, I concluded that there was no significant difference between the groups, at either of the testing periods. If the overlap between the confidence intervals for each time point was less than the difference between the means, then I concluded that there was a significant difference between the groups at a particular time point.

**Section 1 of the Speaking Test: Picture Task**

An examination of the pre-test scores, the immediate post-test scores and the delayed post-test scores indicate that the overlap between the confidence intervals for each of these time points was less than the difference between the means; therefore, I concluded that at each testing time point, there was no significant difference between the classes (see Figure 1).
In order to determine whether there was significant growth between each of the testing periods by the individual classes, I examined the confidence intervals for the value of 0. If the value of 0 was within the confidence interval, then I concluded that there was no significant change over time (either growth or loss in proficiency level). However, if the value of 0 was outside of the confidence interval, then I concluded that there was significant change over time. Figure 2 shows confidence intervals for the three classes at each of the speaking testing periods. Since there was no data for 7A on the post-test, then confidence intervals between the pre-test

*Figure 1. Confidence intervals for speaking test section 1 (parts A and B), by class (cases excluded variable by variable).*
scores and the post-test scores, as well as the post-test scores and the delayed post-test scores are not represented in the figure.

Figure 2. Differences in section 1 speaking test mean scores over time, by class.

An exploration of the confidence intervals over time, by class, indicates that on the first section of the speaking test, there was no significant growth or loss indicated by the pre-test to the delayed post-test scores for 7A. Looking at the scores for 7C, it is also true that there was no significant difference between test scores (pre-test to immediate post-test, immediate post-test to delayed post-test, or pre-test to delayed post-test), since the value of 0 falls within each
confidence interval. However, there was significant change noted over time in the scores for 7B, the second compact CF class. There is significant growth noted over time between the pre-test and the immediate post-test, a growth which was maintained over time to the delayed post-test. No significant change was noted between the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test, suggesting that students had retained their growth in speaking proficiency over time.

**Section 2 (Part C) of the Speaking Test: Pronunciation Task**

An examination of the pre-test scores indicated that there was no significant difference between either of the classes at the pre-test stage (see Figure 3). However, on the immediate post-test, there was a significant difference between the compact CF class of 7B and the comparison class of 7C. The 95% confidence interval on the immediate post-test for 7B was (2.67, 4.47), and the mean score was 3.57; the 95% confidence interval on the immediate post-test for 7C was (3.03, 8.47), and the mean score was 5.75. The overlap between the confidence intervals was less than the difference between the means, suggesting that 7C demonstrated significantly higher scores than 7B on the immediate post-test. On the delayed post-test, however, there was no significant difference noted between classes 7B and 7C. There was, however, a significant difference noted between 7A and 7B, as well as between 7A and 7C, in that compact CF class 7A demonstrated significantly higher scores than classes 7B and 7C on the delayed post-test.
Figure 3. Confidence intervals for speaking test section 2, by class.

To determine whether there were any significant differences over time, I examined the confidence intervals for the value of 0 (see Figure 4). An examination of the pre-test to immediate post-test scores, immediate post-test to delayed post-test scores, and the pre-test to delayed post-test scores suggests that only 7A experienced significant growth in speaking language proficiency over time.
Figure 4. Differences in section 2 speaking test mean scores over time, by class.

Although on the immediate post-test there were significant differences between 7B and 7C, when examining growth over time, neither group outperformed the other and experienced higher growth. However, the confidence intervals for 7A investigating the differences between the pre-test and the delayed post-test do not include the value of 0, therefore indicating that a significant change had occurred. Since the confidence intervals are all above the value of 0, a significant growth in speaking language proficiency is indicated.
Researcher-Developed Reading Test Results

The researcher-developed delayed reading post-tests were designed to assess the retention of curriculum-specific material over time, and were therefore administered as a delayed post-test the following September (the start of the students’ Grade 8 year of study). The test was administered to the same participants from the following year; however, the number of participants from each of the previous year’s classes varies due to student movement out of the school boundaries over the summer vacation, or due to student absence at the start of the Grade 8 school year in September.

Correlation coefficients were computed among the scores for the three parts of the reading test to determine whether the test results should be presented individually as indicators of different skills, or comprehensively. Using the Spearman approach, the results demonstrate a relationship between parts B and C of the reading test, indicating correlations of .54. However, the correlations were not significant between part A and the other two parts of the test: correlations between part A and part B were .26, and correlations between part A and part C were .24. This may be a result of the varying level of language required to complete the three parts of the test. The first task necessitates that students order steps in a recipe using language clues within each sentence (e.g., transition words), whereas parts B and C of the test require the student to read a passage, and then complete multiple choice questions. The latter two parts of the test are similar in nature and therefore it is statistically sound to present a separate reading test score for part A, and a combined reading test score for parts B and C. The means and standard deviations for the test scores are presented in Table 12.
Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Delayed Post-test Reading Test Scores, by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A (N = 22)</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B (N = 16)</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C (N = 12)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part A (max = 6)</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts B and C combined (max = 10)</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delayed Reading Test Scores: Part A

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the delayed post-test, researcher-developed reading comprehension scores (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The ANOVA was significant, $F(2, 47) = 4.60, p < .05$. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. Since equal variances were assumed, I conducted post hoc comparisons with the use of the Tukey procedure.
Table 13

95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Mean Scores on Delayed Reading Test, Part A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>7A</th>
<th>7B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>3.61*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. An asterisk indicates that the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero, and therefore the difference in means is significant at the .05 significance using Tukey's procedure.

There was a significant difference in the means between the two compact CF classes, but not between the means of the comparison group and the compact CF classes. The second compact CF class, 7B, demonstrated a significantly higher score on the researcher-developed, delayed reading post-test than did 7A; however, there were no significant differences noted between the scores of 7B and 7C, or 7A and 7C. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as the means and standard deviations for the three classes, are reported in Table 13.

Delayed Reading Test Scores: Parts B and C

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the delayed post-test composition scores (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The means and standard deviations for the test scores are presented in Table 12. The ANOVA revealed no significant differences between classes.
Curriculum-Specific Writing Test Results

Correlation coefficients were computed among the scores for the two composition tasks to determine whether the test results should be presented individually as indicators of different skills, or comprehensively. Using the Spearman approach, the correlations were not significant at the .05 level; the correlations between part A and part B were .262. Since there was no significant correlation demonstrated among the two composition tasks, results are reported independently for each task.

Delayed Writing Test Scores: Part A

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the delayed post-test composition scores (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The means and standard deviations for the test scores are presented in Table 14. The ANOVA indicated no significant differences between classes.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations for Delayed Post-test Composition Test Scores, by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part A (max = 20)</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B (max = 10)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delayed Writing Test Scores: Part B

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the delayed post-test composition scores (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The means and standard deviations for the test scores are presented in Table 14. The ANOVA indicated no significant differences between classes.

Summary

The results from the proficiency tests indicate that there were few significant differences between the classes, suggesting that on most tests, students performed similarly. In the cases where there were differences between classes, or where there were instances of significant growth in language proficiency, generally these significant differences lay in one or both of the compact CF class test scores.
CHAPTER SIX:
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: STUDENT AND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Introduction

In this chapter, I report the results from the student and parent questionnaires, which will address the third research question relating to the perceptions and attitudes of all stakeholders toward the CF format, and the implementation of the multidimensional approach. Differences in the mean ratings on the pre-questionnaire were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Independent-samples t tests were conducted to evaluate whether any differences existed between the pre-test mean scores of the two compact CF classes. For the questionnaire items related to students’ perceived value of the French language, their perceived improvement in French language skills, and their perceptions of the CF program, I conducted paired-samples t tests. Independent-samples t tests were used to determine the extent to which parental responses on the parental questionnaire differed from those expressed by students responding to the same question on the student questionnaire.

Perceptions and Attitudes of all Stakeholders

Student questionnaires (see Appendix J) were administered during both the pre-testing and immediate post-testing periods. These questionnaires measured student attitudes toward the CF program format in which they were enrolled, as well as the various teaching strategies. Also, they measured student self-assessment of language proficiency and improvement. As part of the initial questionnaire, students were asked about their language background (years in CF and/or FI), French language heritage or other language learning experiences. This questionnaire was adapted from the one used in the Lapkin et al. (1995) study, as well as the one used in the
Turnbull (1998) study, in order to assess whether the students in the three classes were comparable.

In addition to the student questionnaires, short surveys were sent to parents at the end of each program format in order to assess their perceptions of student experiences in the CF classes and French language learning.

**Results: Perceived Value of Learning French**

The questionnaire responses related to the value of learning French were recoded for analysis into two categories: agreement and disagreement. This permitted the value scale to be consistent and out of 2: 1 represented all statements of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree, and slightly disagree); and, a code of 2 represented all statements of agreement (strongly agree, agree, and partly agree).

An ANOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test questionnaire responses on the value of learning French component (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The results indicated that there were no significant differences among the three classes at the beginning of the study period. Table 15 reports the mean scores of each class on the responses related to the rating of agreement toward statements of the value of learning French.
Table 15

Mean Pre-test Overall Student Value of French Agreement Rating, by Class\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 22)</td>
<td>(N = 16)</td>
<td>(N = 12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Value of FSL</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} \textsuperscript{a} The recoded values are as follows: 1 represented all statements of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree, and slightly disagree); and, 2 represented all statements of agreement (strongly agree, agree, and partly agree).

An independent-samples \(t\)-test was performed to evaluate whether any differences existed in the mean rating of agreement on questionnaire value responses between the two compact CF classes. The mean responses were not significantly different, \(t(41) = 0.287, p = 0.78\), and therefore results will be reported for the two classes as one compact CF group, in addition to individually where necessary.

Table 16

Mean Overall Student Value of French Rating, all Students\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-questionnaire (N = 58)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-questionnaire (N = 57)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall value of French</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} \textsuperscript{a} The recoded values are as follows: 1 represented all statements of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree, and slightly disagree); and, 2 represented all statements of agreement (strongly agree, agree, and partly agree).

A paired-samples \(t\) test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the value ascribed by students to the learning of French between the pre-test at the start of their study period and the post-test at the conclusion of their study period (see Table 16).
The results indicated that the mean value rating on student post-questionnaires ($M = 1.47, SD = .171$) was significantly lower than the mean value rating indicated on student pre-questionnaires ($M = 1.55, SD = .148$), $t(56) = 2.72$, $p < .01$.

A follow-up paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to determine whether this significantly greater disagreement was represented in the scores of both the compact CF and the comparison classes. The results indicated that only the compact CF group showed a significant change in their rating of agreement about the value of learning French. The compact CF group results indicated greater disagreement, and therefore a lower value ascribed to the learning of French, on the post-questionnaire ($M = 1.44, SD = 0.167$) than was indicated on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.53, SD = 0.143$) $t(41) = 2.763$, $p < 0.01$. The comparison group results did not show a significant difference. A further breakdown of the results indicates that only the responses of students in 7B of the compact CF group indicated a significantly greater rating of disagreement.

Paired-samples $t$ tests were conducted for each individual questionnaire item related to value to determine whether there were significant differences in the value ascribed by students to individual questionnaire items at the start and at the end of their study period. Table 17 outlines the mean response rating for all students on both the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. I will report those questionnaire items for which a significantly different rating of response was indicated by the $t$ tests.
### Table 17

**Mean Agreement for Each Item of Student Value of French Rating, by Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of Grade 8, I will have learned all the French I will need later on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve learned as much French as I need now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to continue studying French in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important in getting a good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important to get into a good college/university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French will only help me in a government job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French because I want to speak with French-speaking persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French because I want to travel to French-speaking provinces or countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French only because it is mandatory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French is one of my favorite subjects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N = 58</strong></td>
<td><strong>N = 57</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate the extent to which students believed they will have learned as much French as they will need to know by the end of elementary school (Grade 8). The results were not significant, $t(53) = 0.685, p = 0.496$. However, the paired-samples $t$ test evaluating the extent to which students believed they had already learned as much French as they need to know was significant. The results indicate significantly greater agreement with this statement on the post-questionnaire ($M = 1.49, SD = 0.504$) than on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.28, SD = 0.453$) $t(56) = -2.567, p < 0.05$. A further $t$ test indicates that only the agreement rating of 7A responses were significantly greater at the end of their study period ($M = 1.50, SD = 0.511$) than at the beginning of their study period ($M = 1.21, SD = 0.415$) $t(23) = -2.598, p < 0.05$.

A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate whether students indicated a greater or lesser desire to continue French studies in secondary school at the end of their Grade 7 program of study. The results indicated that the mean level of agreement with the statement of intent to continue studies in secondary school expressed at the end of their Grade 7 French study ($M = 1.29, SD = .456$) was significantly lower than the mean level of agreement at the start of their study period ($M = 1.48, SD = .504$), $t(55) = 2.66, p < .05$. 

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N = 58$</td>
<td>$N = 57$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>.501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

French is as important as other school subjects. 

Note. *The recoded values are as follows: 1 represented all statements of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree, and slightly disagree); and, 2 represented all statements of agreement (strongly agree, agree, and partly agree).*
The results of the paired-samples $t$ test conducted to evaluate possible change in the extent to which students agreed with the statement that French is necessary for acquiring a good job indicated that the mean level of agreement with this statement at the end of their Grade 7 French period of study ($M = 1.67, SD = .476$) was significantly lower than the mean level of agreement at the start of their Grade 7 year ($M = 1.91, SD = .285$), $t(56) = 3.41, p < .05$. A further break-down of the results indicated that only the responses from 7A of the compact CF group indicated a significantly lower rating of agreement ($M = 1.67, SD = 0.482$) than they had done on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.92, SD = 0.282$) $t(23) = 2.304, p < 0.05$.

Results also indicated a significantly lower rating of agreement on the post-questionnaire with the statement that French was necessary for entrance into a good college or university program ($M = 1.60, SD = .495$) than was expressed on the pre-questionnaire at the start of their Grade 7 year ($M = 1.82, SD = .384$), $t(56) = 3.03, p < .05$. Again, a break-down of the results indicated that only the responses from 7A were significantly lower at the end of their CF studies ($M = 1.58, SD = 0.504$) $t(23) = 2.892, p < 0.01$.

A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate possible change in the extent to which students agreed with the statement that French was one of their favorite subjects. The results indicated that the mean level of agreement with this statement at the end of their Grade 7 French period of study ($M = 1.22, SD = .420$) was significantly lower than the mean level of agreement at the start of their Grade 7 year ($M = 1.78, SD = .420$), $t(56) = 3.03, p < .05$. Only the response ratings from the compact CF group indicated any significant difference at the end of their CF program of study ($M = 1.13, SD = 0.339$) from the response rating at the start of their program of study ($M = 1.85, SD = 0.366$) $t(38) = 8.785, p < 0.01$; the results indicated that the response
rating was significantly different for both classes in the compact CF group. Also, the results show that there was no significant difference in the comparison group response rating.

**Results: Perceived Student Improvement**

In this section of the questionnaire, students were asked to indicate their perceived improvement in French language skills and tasks since they had begun their French language studies. For example, students were asked to rate how they think they had improved in writing in French, or in their self-confidence in French, or in their motivation to learn French. Students selected one of the following four ratings: (a) Greatly improved; (b) Slightly improved; (c) Did not improve; and (d) Not sure.

An ANOVA was conducted to determine the relationship between the pre-test questionnaire responses on students’ mean perception of their improvement in French (the independent variable) and the class in which students were enrolled (the dependent variable). The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the three classes at the beginning of the study period, $F(2, 55) = 1.64, p = .203$. Table 18 reports the mean student perceived improvement rating of language skills by each class.
Table 18

Mean Student Perceived Improvement Rating of Student Language Skills, by Class\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 24)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 19)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} \textsuperscript{a} Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).

An independent-samples \(t\)-test was performed to evaluate whether any differences existed in the mean perceived improvement rating between the two compact CF classes. The mean responses were not significantly different, \(t(41) = 1.78, p = 0.083\), and therefore results will be reported for the two classes as one compact CF group, where appropriate.

A paired-samples \(t\) test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the perceived improvement rating by students between the pre-test at the start of their study period and the post-test at the conclusion of their study period (see Table 19). The results indicated that there was no significant difference.
Table 19

Mean Student Perceived Improvement Rating of Student Language Skills, All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N = 57$</td>
<td>$N = 57$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall improvement in French</td>
<td>1.78   .260</td>
<td>1.73   .303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).

Further paired-samples $t$ tests were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in the perceived level of improvement in individual French language skills as indicated by students at the start and at the end of their study period. Tables 20 and 21 outline the mean ratings by students on each individual questionnaire item. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the two scores for the following skills or acquired knowledge: reading skills, oral comprehension skills, writing skills, self-confidence in French language skills, motivation and desire to continue French language studies, and knowledge and understanding of French-speaking cultures. However, the results indicated that the mean level of agreement in relation to improved speaking skills at the end of their Grade 7 French period of study ($M = 1.84$, $SD = .373$) was significantly lower than the mean level of perceived improvement in grades 1 to 6 as evaluated at the start of their Grade 7 year ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .200$), $t(48) = 2.59$, $p < .05$. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the amount of improvement in speaking skills indicated on the post-questionnaire and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable, the amount of improvement in French speaking skills, included two levels: improvement and lack of improvement. The dependent variable was the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or
The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant mean difference in response across the three classes.

**Table 20**

*Mean Student Perceived Improvement Rating of Student Language Skills, by Test*\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 58)</td>
<td>(N = 57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in French</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in French</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand French</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in French</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence in learning French</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to continue in French</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding on French-speaking cultures</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).
Table 21

Mean Student Perceived Improvement Rating on Post-Questionnaires, by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A N = 24</th>
<th></th>
<th>7B N = 18</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C N = 15</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in French</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.388</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in French</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand French</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in French</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.415</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence in learning French</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to continue in French</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of French-speaking cultures</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.493</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).

An independent-samples t test was conducted to examine the extent to which the perceived level of student improvement as expressed by parents on the questionnaire differed from the perceived level of improvement as expressed by students on the same questionnaire item. The difference in means between the parent responses (M = 1.80, SD = .247) and the student responses (M = 1.73, SD = .303) was minimal, and the test was not significant. Table 22 reports the overall mean perceived improvement rating of student language skills by students and parents.
Table 22

*Mean Student and Parent Perceived Improvement Rating of Student Language Skills*¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student N = 57</th>
<th>Parent N = 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall improvement in French</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* ¹ Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).

Independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to determine whether there were any differences between the responses of parents and students for individual items of the improvement skills questionnaire section. No significant differences were found. Table 23 reports the mean perceived improvement rating of student language skills by students and parents on each individual questionnaire item.

Table 23

*Mean Student and Parent Perceived Improvement of Student Language Skills, Post-Questionnaire*¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students N = 57</th>
<th>Parents N = 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>M</em></td>
<td><em>SD</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in French</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read in French</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand French</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write in French</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N = 57$</td>
<td>$N = 24$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence in learning French</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to continue in French</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French-speaking cultures</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* a Values were recoded as follows: 1 represented the statement relating to no improvement (did not improve); and, 2 represented all statements indicating improvement (greatly improved, slightly improved).

**Results: Satisfaction Scores**

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of satisfaction with the Grade 7 CF program (overall CF program; length of the period; daily learning activities; and, final projects) and the class in which students were enrolled (see Table 24). The independent variable, the overall level of satisfaction rating expressed by students, included two levels: dissatisfaction and satisfaction. The dependent variable was the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or 7C). The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant difference in response across the three classes when students were asked to indicate satisfaction level with the overall CF program, the daily learning activities and the final projects.
Table 24

Mean Student Satisfaction Rating With CF Program, by Class<sup>a</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7A &lt;sup&gt;N = 23&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>7B &lt;sup&gt;N = 18&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>7C &lt;sup&gt;N = 15&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall CF program</td>
<td>1.61 .499</td>
<td>1.72 .461</td>
<td>1.60 .507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of period</td>
<td>1.39 .499</td>
<td>1.22 .428</td>
<td>1.67 .488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily learning activities</td>
<td>1.65 .487</td>
<td>1.61 .502</td>
<td>1.73 .458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final projects</td>
<td>1.61 .499</td>
<td>1.67 .485</td>
<td>1.73 .458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>Note.</sup> Values were recoded, as follows: 1 represented all statements of dissatisfaction (not at all satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied); and, 2 represented all statements of satisfaction (very satisfied, satisfied).

However, there was a significant mean difference in response with respect to satisfaction with the length of the daily periods across the three classes. In order to determine where this difference lies, post hoc analyses were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. There was a significant difference in the means between the compact CF group 7B and the comparison group 7C, but no significant differences between compact CF group 7A and comparison group 7C or between the two compact CF groups (7A and 7B). Compact CF group 7B indicated a lower level of satisfaction with the length of their CF periods than expressed by the comparison group. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as the means and standard deviations for the three classes, are reported in Table 25.
### Table 25

*95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Level of Satisfaction With Length of CF Period*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>7A</th>
<th>7B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>-.65</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. An asterisk indicates that the 95% interval does not contain zero, and therefore the difference in means is significant at the .05 significance using Tukey’s procedure.

*a* Values were recoded, as follows: 1 represented all statements of dissatisfaction (not at all satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied); and, 2 represented all statements of satisfaction (very satisfied, satisfied).

An independent-samples t test was conducted to examine the extent to which the level of satisfaction with the CF program as expressed on the parents’ questionnaire differed from the level of satisfaction as expressed by students on the same question. Since the variances for the two groups were different and the sample sizes not equal, the t value does not assume equal variances. The test was significant, $t(44.40) = 2.53$, $p = .015$. The differences in means showed a higher parental satisfaction response rating ($M = 1.81$, $SD = .322$) than the response rating expressed by the students ($M = 1.60$, $SD = .353$). The mean satisfaction rating as expressed by parents and students is reported in Table 26.
Table 26

Mean Student and Parent Overall Satisfaction Rating With CF Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 57</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N = 23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with CF program</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Values were recoded, as follows: 1 represented all statements of dissatisfaction (not at all satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied); and, 2 represented all statements of satisfaction (very satisfied, satisfied).

Independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to determine whether there were any significant differences between the responses of parents and students on individual items of the satisfaction questionnaire section. Table 27 reports the mean satisfaction rating of individual items responses by both parents and students. Mean differences for the overall program satisfaction rating and the final projects satisfaction rating were examined and the test was not significant. However, the test indicated significance differences when examining the satisfaction rating expressed for the length of the period, *t*(44.23) = 3.20, *p* = .003. The differences in means showed a higher parental satisfaction response rating for the length of the period (*M* = 1.77, *SD* = .429) than the satisfaction rating expressed by the students (*M* = 1.41, *SD* = .496). The test was also significant when examining differences in satisfaction rating expressed for the daily learning activities, *t*(66.05) = 2.88, *p* = .005. The difference in means showed a higher parental satisfaction rating for the daily learning activities (*M* = 1.91, *SD* = .288) than the satisfaction rating expressed by the students (*M* = 1.66, *SD* = .478).
### Results: Usefulness Scores

Paired-samples *t* tests were conducted to evaluate whether there were significant differences in the ascribed level of usefulness of daily language learning activities (both traditional and multidimensional) as indicated by students at the start (improvement to the end of Grade 6) and at the end of their study period (improvement to the end of Grade 7). The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the two overall scores for the following items: (a) working on projects; (b) learning vocabulary; (c) pronunciation activities; (d) oral presentations; (e) writing in French; (f) listening to recorded conversations; (g) working in groups; (h) reading; (i) grammar exercises; (j) learning about culture; (k) using dictionary lists; (l) using dictionaries; (m) translating L2 into L1; (n) learning how the French language works; and, (o) speaking French in class. However, the results indicated that there were significant differences between the overall scores for the following two questionnaire items: (a) comparing...
how French and English work and the differences/similarities; and, (b) hearing the teacher speak the L2 (French) in class.

The results from a paired-samples $t$ test conducted to evaluate possible change in the extent to which students considered comparisons between the L1 and the L2 as useful in the learning of French indicated that the mean level of usefulness ascribed to this pedagogic activity at the end of their Grade 7 French period of study ($M = 1.60, SD = .497$) was significantly lower than the mean level of agreement at the start of their Grade 7 year ($M = 1.79, SD = .415$), $t(41) = 2.44, p < .05$. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the degree of usefulness ascribed to this pedagogic activity on the post-questionnaire and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable, the degree of usefulness of comparing how the French and the English language work included two levels: useful and not useful. The dependent variable was the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or 7C). The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant mean difference in response across the three classes. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as the means and standard deviations for the three classes, are reported in Table 28.
Table 28

95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Perceived Usefulness of Comparing How French and English Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>7A</th>
<th>7B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Values were recoded, as follows: 1 represented the statement of not useful; and, 2 represented all statements of usefulness (very useful, useful).

The results from a paired-samples t test conducted to evaluate possible change in the extent to which students considered hearing the teacher speak the L2 in class as useful in the learning of French indicated that the mean level of usefulness ascribed to this pedagogic activity at the end of their Grade 7 French period of study (M = 1.72, SD = .455) was significantly lower than the mean level of agreement at the start of their Grade 7 year (M = 1.87, SD = .341), t(45) = 2.20, p < .05. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the degree of usefulness ascribed to this pedagogic activity on the post-questionnaire and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable, the degree of usefulness ascribed to hearing the teacher speak French in class included two levels: useful and not useful. The dependent variable was the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or 7C). The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant mean difference in response across the three classes. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as the means and standard deviations for the three classes, are reported in Table 29.
Table 29

95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences in Perceived Usefulness of Hearing the Teacher Speak French\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>7A</th>
<th>7B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7B</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>-0.24 to 0.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>-0.49 to 0.18</td>
<td>-0.70 to 0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} \textsuperscript{a} Values were recoded, as follows: 1 represented the statement of not useful; and, 2 represented all statements of usefulness (very useful, useful).

Results: How well do you [students] conduct day to day activities in French?

A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the overall achievement level ascribed by students to the ability to conduct day-to-day activities in French between the pre-test at the start of their study period and the post-test at the conclusion of their study period. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean scores. Paired-samples $t$ tests were also conducted to evaluate whether significant differences existed between the achievement levels given by students to each individual questionnaire item in this section (self-assessment of ability to use French in daily activities). The results indicated that significant differences were evident on only one of the ten questionnaire items: the mean self-assessment of ability to participate in group discussions in French was significantly higher on the post-questionnaire ($M = 1.70, SD = .630$) than the self-assessment recorded on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.41, SD = .565$). A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the post-questionnaire self-assessment of ability to participate in group discussions in French and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable, the degree of ability ascribed to participation in group
discussions, included three levels: with much difficulty, with some difficulty, with little or no difficulty. The dependent variable was the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or 7C). The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant mean difference in response across the three classes.

Results: How recently do you [students] conduct daily activities in French?

A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in how recently students indicated they conducted various daily activities in French, as ascribed by students on the pre-questionnaire and on the post-questionnaire. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean scores. Paired-samples $t$ tests were also conducted to evaluate whether significant differences existed between the recentness score recorded by students for each individual questionnaire item in this section (self-assessment of how recently students conducted specific daily French language activities). The results indicated that significant differences were evident on only one of the eight questionnaire items: the frequency students listen to music or music programs in French was significantly higher on the post-questionnaire ($M = 2.40, SD = .153$) than the self-assessment recorded on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.75, SD = .109$). A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the post-questionnaire self-assessment of frequency of listening and the class in which students were enrolled. The independent variable, the frequency ascribed to listening to French music or music programs, included five levels: never, within the past year, within the past 6 months, within the past month, and within the past week. The dependent variable consisted of the class in which students were enrolled (7A, 7B or 7C). The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no significant mean difference in response across the three classes.
Summary

The results from the parental questionnaires generally indicated a high satisfaction rate with the CF program in which their children were enrolled, as well as general satisfaction with the length of the CF format (whether traditional or compact). As well, parents indicated greater satisfaction with the daily learning activities and tasks than did the students.

Student results from the questionnaires were mixed. Overall, students seemed to indicate less agreement with the various post questionnaire items than they did on the pre-questionnaire. Reasons for the mixed results will be considered in the discussion in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER SEVEN:
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the qualitative findings of the study in three sections. The first section presents analyses of teacher journal entries in order to examine the extent to which a “communicative/ experiential” approach to teaching and learning was implemented in similar or dissimilar ways in the two CF formats. In addition, I discuss my perceptions of student responses toward the pedagogic approach. The second section presents the independent observations from videotapes of classroom teaching in order to determine the extent to which by my teaching approach was consistent across the three classes. The third section reports on the student focus groups to investigate the point of view of the students toward the CF format and the pedagogic approach.

Pedagogic Approach

Teacher Journal Entries

In this section, I outline the findings from the teacher journal entries. The purpose of the journals was to elicit information regarding my perceptions of the implementation of the multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach in all three classes. Using NVivo software, I read through each journal entry, highlighting and subsequently coding potentially relevant comments statements. These statements were then grouped together according to common, underlying themes (Glesne, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As a result of this analysis, three broad themes emerged from my teacher journals:

1. Perceptions of students’ language level;
2. Perceptions of the pedagogic approach and CF format; and

3. Perceptions of similarities and differences between groups.

**Perceptions of Students’ Language Level**

The multi-dimensional, project-based approach was prepared for a Grade 7 level class, according to the mandatory content of the Ontario curriculum expectations for CF (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998). A review of my journal notes that at the start of the Grade 7 period of study, students did not demonstrate the necessary language competence to begin the Grade 7 curriculum, as evidenced by some of the following representative excerpts:

However, when I went to the audience for questions, they were unable to form even the most basic question (or unwilling, although I do believe it to be more unable to spontaneously create a question). (7A - September 16, 2004)

Verbs seem problematic and something we’ll need to work on this year, preferably in context. Students demonstrate in particular lack of familiarity or ability with être and avoir. They are unable to use these verbs in context, and many, many, many students asked me, “How do I say ‘is’ in French?” (7A – September 20, 2004)

Also, the students all seem so low, even though they have had 550+ hours of FSL instruction since SK. I’m really worried about the curriculum this year. I may need to settle on fewer projects and units since I need to review at the start of the year. (7C - September 16, 2004)

We have finally arrived at the final project. I can’t believe how long it took both 7A and 7C to get to this point. I had originally planned for 7A to finish their final projects from unit 1 by the beginning of October, and 7C by the end of October. We spent quite a bit of time on other activities. The verb activity, for example, I did not originally plan, but prepared because the students did not come to me
ready for the Grade 7 curriculum. They demonstrated low comprehension of spoken French, and did not demonstrate a high level of speech in French. Students asked how to say “is” and “am.” Anyway, we spent quite a bit of time on review, and basic conversation items. (7C – November 4, 2004)

As evidenced by these representative comments, students in all three classes did not seem to have the productive or receptive language skills necessary to build upon and teach the Grade 7 curriculum expectations. This necessitated considerable review of expectations from prior years in order to begin the planned units.

This lack of language knowledge may also have led to anxiety on the part of the students during the initial implementation of the pre-tests at the start of September, in particular, during the oral comprehension test.

We also began the oral comprehension activity. This was very difficult for them, and required a lot of explanation. We did the sample one twice, so we ended up with only 20 minutes. (7A – September 8, 2004)

Today we began the oral comprehension test. This class also required a lot of explanation and practice with the sample, so we only had 15 minutes on the test (to question #13). (7C – September 9, 2004)

It is certainly possible that some of the anxiety was related to taking a test, although students were certainly made aware of the reason for the test, and that they were not being graded on the test for school reporting purposes. However, students did not seem to exhibit the same level of anxiety when writing the post-tests.

We got through it this time with surprisingly little anxiety. I expected more since they showed more when we wrote the writing test; however, I only explained the
task once, and students seemed to remember how it worked. (7A – January 31, 2005)

We actually completed the oral comprehension [listening] test today in one class (instead of the two that it took in September). Students seemed to demonstrate much lower anxiety this time. (7C – June 14, 2005)

We completed the oral comprehension [listening] test in class today. Few students complained, and most seemed to know what to do. (7B – June 16, 2005)

These representative comments indicate that students seemed more at ease with the testing process, perhaps a result of familiarity with the task instructions, as suggested by the comments relating student understanding of the task and the lack for repeated directives.

At the end of each period of study, I reflected in my journal on the progress made by the students in each class. In the first compact CF class, my notes indicate that I perceived students to have advanced in their learning since the beginning of the study period.

They have come so far since September. They are taking the time to use the learned language structures, supplementing their presentations with new vocabulary found in various classroom resources. Many of the presentations truly represent the language that students have learned throughout the year, as well as pulling out pre-existing language knowledge . . . Most of the students seem more confident in their ability to speak in French. (7A – February 1, 2005)

As this excerpt indicates, I perceived that learning had definitely taken place in 7A. In addition to language learning, I also perceived that attitudes toward learning FSL had also changed to become more positive, at least for some students.

I’m so proud of [names of two students], who entered class in September with the most sullen of attitudes toward learning French, and who now seem confident and
excited in their ability to speak French. I’m not naive enough to assume that they would take French if given the choice (they still inform me that it is not their favorite subject), but at least they are now stating that they can do well in French (level 2 or 3), and are no longer digging in their heels and stating that “I’m no good at French” or “I can’t speak French.” At least now they’re trying to learn, which I find truly exciting! (7A – February 1, 2005)

My reflections for the second compact CF class tell a different story. At the end of their program, I didn’t seem to consider their learning to have been as great as that of 7A.

What frustrated me the most today was that students needed reminders about vocabulary. They kept asking me what *aider* meant, even though we spent some time on this verb earlier in the year. Here I’m going to be assessing retention in September after a break of 2 months, and they can’t even retain (or won’t retain) what we have worked on this year! (7B – June 13, 2005)

As this excerpt indicates, I worried about the retention of the language structures and vocabulary items taught throughout their program of study. Also, I perceived that some students still did not seem motivated to learn French; in particular, I worried that some did not view the post-testing period as serious testing, and did not complete the tests to their full potential.

However, my sense is that some of the students just circled any answer, and didn’t really listen to the speakers on the CD. I noticed [names of four students] ahead in the book. I kept referring them back, but I think they just went ahead and circled whatever. I’m hoping their test won’t be included in the study, but I have no proof that this is what they did, just a gut feeling. (7B - June 16, 2005)

In the comparison class, my notes indicate that I perceived student learning to have taken place, albeit perhaps to a lesser degree than in 7A.
It seems that students are more willing to listen to the French and try to figure out the meaning, or at least aren’t resisting the spoken French like they did at the beginning of the year. Even if performance doesn’t improve, it’s encouraging that their listening behavior has improved. (7C – June 14, 2005)

As this excerpt indicates, my perception was that student willingness to learn or try to learn had improved, but I was clearly unsure as to the extent of actual language learning that had taken place.

**Perception of the Pedagogic Approach and the CF Format**

*Use of target language in the classroom*

The use of the L2 by teachers and students is a characteristic of a multi-dimensional, project-based approach, as defined by Turnbull (1999a), and was a specific focus in my pedagogic approach. As part of my daily journal, I noted any reflections on the student response to the use of French in the classroom, by either myself or the expected use by the students. Of the three classes, only students in 7A students seemed to resist the use of the TL in the classroom at the start of their program.

Students thus far seem to resist the use of French in class. “Can you say that in English?” is a refrain heard far too often. The students seem unwilling to try any verbal cues to make meaning, and don’t respond to the use of French. (7A – September 22, 2004)

This excerpt indicates that the students in 7A seemed unwilling to take any risks at the start of their program, and resisted the use of the TL in the classroom. It is possible that this is a result of a lesser amount of TL expected in previous years, as well as a lack of confidence in language skills. However, as the study progressed, excerpts from the teacher journal indicate that this class
demonstrated more interest in speaking and communicating in French than they did at the start of the year.

This class is really beginning to get into the structure of the class. I haven’t heard “Say that in English,” for quite some time. They seem to be using more verbal cues to understand what they hear, and not just the visual (pictures I draw, word on the board, my gestures). They also don’t questions the use of French and seem to take it for granted now. Some are beginning to use it to ask me simple questions without prompting. (7A – October 26, 2004).

Some of today’s role plays were great. Some students like [student names] really got into the spirit, using clipboards and menus as props! They tried hard to use the French that we discussed, and made recommendations based on the menus. (7A – November 24, 2004)

It was wonderful to see this initiative . . . students are looking forward to the chance to build pizzas tomorrow, which they will then eat for lunch. For me, it was great to hear the amount of French spoken in the classroom today, most of it spontaneous as students are not writing down their orders. (7A – December 15, 2004)

What truly impressed me was the amount of French that I’m hearing in the classroom. For the most part, students are working on their role plays in French, meaning that they are using the resources in their workbooks and the prior knowledge from previous lessons to plan their role plays in French, instead of in English. Some still are writing in English and then translating, but these students are now in the minority! (7A – January 25, 2005)

As these excerpts indicate, student reaction to the use of the TL in the classroom changed over their period of study. Students became less resistant to listening to French and decoding French, and began to use more comprehension strategies to make meaning. In addition, the use of French
by students in the classroom increased as students began to respond to the more spontaneous oral communication tasks. This increase in the use of French in spontaneous situations may have been a result of some of the motivational strategies put in place in the classroom. As my journal notes indicate, the students seemed to enjoy earning points and rewards for speaking French.

Students are speaking with me in French, perhaps in part because they wish to receive [points] for the auction; however, they are still speaking in French, which is fantastic! (7A – January 25, 2005)

Students in 7A seemed to first resist hearing or using the TL in the classroom, but then seemed to embrace its use. The second compact CF class, 7B, seemed less resistant toward the use of the TL in the classroom at the start of their study period.

I really hope they continue in this manner. They seem to be very focused on learning French (or at least on learning in this class). Many of the students participate in the oral conversation periods that I always begin with, and the students reacted more positively than the other two classes to the listening test. Although this doesn’t mean that they will necessarily have more success than the others, they seemed more willing to listen to the spoken French and to try and comprehend it. My initial impression of this class is that it consists of many risk-takers, who are not afraid to make mistakes in order to learn to speak French. I really hope this type of behavior continues! (7B – February 9, 2005)

They enter class ready to work and I’ve seen little evidence of negative attitudes toward FSL education. Also, they really try to decode my French. I rarely need to use English. (7C – September 22, 2004)

However, this type of risk-taking and positive response to the use of the TL in the learning environment did not seem to continue, as the following excerpts from my teacher journals illustrate.
Students are resisting speaking in French, and are increasingly resisting hearing me speak in French (“What did you say? I don’t understand French. Tell me in English.”). (7B – April 5, 2005)

However, some students are still very resistant to the use of spoken French, and continue to say, “Huh? English, please!” whenever I speak in French to them. Some of the students are even resistant to the use of the resources, whether the dictionary, the word wall or their own personal cahier. Instead, they ask me, in English, how to say a particular word, and they don’t really like it when I tell them to search out the answer using the resources in the classroom. (7B – May 9, 2005)

At the time of writing these excerpts, I wondered whether this resistance to speaking French and using the available resources was actually a reflection on poor work habits.

However, many of these students are the ones who are resistant to any type of task completion and I think just want to take the easy way out without being bothered to do any work. (7B – May 9, 2005)

This class also seemed less motivated by the use of reward systems.

The points system is still working, but seems to be motivating mostly those who would already participate, and not those who rarely participate. (7B – March 30, 2005)

Students in the comparison group also demonstrated a more positive attitude at the beginning of the school year toward the use of the TL in class. Like 7B, though, this positive attitude declined to a more negative attitude and a resistance to the use of the TL.

Although this class did not seem to resist my use of French at the start of the school year, there are some that are unwilling to speak it, even in these less risky
situations. I overheard some translating into English to ask their questions and develop their partner profiles. (7C – October 7, 2004)

Most students worked on their presentations in English, then translated into French. I’ve been encouraging them to speak French during class time, and to use the French phrases and language structures that we learn during class instead of reinventing the wheel and trying to look all up in the dictionary. Some students are doing this . . . but many are not. (7C – February 14, 2005)

Although I mused that some resistance in 7B could have been a result of poor work habits and a general unwillingness to exert oneself to complete a task, my reflections in the 7C teacher journals suggest that this class was motivated more by unwillingness to perform poorly.

It seems to be . . . students are worried that the language level will not be sufficient (the overachievers who want to write the output that they do in English). (7C – February 14, 2005)

Several of the students in this class were high achievers, and seemed unwilling to take any risks that may have impacted negatively on the final mark. Translating from English, a language with which they were very familiar, into French seemed to ensure a higher quality of product in the TL. Many of these students used online translators at home for assignment preparation, which previous French language teachers had taught them to use.

They tried to lead an original discussion using new vocabulary and structures. I certainly do try to encourage this type of language extension, but in this case, they wrote their questions in English and then translated literally into French. Their presentation didn’t highlight any prior knowledge of the French language. . . My frustration is that some teachers in the elementary schools teach the students how to use [name of online translator] and other online translators, which doesn’t help the students learn how to effectively use resources. The students then take at face
value what the online translator spits out, without checking for errors or inconsistencies. (7C – January 19, 2005)

The use of the TL in class, and attitudes toward this usage, became more positive once again toward the end of the student study program.

It seems that students are more willing to listen to the French and try to figure out the meaning, or at least aren’t resisting the spoken French like they did at the beginning of the year. Even if performance doesn’t improve, it’s encouraging that their listening behavior has improved. (7C – June 14, 2005)

As this excerpt indicates, students became less resistant toward the use of French in the classroom as the year progressed. A possible explanation for this phenomenon could be the fact that this class studied French over the course of 10 months, and students may have demonstrated more resistance to the use of French over the middle months when motivation begins to wane in all subject areas.

Another explanation could be that students in 7C, like those in 7A, reacted positively to the reward system that was implemented during the middle of their study program to encourage a higher frequency of the use of French during learning tasks.

The points system is really motivating students to use French, which is absolutely fantastic. I’m getting more French from many in the class. The French is fragmented (in that it isn’t always correct or is more like “franglais”), but at least attempts are being made to speak in sentences, and students are taking risks and using what they know. (7C – March 1, 2005)

**Negotiation**

Negotiation of activities was an element of the multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach implemented in both compact CF and comparison groups. At the beginning
of each period of study, both groups of students (two compact CF classes and one comparison) seemed unsure of this process, and did not demonstrate an understanding of the ability to negotiate tasks and activities.

It was interesting when I first presented them with choices. We discussed at the start of the unit the final projects. The students at first thought they had to complete all these projects. (7A – October 6, 2004)

Students were already told their choices at the start of the unit, and had been allowed input into the activities and the projects. They didn’t give me any, but I figured that could be because it was the start of the year and they were shy to do so. (7C – November 4, 2004)

However, both classes in the compact CF group (7A and 7B) began to participate in the negotiation process as the year progressed. The first compact CF group, 7A, in particular seemed to enjoy the opportunity to have input into their program.

This time, students were more willing to chime in with ideas. We created quite a list. I selected some tasks/learning opportunities and they selected some as a class. We discussed the final project, settling on a health network. We will all create one and then each person/pair/group will film either a show or commercial on the network. We will develop details this week. (7A – November 1, 2004)

We also took a look at some of the activities that we had already done, and reviewed the list of activities that we wanted to do. I knew that we were not going to be able to complete all that they suggested, and some were not possible . . . Anyway, the class finally decided to continue with the food theme, making healthy meals in class. They wanted to cook (I think they just want to eat, but that’s okay!). So, we’ll spend some time on recipes and recipe preparation. (7A – November 29, 2004)
The students in the second compact CF group, 7B, seemed to initially enjoy the negotiation process.

This class seemed more willing to join in the negotiation process, but some chose to do so in a silly manner (as opposed to seriously thinking about possible final projects or variations of what I suggest). They did come up with some ideas that will work. (7B – April 4, 2005)

However, perhaps because their program of study was the second half of the academic year, as their program of study progressed, they seemed less interested in negotiation and did not seem to suggest or negotiate original activities.

We tried to negotiate the learning activities. I’m hoping that as we get into the unit they’ll begin to take ownership. They still did not go for the negotiation of tasks. They didn’t really seem interested, as 7A did, in suggesting possible final project ideas. I’ll return to this, and won’t give them anything too definite at this point. I’ve mentioned a few ideas for the final project to them, and have also outlined some possible learning activities. Perhaps in a few days, after some thought, they’ll be more willing to participate in their own learning. This class really isn’t taking ownership of their learning like 7A did. (7B – April 26, 2005)

The students in this class did give some input into their learning, but in a limited manner. As the following excerpt illustrates, students in 7B knew the type of activity in which they were interested, but were not interested in discussing the details or in negotiating different options.

Most of the students just wanted to cook. They didn’t really come up with some ideas. (7B – May 24, 2005)

Students in the comparison group also began their program of study unsure about the process of negotiation.
Students were [given] their choices at the start of the unit, and were allowed input into the activities and the projects. They didn’t give me any, but I figured that could be because it was the start of the year and they were shy to do so. (7C – November 4, 2004)

The students all selected their final task, and I met with each group (according to what they chose) to negotiate assessment expectations and to hand out and personalize the organizers. Mostly, it was me that created the organizers and the rubrics, since few students suggested anything. Hopefully, as the term goes on, they will begin to realize that they can take responsibility for their learning, and that they can be part of the teaching and learning process. (7C – November 8, 2004)

As the year progressed, the comparison class’ interest in the negotiation process did not seem to improve.

The students did not seem particularly enthusiastic, and did not really give me anything other than cooking (which they heard 7A was going to do). Perhaps as we get into the unit in a couple of lessons, they will be more willing or able to negotiate their tasks. (7C – December 6, 2004)

As this excerpt suggests, like the students in 7B, students in the comparison class were unwilling to individualize their program through the use of negotiation, and instead use the choices and learning tasks already implemented in the other class. This behavior continued throughout their program of study.

I tried to negotiate the final task today. They came up with few ideas, and waited for me to suggest some ideas. The ones I suggested they latched onto. Few students came up with any original ideas; in fact, only two students came up with something for the final task. I had hoped by this time in the academic year that
they would be used to this process, as we have repeated it several times.

(7C – March 1, 2005)

As this excerpt indicates, students in 7A, the first of the compact CF classes, began to willingly negotiate the learning activities in which they were to be involved. The second compact CF class demonstrated some initial enthusiasm for negotiation midway through their program, but then elected to not fully participate near the end of the program. The comparison class did not seem willing to be part of any negotiation process, other than simply making final project choices based on those they wished me to make as the teacher.

**Authentic materials and activities**

A third component of the multi-dimensional, project-based approach, as outlined by Turnbull (1999a) is the use of authentic materials and meaning-based activities. Examples of authentic materials used during the period of study include magazine articles (e.g., questionnaires, health articles), government documents (e.g., Canadian Health Food Guide and supporting documents), websites, television and DVD footage. It was more difficult to plan and implement authentic activities involving interaction with francophone’s and with French-speaking persons, in part because the community was relatively homogeneous with few French first-language speaking persons. Also, school board regulations and lack of technology at the time of the study prohibited the use of electronic messaging to engage in authentic communication.

Also, I’d like to use the computer to engage the students in real communication with other francophone’s (emails, chat, etc.), but this is prohibited in our board and the computer system will not permit any outgoing mail from student accounts. I’ll have to address this with the computer technicians and with the
board for next year, since I truly believe this authentic communication to be better for the students! (7C – January 20, 2005)

Therefore, activities that I considered to be authentic in that they were meaning-based and within the students’ realm of experience were implemented. Examples of meaning-based activities include nutrition studies, use of computers, video games and other technology, recipe preparation, and sports activities.

Student reactions to the use of authentic materials and meaning-based activities were extremely positive. All three classes seemed to enjoy the opportunity to use the computer websites.

Today we went to the computer room for the first period, and I introduced them to the Radio Canada website. We discussed reading strategies to use to decode the game instructions; this was probably one of my most successful activities to date! (7A – September 30, 2004)

We stopped midway through the class to discuss some of the new language structures that we had come across, and to share with each other what we had figured them to be. It’s amazing how a student is willing to take the time to decode a second language if it will enable them to play a computer game more successfully, but balks in class and claims to not be able to read French for all other class activities! Hmm! (7C – January 20, 2005)

As these excerpts suggest, students willingly implemented decoding strategies in order to read written instructions because the reading task, in this case instructions for playing a computer literacy game, held meaning for them and was within their realm of personal experience. Students read French instructions, demonstrating the use of comprehension strategies, because they were motivated to play the game.
Another activity that motivated students was recipe preparation. All three classes engaged in recipe reading, writing and food preparation as part of their nutrition unit, although the individual recipes used varied by class because of negotiation, as did the final projects for the unit.

The students really enjoyed today’s class. They began to draw their ideal sundaes, using the list of ingredients that we brainstormed. What has motivated them, I’m sure, is the fact that once the sundaes are drawn and labeled, then they will be “ordering” their sundaes from me and will get to enjoy the perfect sundaes. What a way to encourage everyone to authentically speak in French – offer food as motivation. (7B – May 25, 2005)

I’m amazed at how teaching with food encourages participation. The students worked well on the nacho task (ordering sentences from the recipe preparation) even though it involved no actual food. It seems that just discussing food is good. (7C – April 5, 2005)

Another meaning-based, authentic task involved the study of healthy eating habits. Again, this study seemed to be well-received by the students.

We then had time today to complete the health questionnaires. I liked this activity because it was an authentic questionnaire. We were able to use the Health Canada guidelines and information packets in French (again, authentic materials), and it was a good reading comprehension task. Most students did apply themselves to the activity and tried to make sense of each question. (7A – November 4, 2004)

We began the questionnaire, which students seemed to like. I adapted it (cut and pasted a few items) from a French teen magazine, so it was a familiar format for most of them - the girls, anyway, I’m sure. (7C – December 9, 2004)
Most students were able to understand the activity. It certainly helped that they just finished studying nutrition in family studies, so were already familiar with the Canadian Food Guide in English, as well as the daily requirements. This contextual familiarity seemed to give students confidence during the reading task, and I encountered less resistance (and fewer groans) than usual when I introduced the task. (7B – May 2, 2005)

As these reflections indicate, the use of materials and the implementation of tasks similar to those studied in other subject areas gave meaning to the tasks and promoted the use of French in a meaningful manner. Students seemed to respond more positively to these types of opportunities.

Opportunities in which students were able to select activities based on their own interests also seemed to bring authenticity to the learning program.

The group of [student names] are really excited about the chance of creating a sports desk media show. I think they’re most excited about the chance of filming themselves playing hockey, and then reporting on it! (7A – January 19, 2005)

As suggested by this reflection, engaging the students in activities and projects that were self-directed seemed to promote enthusiasm for the learning activities.

**Collaborative, communicative tasks**

Within the prepared curriculum for the study (see Appendix B for sample unit and learning activities), a variety of tasks and activities were presented. Many tasks and activities were collaborative in nature, requiring students to work in pairs or in small groups.

We began reading the introductory comic strip today. The plan is for students to work in collaborative pairs or groups to “read, reflect and retell” the story; then,
we bring it to the large group for sharing and to ensure comprehension. (7A – September 15, 2004)

We began a scaffolded reading project. Students were in groups of 4 (they partnered, and then I combined pairs of students) to read and answer the comprehensive questions based on Les diététistes. (7C – February 24, 2005)

Reflections on student response to the collaborative nature of the program were primarily positive. Students in all three classes seemed to enjoy the opportunities to work with a classmate or in a group.

Students seemed to like the group time provided to try and brainstorm space and video game vocabulary. (7A – September 14, 2004)

Students don’t seem to mind the presentations when they can do them with a partner or in a group. (7A – November 24, 2004)

Students worked well in their collaborative groups to brainstorm prior knowledge and experiences with video games and space (movies, etc.). (7B – February 7, 2005)

Anyway, the students seem to be enjoying the collaborative tasks, and mostly exhibit on-task behavior. (7C – November 10, 2004)

These representative excerpts illustrate that students were generally productive and enjoyed working in collaborative situations. Only in the journal reflections for 7B did I outline specific need for the use of individual learning.

Having some of the working period be individual or partner work instead of all groupwork has helped keep the behavior in check. There is more on-task behavior with this class when I insist on some individual work. (7B – May 12, 2005)
In this case, the use of individual tasks was implemented for classroom management reasons rather than specifically for pedagogic reasons.

Many teaching and learning activities were oral, requiring students to use the learned language structures and activate prior knowledge in communicative situations and spontaneous opportunities (e.g., role plays, question and answer periods, debates).

We then spent some time in role plays. Students could select a cooking show (they were given milkshake ingredients and they had to explain how to make it), an interview with a dietician (they were given a menu), or an interview with an athlete. (7A – January 3, 2005)

Today, we began our roving report. I was the reporter, and I “interviewed” several students. We recorded sample questions and answers on the board. Students then created mini-dialogues in groups using the models on the board. This was a completely oral activity. I instructed the students not to write anything down, but to just take 2-3 minutes to “talk it through.” (7B – February 17, 2005)

Student reactions to the oral, communicative focus of the learning activities were varied. At the start of their learning program, students in the first compact CF class (7A) seemed resistant to these types of activities, preferring more traditional paper-and-pencil, language (grammar)-focused tasks.

The plan was great; however, it is going to take a lot of work to convince students to use this new strategy. They seem to want the paper comprehension activities. They look to me for guidance, and need to be walked through each step. They’re quick to say, “What does this mean?” or “I don’t know,” rather than using all available cues and collaborative problem solving. (7A – September 15, 2004)

Today we worked in pairs on oral activities “J’aime. . .” There is a definite lack of enthusiasm in this class for oral language activities. They are quiet and willingly
complete grammar-type worksheets, but seem to balk at any type of oral or discovery (collaborative) activity. (7A – September 22, 2004)

As these reflections indicate, initial reactions to more collaborative, communicative tasks seemed hesitant and resistant. A possible explanation for this initial resistance is the higher level of risk involved in oral activities, as well as a lack of familiarity with more experiential, communicative tasks.

In addition, students perhaps perceived the oral, communicative tasks as enjoyable, but not as serious learning opportunities. In an excerpt from my journal after having given a short, written grammar test, I questioned this possibility.

Today students completed a written assessment test designed to assess use of verb conjugations in context. They were very quiet and worked well. It was interesting to realize that they put more effort and study into this one test that will count for such a small portion of their work (which they knew), yet resist the more oral tasks and projects that count for so much more (actual use and performance). They like the collaborative tasks, or seem to, but don’t consider them to be as “serious” an assessment as the paper-and-pencil test. (7A – October 7, 2004)

Students in the second compact CF class, 7B, seemed to enjoy the oral activities from the beginning of their study period, and did not initially question the implementation of such an approach.

Many of the students participate in the oral conversation periods that I always begin with, and the students reacted more positively than the other two classes to the listening test. Although this doesn’t mean that they will necessarily have more success than the others, they seemed more willing to listen to the spoken French and to try and comprehend it. (7B – February 9, 2005)
I must say, this group just seems to dive into any oral activity! What a great response! Today, we began our roving reporter. I was the reporter, and I interviewed several students. We recorded sample questions and answers on the board. Students then created mini-dialogues in groups using the models on the board. This was a completely oral activity. I instructed the students not to write anything down, but to just take 2-3 minutes to “talk it through.”

(7B – February 17, 2005)

Initial reactions to the oral approach in the comparison class were varied. Although students did not seem to resist the oral approach, they also worked more efficiently and more productively on more traditional activities. As the following excerpt from the comparison class journal outlines, initial student preference for more traditional types of paper activities may have stemmed from familiarity with the tasks, rather than an enjoyment of these types of tasks.

The class very comfortably worked on the devoir worksheets. Worksheets are something they definitely enjoy doing, or at least are familiar with so they get right to business! I have fewer behavioral issues when we complete worksheets, but I also have more complaints about French being boring. Hmm.

(7C – February 14, 2005)

As the period of study progressed, student response to the pedagogic approach seemed to change, depending on the class in which they were enrolled. Students in the first compact CF class, 7A, seemed to embrace the concept of collaborative, communicative learning tasks, and began to state preference for these types of tasks.

[Student names] were hysterical [amusing] in their oral conversation today. They presented an episode of The View . . . Anyway, they brought a few people from the audience up and had them join in the table discussion. The students liked this.

(7A – November 4, 2004)
Students really seem to enjoy the oral time at the start of class. It focuses them on French and permits several opportunities for spontaneous oral communication and for them to practice what they are learning (for those willing to take the risks to do so). (7A – October 12, 2004)

We began the class with the theatre game *Passez le ballon*. It gave an opportunity for students to role play, yet decline if they wished. Most students did jump on board with this, speaking primarily in French with some assistance. Definitely a game to play again. I was hoping it would release inhibitions before the student orals. It seemed to work. (7A – Tuesday, October 19, 2004)

Participation in oral tasks in the second compact CF class, 7B, on the other hand, began to decline.

Oral communication time is slowing down, and students are beginning to resist participating. (7B – May 11, 2005)

The first part of the class (our oral communication time) was slow – few participants, and those who did participate are those who always participate. It’s getting harder each day to “drag” the oral communication out of the students. (7B – March 30, 2005)

However, as the journal notes indicate, this decline may have been a result, in part, of a higher incidence of student behavior.

I had to spend quite a bit of time with [names of students]. Both of these pairs were off-task and not keen on participating. The good news is that those who were on-task certainly seemed able to identify what they ate at each meal, using the correct partitive. (7B – May 3, 2005)

I’m beginning to get the impression that this particular group needs some structured activities, some very specific routines, rules and consequences. They
were certainly eager to play the tasks, though. We still have 3 groups to go through, as it took so long to organize each task because I was dealing with behavior and trying to help each group leading a task to be independent. (7B – March 1, 2005)

Behavior escalated to a point where it is truly hindering the learning of French. Students are resisting speaking in French, and are increasingly resisting hearing me speak in French (“What did you say? I don’t understand French. Tell me in English.”). This is creating behavior in the classroom, and I spent much of my energies today on behavior as opposed to teaching and facilitating the learning of French. (7B – April 5, 2005)

As these excerpts highlight, student off-task behavior seemed to contribute to the perceived lack of interest in the communicative, oral activities. However, in my journal, I noted that some of the more disinterested students seemed to also demonstrate similar off-task behavior in other subject areas.

I don’t think I’ve changed the program format from what it was at the beginning, so I don’t understand the change in behavior. I’ve discussed some of the more difficult students with their core teacher and other rotary teachers, and others are having difficulties with them as well. (7B – April 5, 2005)

This excerpt suggests that some of the problems and lack of interest in the pedagogic approach may not have been solely a reaction of the students in 7B toward the CF class, but rather a response to academic programs in general.

Students in the comparison class of 7C also began to more actively participate in oral tasks shortly after the beginning of their period of study.
Surprisingly, there was active participation. We did a roving reporter activity, which the students seem to like, judging by the numbers requesting to be one of the roles. (7C – September 29, 2004)

Students have begun to take ownership of the opening oral tasks. They request to lead it, and many volunteer to respond to the “star” and ask questions. (7C – October 4, 2004)

Journal excerpts indicate, though, that this more active interest did not translate into more risk-taking and a higher degree of confidence in communicative tasks. In fact, students in the comparison class seemed disinterested or unwilling to take risks and to engage in more complex conversation without the use of several examples and sentence starters.

Few risks are taken, though, in that similar questions are posed each day. We’ll need to focus on making links with their learning activities and these spontaneous oral tasks. (7C – October 4, 2004)

As the year progressed, the active participation in comparison class 7C began to wane and many students did not wish to be part of oral communication activities.

Participation is lean, and it takes quite a bit of prompting from me (as well as picking on students) in order to have any oral discussion in the classroom. If this continues, I will have to rethink the oral spontaneous model of beginning with a conversation, perhaps beginning with role plays that students prepare beforehand, developing some type of response that students can use to engage in conversation after the role play. (7C – January 25, 2005)

Although they are working well, for the most part, in the collaborative tasks, our oral conversation and discussion periods (spontaneous, oral conversation opportunities) lag and seem to require structure in order to keep it running. The students don’t want to participate, and are unwilling when called upon to try and
risk new structures and language expressions. They consistently ask, “How do I say . . .?” instead of trying to retrieve prior knowledge or the expressions discussed in lessons. This is very frustrating to me. This class demonstrated so much potential at the start of the school year. They were enthusiastic, and had several students who participated in conversations and who demonstrated a high level of competence in the French language. Many of these students are not completing their work now, and are among those not participating. I’m down to the regular quartet of [names of students]. (7C – January 31, 2005)

As these representative comments suggest, students in 7C seemed less inclined to participate actively and enthusiastically in oral language tasks as the year progressed.

According to the notes in my teacher journal, all three classes seemed to enjoy the collaborative nature of the CF classroom. Students in 7A, and 7C to some extent, worked productively in collaborative situations; however, students in 7B often engaged in off-task behavior, which I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

Also, student reaction to the oral focus of the classroom was varied. Students in 7A, although they required much encouragement at the beginning of their study period to participate, began to embrace the oral activities and tasks. Students in the comparison class began the year, like 7B, by participating in oral tasks, and then began to decline participation and made fewer attempts to speak the TL. Several excerpts in both of these classes highlight student behavior as a possible reason for this decline, in particular in the second compact CF class, 7B.
Perception of Similarities / Differences Between Groups

Student behavior

Notes in my teaching journals indicate that students in all three classes posed some behavioral challenges.

Behavior was a real problem today. [Student name], in particular, has not been completing work and he and [student name] are disrupting others. Tomorrow there will be a seating change. (7A – November 2, 2004)

Tough, tough class today. Behavior escalated to a point where it is truly hindering the learning of French. (7B – April 5, 2005)

I’ve already made a few seating changes, and have phoned home regarding one student. Behavior does seem to be escalating; in particular, the behavior of indifference. (7C – January 25, 2005)

As these excerpts note, off-task behavior was prevalent in all three classes. However, the type and duration of such off-task behavior, as well as the perception of its impact on student learning, varied by class.

In my reflections on the first compact CF class, I recorded several instances of off-task behavior in 7A, primarily at the start of the year. Upon closer investigation of these notes, though, it became apparent that the bulk of the class off-task behavior was exhibited at the start of their learning program.

Today we tried a student-driven activity. Each “team” selected a list of words . . . They had to know the answer. If correct, they could select “points” for their team (from the pile of point’s cards). This went well, but behavior interrupted. This group needs routines for large group work, and need to learn how to silent, participate and support their peers! (7A – September 21, 2004)
As this excerpt indicates, student behavior at the beginning of the study period in September seemed to be a result of needing consistent rules and routines in the classroom. Once these were established, and students had an opportunity to learn the routines, more on-task behavior on the part of the entire class seemed prevalent. As 7A’s period of study progressed, the off-task behavior became isolated to a few individuals.

We didn’t get to the questionnaire. The oral conversation takes time in the beginning and we also had to take time out to put in place the new seating plan. We completely changed tables around, so this took quite a bit of time. I think it will help, though, as there are some students in this class who continue to try and disrupt and act out, but most students are now on board, so we want to continue with this. [Student name] hasn’t been doing his work, so I need to check up on him and his group. (7A – November 3, 2004)

[Student name] did not want to do the work. He has completed very little work this term and refuses to come in for extra help (unless I give him a detention). I moved him to the table with [names of two students], since they won’t be drawn into his disruptive behavior and he will hopefully be less disruptive. (7A – November 4, 2004)

I’ve made some phone calls home, and we have re-arranged seating. There are some obvious behavioral issues in this class who are disrupting it for everyone [names of five students]. We had gotten on track, but now a few students are causing serious disruptions in the class. (7A- November 8, 2004)

The impact on the pedagogic approach seemed to be the loss of more collaborative activities until behavior became less of an issue and students were able to work more independently and more on-task.
We do have rules and routines in the classroom, which we will continue to follow, but unfortunately it takes away from the classroom. However, until on-task behavior is in place, we will not be able to continue with many of our activities (such as collaborative tasks) because students continue to disrupt. I have come up with a points system that I will put into place for students tomorrow to reinforce those who demonstrate positive learning habits, and will continue with the 1-2-3 action plan that we have had in place for those who continue to disrupt. (7A – November 8, 2004)

This excerpt indicates that in addition to consistent rules and routines, a reward system was put into place in 7A. Following the implementation of this program, behavior seemed to be less of an issue with the majority of students, as the behavioral plan seemed to motivate students to demonstrate more on-task behavior. Also, my teacher journals indicate that a pause was introduced into the intensive period in order to give students an opportunity to eat a healthy snack.

We tried something new today. I introduced *la pause*. Many of the students have complained about hunger, and since our class goes until 12:15, that means that they haven’t had a break since before 9:00 a.m. Perhaps some of the restless behavior is related to hunger. Since we are discussing healthy habits, I introduced the idea of a break for 5 minutes, during which time we refreshed our minds and bodies with healthy snacks. (7A – November 9, 2004)

As the following excerpt indicates, I perceived that this break greatly assisted with the attention and motivation of students.

Behavior seems back on track. I’m sure it’s a result of many factors, but I do believe the brief opportunity to break for something healthy to eat is helping. (7A – December 6, 2004)
Midway through the period of study for the first compact CF group, the reflections in my teacher journal began to indicate that the more on-task behavior exhibited by students facilitated the successful implementation of more collaborative learning activities and opportunities for negotiation, as evidenced by the following representative comments.

Today I tried something new with the class and was very happy with the collaborative effort . . . but what I was so happy to hear was the amount of discussion about the text and the meaning. Most groups were not focusing on each word, but rather on the general meaning! This was truly gratifying to me and I was so excited about this class that I chatted the ear off of my colleague at lunch (Grade 8 CF teacher) I truly believe that learning happened today, and I also believe that the students felt proud of their efforts. (7A – November 18, 2004)

[Name of student] is more on board with the activities that we’re working on. He is actually one of the students that seemed to relish the chance to have input in the program. He also surprised me by suggesting some worthwhile activities. (7A – December 6, 2004)

Students worked in their groups today to read their recipes for the gingerbread snaps. We’re going to sell them to raise money for the breakfast club . . . I think this was the first class that we had that had the potential to be absolute chaos but it wasn’t. (7A – December 8, 2004)

We used the entire class to prepare our pizzas, because close to 30 students had to individually order a pizza from me. I ended up enlisting the aid of three students who helped me prepare the pizzas according to each student’s specifications. It was a great class though. Every student was able to order a pizza from me in French, with very little assistance. They cooperated well and worked on-task at their desks until called, so I was able to assess each student individually. (7A – December 16, 2004)
In the second compact CF class, 7B, I perceived that behavior was more on-task at the start of their study period.

They adapted quickly to the rules and routines, and worked well at the collaborative tasks. This was only the first day, of course, and students have also been working together for half a year already, and have gotten a chance to get to know each other. (7B – February 7, 2005)

My initial impression of this class is that it consists of many risk-takers, who are not afraid to make mistakes in order to learn to speak French. I really hope this type of behavior continues! (7B – February 9, 2005)

As indicated in the first excerpt, I attributed the initial positive on-task behavior to the fact that 7B had already been in school for 5 months as a class, and were beginning their CF program of study midway through their academic year. They were already well prepared for the routines of a classroom, and also had had an opportunity to merge as a class.

Although behavior began on a more positive note than was the case in the first compact CF class, it did not remain that way. As the following excerpts indicate, behavior in 7B deteriorated and began to impact learning activities.

I spent much of my time running between the two [groups] keeping behavior in check, and didn’t truly have an opportunity to assess any language learning, or to foster risk-taking. I’m beginning to get the impression that this particular group needs some structured activities – some very specific routines, rules and consequences. (7B – March 1, 2005)

Behavior escalated to a point where it is truly hindering the learning of French. Students are resisting speaking in French, and are increasingly resisting hearing me speak in French . . . This is creating behavior in the classroom, and I spent
much of my energies today on behavior as opposed to teaching and facilitating the learning of French. (7B – April 5, 2005)

Behavior has been a huge issue with this class. I’ve adjusted the seating plan a few times to try and get the best possible mix of students at each table. I had to do it again today. (7B – May 9, 2005)

The same motivational reward system was implemented in 7B as it was in 7A, but was less effective.

It’s getting harder each day to “drag” the oral communication out of the students. The points system is still working, but seems to be motivating mostly those who would already participate, and not those who rarely participate.

(7B – March 30, 2005)

Also, in my teacher notes, I perceived the greater incidences of off-task behavior in 7B to be detrimental to the learning of French, as it appeared to result in fewer opportunities for effective learning than in either 7A or in 7C.

This class really isn’t taking ownership of their learning like 7A did. It’s perhaps the makeup of the class. It definitely has more student behaviors in this class, and students entered the French program with what I perceived to be a more negative attitude toward the learning of French. (7B – April 26, 2005)

I’m not sure whether we’re even going to get a chance to get into our final unit. It seems as though 7B is completing the learning tasks more slowly than 7A, and most likely won’t complete the same amount of the program as either 7A or 7C. This could be because we had several interruptions, but we also had a lot more behavior in this class. I have had to deal with so much more off-task behavior. (7B – May 24, 2005)
I’ve created a calendar for the remainder of the year, as we have very few full teaching days left. I am going to have to pick and choose activities. I will have to skip a few with this group that I completed with 7A and am working on with 7C because I would like them all to complete the Cirque du Soleil task.

(7B – June 2, 2005)

As evidenced by these excerpts, I did not complete the same number of teaching and learning tasks in the second compact CF class. In my reflections, I attributed much of this slower pace of pedagogic implementation to the frequent off-task behavior and lack of student motivation.

The comparison class, 7C, also demonstrated some student off-task behavior, but seemingly to a lesser degree than 7B. According to my reflections in the teacher journal, motivation and enthusiasm in this class for learning French waned during the middle of the year, as did student willingness to participate in oral tasks.

There is a definite lack of enthusiasm in this class. Today I felt as though we were just going through the paces instead of doing anything meaningful. It could be the time of year and the stress of Christmas concert that has us like this. I don’t know.

(7C – December 8, 2005)

Participation is lean, and it takes quite a bit of prompting from me . . . in order to have any oral discussion in the classroom. (7C – January 25, 2005)

The enthusiasm in the class seems to be waning. As I’ve previously written in past journals, this class is getting sluggish. Perhaps it is the blues that always seem to hit at the end of January and into February. (7C – January 31, 2005)

These excerpts are representative of several within the December to February timeframe, or months five to seven of the students’ academic year. After this point, there were few entries in my journal indicating that the class as a whole was exhibiting off-task or unmotivated behavior.
Like 7A, it is possible that the increased motivation to engage in oral learning tasks on the part of most students was a result of the rewards system implemented in the class.

The points system really seems to encourage the use of French. I’m getting sentences instead of single word answers . . . Hopefully once the novelty of the points system has worn off, students will still be motivated to collect the points and speak French. (7C – March 2, 2005)

Although the class as a whole seemed to be more engaged in the learning tasks as the end of the year approached, a few students seemed to continue to demonstrate a lack of motivation and engage in off-task, disruptive behaviors.

[Names of three students] would not remain on-task during this activity and would not use the time wisely . . . Instead, they used their time to write inappropriate notes back and forth . . . However, I have been noticing recently that these girls as well as [names of three students] seem to be losing motivation to complete any work in class. All of these girls are more than capable of doing the work, and of learning. They just choose not to. (7C – February 7, 2005)

However, there are still some students who don’t engage in any of the group discussions, and who only complete the minimal amount of work necessary for a mark. The girls’ group of [names of four students] really need a lot of reminders to complete their work. They have really fallen away from academics . . . Motivating them has been really difficult. They are resisting any work in French, and only want to begin with English and then translate the work into French. (7C – May 4, 2005)

As these representative comments indicate, examples of whole-class negative behavioral choices seemed to decrease with the introduction of behavior modification programs and incentives, although a few students continued to demonstrate off-task behavior and learning choices.
Time issues and pedagogic approach

At the start of the study, I implemented the same teaching and learning activities in all three classes, using a project-based, multidimensional pedagogic approach. Throughout the year, I reflected in my daily journal regarding the implementation of teaching and learning strategies in each class. An in-depth study of all excerpts highlights both frustration and some differences between implementation in the three classes.

Firstly, in my journal excerpts, I noticed that I expressed great frustration with the shorter period length of the comparison class, because we were unable to utilize the class time that we had to complete work. Frequently, assignments and collaborative tasks extended over a period of several days.

Students struggled with these questions, so we took some time to review them orally, and then the groups completed them collaboratively. We still didn’t get through them, though, and will need to finish tomorrow. It seems we just get started and we need to pack up. It’s worth taking the time to work through the reading collaboratively because they seem to help each other. (7C – September 28, 2004)

Unfortunately, we still did not finish. There just never seems to be enough time. By the time we get settled in, it’s time to go again. (7C – October 20, 2004)

Students still needed time to finish their group activities. I’ll be glad when this task is over. We’re into the end of the second week and still not done. (7C – October 27, 2004)

As these excerpts illustrate, tasks extended beyond one period, often extending into several periods in order to complete. One reason noted in the journals for this task length was the fact that an opening oral component was implemented each day in each of the three classes.
We opened the class with our oral communication. This often takes about 10 minutes, as it did today. It’s valuable time spent in spontaneous oral communication, but leaves us little time to complete our tasks.

(7C – October 12, 2004)

As this excerpt indicates, the time spent in oral communication at the start of class shortened the amount of time within the class to have been spent on other teaching and learning activities. Also, as a result of the break in learning, my journal reflections indicate that much time was spent in the review of concepts as well as on task expectations.

Since we didn’t finish yesterday, I spent a few minutes reviewing what to do. (7C – October 20, 2004)

Then, I need to begin again the next day, and I’m noticing that I need to review once again the structures from the day before. (7C – January 25, 2005)

We did, however, have a chance to review the structures from yesterday, which I put on the board, and then students were given their menus that were turned in yesterday so they could put together a presentation. (7C – February 2, 2005)

We worked on the reading task from yesterday. We took approximately 10 minutes at the start of the class (after our oral communication time) to review the task and to form our groups. Most of the students remembered the group that they were in, so thankfully we didn’t need to waste time reviewing the groups. (7C – February 28, 2005)

This leaves very little time for actual groupwork, and it takes the students time to get back into their groups, review their work from the day before, and then organize for today. (7C – April 14, 2005)
In contrast to the comparison class excerpts, task completion was viewed favorably in my reflections regarding the compact CF class period length.

This particular time period is great, because the double time slot gives me the chance to get everyone into their individual/group work, ensure that all questions have been answered and students are on-task, and then take the time to meet one-on-one with students to assess oral conversational abilities. (7A – January 19, 2005)

This class worked on their comic strips today. Each group seemed to make some progress, in that they were able to map out and plan their strips. It’s nice to have the extra time to be able to give a quality explanation, give students the time to work, then regroup as a class to discuss any problems or issues that arose before going back to work again. (7B – March 29, 2005)

These excerpts highlight my perception that the more intensive period length (double the length of the comparison class period) facilitated task completion as well as more in-depth teaching and the successful implementation of collaborative tasks. While I noted in my journal that collaboration was certainly part of the comparison class pedagogic approach, I also highlighted the difficulty I had in implementing some of the more complex collaborative tasks within the comparison class time frame.

We didn’t spend the same amount of time on the recipes because we had half the time. I wasn’t able to spend the same amount of time enforcing the use of French. (7C – December 15, 2004)

We also didn’t get a chance to cook the pizzas in class. I ended up cooking them at lunch and all students returned during recess to eat their pizzas. It is on days like this that I especially miss the luxury of a longer class period. I feel that I rushed through what could have been a valuable and authentic communicative
task in order to get the pizzas finished before the end of the class.
(7C – March 24, 2005)

In order to manage the timeframes in the comparison class, journal reflections indicate that I occasionally assessed student performance in a manner different from that in the compact CF classes.

Unfortunately, we did not have enough time for me to adequately assess all students. I ended up creating a short checklist, as opposed to the rubric that I had used with 7A, in order to be able to go through all pairs. (7C – March 24, 2005)

Assessment in the comparison class was difficult to complete within the parameters of the more traditional period length (38 minutes). Journal excerpts from the two compact CF classes of 7A and 7B indicate that the longer period facilitated more in-depth student assessment.

The one good thing about having so much time is that I can spend time conferencing with almost all students each class, so I can redirect, if necessary. (7A – October 12, 2004)

I also used the class time to meet with individual students for some one-on-one assessment . . . I find that I better know the language abilities of the students in this class since I’m able to take this time with them. Usually by the time all are settled into their work in the other class (7C), I don’t have much time for this type of individual assessment. I can get so much more formative assessment done in this class. (7A – January 19, 2005)

It was not only assessment that was implemented in a manner different in the comparison class. According to my reflections in the journal, I implemented fewer communicative tasks, such as role plays, debates, and communicative games, in the comparison class. Some reflections indicate that a game was planned, but was not implemented due to lack of time.
Although I had planned a communicative game, I had to drop it due to time. Task explanation took quite awhile, as did set-up of groups, materials, etc.

(7C – October 18, 2004)

Other excerpts highlight the fact that communication tasks, like the more collaborative tasks, took several periods to complete.

We finally managed to complete the communication game. The students really seemed to enjoy this game. I think they enjoyed the complex nature of the scoring, and the opportunity to engage in spontaneous communication. The parameters of the game helped them to have the necessary vocabulary to communicate and to spontaneously speak language “on the fly.”

(7C – May 2, 2005)

As this excerpt illustrates, some of the more oral activities took more than one period to complete. It is certainly possible that fewer games or communicative tasks were implemented in the comparison class because of the amount of time they took from other pedagogic activities, such as the opening focus on oral conversation, teaching and learning explanations, and collaborative tasks.

In this section, I described the findings from the teacher journal. Emerging patterns and themes were presented, and representative excerpts were reviewed in support of the patterns. A more detailed discussion of the findings follows in the next chapter.

**Videotapes of Teacher Pedagogic Implementation**

In this section, I discuss the classroom observations of my teaching practice as recorded by videotape. Six sessions of each class were recorded in order to determine the extent to which the multi-dimensional approach was implemented in each of the three classes. The same unit or project learning tasks and activities were recorded so that comparisons could be made across the
classes. Due to technical difficulties that were unable to be resolved, the tapes for 7A could not
be used. Although the class was filmed, and the footage appeared clean on the camera and on the
video cassettes used to film, I was unable to transfer the data to a computer or to a CD for editing
purposes (which was necessary to prevent the identity of the students). The cassettes seemed
corrupted, and this issue could not be resolved by the technician that had been consulted.
Therefore, classroom observations can only be made for 7B and 7C. Two independent
adjudicators used the revised MOLT checklist to record a description of the learning tasks and
activities observed (i.e., language, discipline, management, project), as well as the teacher and
student TL usage, the role of the teacher in the classroom, the materials, the pedagogy and the
student experiences (see Tables 30 to 32).
### Table 30

**Percentage of Instances of Specific Language Proficiency Skills Introduced by Teacher, by Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th>7C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 31

**Percentage of Teacher and Student Use of Language, by Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher use of language</th>
<th>Student use of language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>7C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 16</td>
<td>N = 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 32  
*Percentage of Observed Role of Teacher, by Class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7B</th>
<th></th>
<th>7C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicator 2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations made on the checklist were varied, and percentages were calculated based on the number of times a particular item was indicated by an adjudicator. Both adjudicators indicated that the learning tasks for both compact CF class 7B and comparison class 7C primarily focused on listening (7B, 32% and 56%; 7C, 24% and 76%) and speaking tasks (7B, 50% and 69%; 7C, 41% and 47%), with some reading and writing tasks observed. Writing tasks were primarily observed in 7B (19% and 38%), usually in association with reading or speaking tasks. One adjudicator did indicate observation of some writing tasks in 7C, then noted that students were primarily required to circle items or draw during these tasks. Differences among the raters were explained in their written comments. For each observation period, the first adjudicator identified the primary language proficiency skill requested of the students, whereas the second adjudicator identified all language proficiency skills. For example, one of the observed tasks consisted of a speaking assignment in which students worked in pairs. The first student gave verbal instructions to the second student in order to produce a drawing that matched the given instructions. The first adjudicator identified this task as a speaking task, as the students were practicing verbal instructions. The second adjudicator, however, identified speaking,
listening and writing skills, as the students were required to speak, to listen, and to draw (writing task).

In both classes, the adjudicators observed that I primarily spoke using the TL or a mix of French and English. In her observations, the first adjudicator predominantly identified French as the language in which I spoke during the recorded teaching and learning tasks, adding in her comments that English was occasionally used during these times for behavior management issues. For the observed activities in which she indicated that a mix of French and English was used, this adjudicator further explained in her notes that English was introduced during these times for language clarification purposes, such as repeating a French vocabulary item in English. The second adjudicator chose to identify that a mix of languages was spoken whenever English was used for instances of discipline or clarification of specific vocabulary items. In both cases, the adjudicators indicated that I spoke similarly while teaching in the compact CF class and the comparison class, using a mix of French and English, and primarily reserving the use of English for discipline issues or clarification purposes. Conversely, students tended to speak primarily in their L1 of English, occasionally using a mix of L1 and the L2. During speaking language tasks, one observer noted that students tended to speak more French as the activity progressed, suggesting that students spoke more French when they achieved comprehension of the task.

In both classes the adjudicators observed that I played the role of teacher as expert as well as of facilitator. However, observations from both adjudicators indicated that in 7C, I seemed to act more in the role of the expert in the class, whereas in 7B, I seemed to act more in the role of a facilitator.
Similar observations across the two classes were the use of extended texts for materials, instances of pre-activities before each lesson, and personalization of the task, usually by offering students choice in their responses.

The observations from the two independent adjudicators indicate that I presented the teaching activities and learning opportunities similarly in compact CF class 7B and comparison class 7C. I focused on speaking and listening activities in both classes, introduced some reading and writing tasks, and spoke primarily in the TL of French, or using a mix of French and English. Adjudicator observations did indicate one difference in my teaching between the two classes. In compact CF class 7B, I was in the role of facilitator more frequently than that of expert, but in comparison class 7A I acted more as expert than facilitator. It is possible that in the comparison class I was concerned with task completion during each period, and therefore assumed the role of expert more often in order to promote that outcome. A more detailed discussion of the adjudicator observations will follow in the next chapter.

**Student Focus Groups**

In this section, I present the analysis of the student focus group sessions for both the compact CF group and the comparison group. Volunteering students in each class participated in one of nine focus group sessions, each 40 minutes in length, during which time I facilitated the discussion by introducing a set of previously-prepared questions (see Appendix S). The purpose of the focus groups sessions was to elaborate on the questionnaire responses and elicit more detailed information regarding student attitudes toward their particular CF program format and learning activities. In total, I interviewed 39 students (15 students in 7A, 19 students in 7B and 10 students in 7C). All sessions were conducted at the end of students’ program of study (either in April or in June), and were conducted in English, recorded and transcribed. Using NVivo
software, I read through each interview transcript, highlighting and subsequently coding potentially relevant comments and notes. Four main themes emerged from this analysis:

1. Perceptions of improvement in language proficiency;
2. Perceptions of period length;
3. Perceptions of pedagogic approach and activities; and
4. Perceptions of student choice.

**Perceptions of Improvement in Language Proficiency**

All three classes self-assessed higher level of language learning than in previous years. In the compact CF classes 7A and 7B, 17 students recorded agreement with the statement that they had improved during the course of the study period. Representative statements of improvement from these two classes are:

I can actually read it, and I can talk better. (7A student)

At that time I sucked but now I am pretty good. (7A student)

I learned a lot in my phrases and words (7A student)

I didn't even know how to use a French/English dictionary before. (7A student)

Yes, I definitely do because I never used to be able to speak French and I could barely even listen to it and now I know most of the stuff. (7A student)

I think more. I actually paid attention. (7B student)

I improved a lot since last year because last year I didn't really learn much. (7B student)

I improved mostly I think in reading and writing and understanding. (7B student)
In the comparison class, again most students considered their language skills to have improved, as evidenced by the following representative comment:

I remember at the beginning of the year, like, the two paragraphs that we did, they were both in English because I didn’t know what to write, and now only one of them in half English because it was the uniform one. (7C student)

This student alluded to the fact that at the start of the year, he was unable to write any of the assessment pieces in French, whereas at the end of the year, he was able to partially write the assessment piece in French, using English only about half of the time instead of French. Other representative comments are as follows:

We learned more in French than we did last year. (7C student)

Last year, I was like, “What are you talking about?” This year, I understand. (7C student)

These statements reveal that students definitely self-assessed greater improvement in their French language learning program than in previous years. Many students attributed the greater improvement to the more difficult Grade 7 program of study that they had just completed.

Last year we just did like in French, all we did was play games and stuff. This year was hardest to get used to. (7A student)

Well, last year, we did kind of kiddie stuff . . . And we got points and we had to write books and stuff and it would just be like the small things, tiny words and stuff, and then we learned how to do sentences . . . but we didn’t do anything really big or much else. (7A student)
Like last year we were basically watching a movie and playing Bingo all the time. . . And this year we get all this stuff that we actually did and we don’t even know much French from before. (7A student)

Last year we didn't really get as much French opportunities in my school. . . we just did stuff in our books. (7B student)

I just remember last year, we had one period a day, and mostly we were drawing stuff and working on the same stuff we did 2 years before that and watching movies, that’s what we did last year, so we learned more. (7C student)

We came here and we thought it was going to be more like reading from books and stuff like it was from our other school, but it wasn't, and it was different. (7C student)

Yeah, we’d like you’d sit there and make it look like you were working, and then, okay, we’ll take it up on the board now. (7C student, referring to last year)

These statements indicate that the students in both the compact CF and the comparison classes considered their current program of CF study to be more challenging and more difficult than in previous years, therefore offering more opportunities for greater improvement in their learning.

Only two students in the compact CF classes expressed that they did not improve at all during the program study period. One of these students, though, attributed his lack of improvement not to pedagogy or to period length, but rather to his own behavior. In his words:

No, I think I went down cause all the foolish stuff I did. (7A student)

Only two students in the comparison class interviewed indicated a lack of improvement in particular skill areas of French. One female student noted that:
I don’t think I have improved in knowing what it means. Sometimes I get so confused I don’t even know how to say “the” . . . like when I’m writing and sort of reading. (7C student)

Another student, this time male, remarked that he had not improved in reading.

Not reading, I don’t understand French. (7C student)

**Perceptions of Period Length**

A pattern of satisfaction with the period length in which students were enrolled emerged from the analysis of the focus group session transcriptions. In the compact CF group sessions, which consisted of a total of 34 students, 14 of 15 students in 7A and 18 of 19 students in 7B expressed a preference for the compact format (80-minute classes, 5 months of the year). In the comparison class sessions, which consisted of a total of 10 students, seven students preferred the traditional format of CF (40-minute classes, 10 months of the year) in which they participated and three expressed a desire to participate in the compact format in future years.

In the compact CF focus group sessions, students indicated a variety of reasons for preferring the compact format over the traditional format. Several students focused on pedagogic reasons.

I think everyone found it easier just to do it for two periods because then you don’t have to think of what happened the day before, and you can get the whole activity done. (7A student)

We had more time to work on things, to plan in one period, so then we don't have to get out and then start, we have a longer time. (7A student)

You have more time to finish your work. (7A student)
You get more work done. (7A student)

Because you have more time to think about it. Sometimes it is like one period you are doing something and then the next day you have to be done it because we are doing something different and some people might not have figured it out yet. (7B student)

If you just get started on something and then you have to put it away because there would only be one period, with two periods you would get to start it and then work on it. (7B student)

Yes. Then you have more time to work on your stuff because you would just explain it and then we would have to put it away and remember it the next day, when you could actually get started on it and then when you go back to look at it you actually know what to do. (7B student)

These statements illustrate that many of the students in the compact CF class considered the compact period to be effective at assisting with work completion. They noted that a more intensive period of time permitted the introduction of a task, as well as an intensive period of time to work on and complete the task without interruption.

Other students focused on pedagogic reasons related to the ability to more effectively learn in a compact CF environment.

It helped me a lot of the time. We could actually go slow instead of taking, going really fast. (7A student)

It helped us out because we would have more time to practice if we have an oral presentation. (7A student)

I think maybe we learned a little bit more. (7B student)
You can intake more . . . because with one period you just learn like a little bit and then oh..., that was a waste of time, right. . . with two periods you get intake more into the brain and it helps a lot. (7B student)

As evident in these comments, the students linked a greater opportunity for more comprehensive learning to the longer, more intensive period. They seemed to feel that the more intensive periods permitted a more in-depth study of the language, and the opportunity to practice and become more proficient in their FSL studies.

A few students indicated that the compact classes permitted engaging and motivating instructional activities.

Um, we had time to do games and learn in groups and stuff. (7B student)

I like the two periods. You get your work done and have time for [communicative] games. (7B student)

Some students expressed a preference for the compact format because they considered it to facilitate the retention of the French language they were learning.

I like the two periods because you start it and then you finish it. If you started it Thursday, you would not have class until Monday. You would forget how to do it and forget some of the stuff that [we] did, so I like the two periods. (7B student)

This particular student seems to be indicating that the ability to begin and complete tasks in the longer, more intensive period facilitates the retention of the learned language structures.

Although not explicitly expressed, his statement suggests that in the more traditional format, task completion may extend over a period of days, and the interruption of the weekend would necessitate review in order to remember all that had been started the week before. In a more
intensive period, completion of tasks with fewer hours and fewer classes in between facilitates retention, as the following statement indicates.

Because they might forget it, like they just come in for one period and then they would have to go to all the other classes. With us, we have two periods, so we try to remember it and stuff. (7B student)

Other students indicated a preference for the compact period for scheduling reasons.

Because if it was one period in the morning and one period in the afternoon, you would take 5 minutes at the beginning and end of each period to clean up and all that and get ready. But with a double period you would only have to take 5 minutes at the beginning of the first period and 5 minutes at the end of the second period, so you still had 70 minutes of class time. (7B student)

Yeah, cause you don’t have to change in between classes. (7A student)

Yeah, you always know when it is and I like the fact that it was the same time every day and we knew where we were going. (7A student)

It made it simple because we had core, core, core and then French, French. (7A student)

Because it's better for me because if you had just one period, let’s say you were going to French, then you would have to go to art, and then a different class, but if doing a double period you can just go through one period. (7B student)

As these statements indicate, students in the compact CF class liked the consistency of the compact schedule, and the lack of rotation between classes. The opportunity to remain in one class longer, as one student indicated, permitted a more full use of class time.
A few students, predominantly from the second compact CF class (7B student), noted that the length and intensity of the compact format was a disadvantage.

It’s long. (7A student)

I don't like having both together because it's so long in one classroom. (7B student)

Way too long. (7B student)

It was too long, that’s all I can say, one big groan. (7B student)

It was tiring listening to all that French because you are so used to speaking one language and then darn!....an hour a day or more every day. (7B student)

It is interesting to note that these students, although they expressed a lack of enjoyment in the more intensive periods, still preferred the compact format to the more traditional format of CF instruction. However, as the following statements suggest, these particular students were more motivated to study in the compact format not by the pedagogic or scheduling advantages as discussed, but rather by the opportunity to study French for only a partial year. These students noted that the intensive period was long, but was preferable to the concept of studying French for the full 10 months of the school year.

You get it over with faster. (7B student)

I liked that because we only had it for half a year, and then the rest it you don’t have to do it. And then you get it over, cause it’s hard. (7A student)
Although the hours remained the same in both compact and traditional formats, they seemed to prefer the compact format because the perception was that it was shorter and entailed less French study.

One student in the second compact CF class, 7B, remarked that the period seemed long and boring not because it was a more intensive period, but because he was unmotivated to study the language.

Just the fact that it’s French. I won’t ever need it in real life. . . . Probably going to end up as a gas attendant. (7B student)

This statement suggests that few formats of French would have been acceptable to the unmotivated student.

Three students in the compact CF group did express a desire to have studied under the traditional format of CF, which they entitled the “single period model.” Two of these students considered the traditional model to be more beneficial to their learning styles.

I think that if you’ve had it once each day that people, like kids, would be more willing to listen and stuff, ‘cause you are not there for two periods a day . . . Yeah, you have a lot of time to do that [referring to communicative games and group work], but then also, it’s kind of boring after a while. (7A student)

Because I don't really like big things in one class, as I don't work for a long time, I think it would be easier if I it would be quicker and then I would be able to pay more attention during that time. When you get into your class first, you pay attention and then after a while you just don't pay attention anymore. (7B student)
The third student outlined a practical scheduling issue to be her reason for preferring the more traditional model, noting that school events toward the end of the school year negatively impacted the French classroom and the time in L2 study.

That’s why sometimes, if we have in the second half of the school, cause kids are missing more school in June and whatever, so we kind of get that all year round because then its equal, kind of, instead missing two periods you are only missing one. (7B student)

This student noticed the disparity between the two halves of the school year, noting that there are many days in June that are missed, and that the second half of the school year consists of fewer actual in-class teaching days. She regarded the intensity of the program to be a disadvantage because students studying in the latter half of the year actually had fewer hours than those in the first half, and she intimated that her educational opportunity to learn French was not equal to that of others in the first compact CF class (7A) or the comparison class (7C).

Students in the comparison class, like the compact CF class, desired to learn in the format in which they had been enrolled – the traditional format. Of the ten students who participated in the focus group sessions, only three expressed interest in learning in the compact format in subsequent years.

Reasons for selecting the traditional format primarily seemed to focus on motivational issues.

We just want to go to sleep and do nothing. (7C student)

One period for the whole time because if you have it for two periods, because, like, the kids can only handle a certain amount of speaking languages before they go insane and go running out of the classroom screaming bonjour. (7C student)
Yeah, it was better than two periods in a row. (7C student)

Because we weren’t there long; we didn’t have to be in the same place for long. (7C student)

It was in the morning and we learn better in the morning cause in the afternoon you’re usually pretty tired and we usually don’t want to do it. We just want to go home. (7C student)

I liked it because we didn’t have to have it two periods in a row. (7C student)

As evident from these statements, the students in the comparison class focused primarily on the length of the program, expressing a desire to only study French in one period, as opposed to two periods a day. Unlike the students in the compact CF group who outlined several pedagogic reasons for their preference, only one student proposed a pedagogic implication, noting that the single period promoted more attentiveness and therefore more learning.

We might have learned more because we don’t have double periods because first period they might have learned something but the second period they just don’t care anymore. So they’re kind of just, “Okay, second period of French. We listened for the first one there’s our French for the day.” So when it’s like French every day, the one period, it’s only the one period so we’re listening the whole time so we take more in. (7C student)

This student suggested that students only wish to listen and pay attention for one, 38-minute period, and therefore the second half of the intensive period would be ill-used and attentiveness would suffer. She suggested that more work was accomplished in the comparison class, which suggests that she considered more learning to also have taken place.
We got more done than some of the other classes because I don’t think 7B got to the masks. (7C student)

Three students expressed a desire to enroll in the compact format in future years of study; one of these students outlined her decision to be a result of her enjoyment of French language study.

I think it would be good [the more intensive period] because me, I like French and it would be a lot more fun for me. It would be also fun halfway through the year to switch. (7C student)

Another of the three students indicated that a more intensive period of French enabled a more desirable format of study for other subjects.

7C Student: The reason that I chose it is because I like to have more French during the day than I like having other stuff, like computers or something, but for the other half of the year I don’t mind having computers.

P. Marshall: So, to clarify, it’s not the French but the other subjects that you don’t like and would only like to have for half the year?

7C Student: Yeah.

This exchange suggests that for some students, the compact nature of CF enables them to study another, less desirable subject, in a similar compact format, therefore completing the less desirable program of study in half the year instead of the full year. Since French is a subject that this student enjoyed, the compact program seemed more advantageous than the traditional format.

The third student to express an interest in the compact format indicated that it would be a better model for him, but was unable to justify his response.
7C Student: Because, um, you get off half the year and like, the other classes you get French half the year and computers the other half.

P. Marshall: And why does that work for you?

7C Student: I don’t know.

**Perceptions of Pedagogic Approach and Activities**

In each focus group, student perceptions and attitudes toward the pedagogic activities were discussed. From these discussions, recurring themes from discussion on the multi-dimensional, project-based curriculum approach emerged:

1. Experiential, project-based approach;
2. Negotiation as a learning tool;
3. TL use in the classroom; and
4. Collaborative work.

Next, I will describe in detail each of the identified themes.

**Multi-dimensional, project-based approach**

A consistently recurring theme in all of the focus groups was an emphasis on the hands-on activities that occurred in the classroom. Students found these activities both engaging and educational.

7A Student 1: Hands-on stuff.

P. Marshall: You mentioned hands-on stuff. What do you mean by that?

7A Student 1: Yeah, like how we did baking and all that . . .

7A Student 2: It makes it fun.
Two students in compact CF class 7B noted that:

7B Student 1: People are more interested because we get to actually make a list
[referring to written recipe – written portion of final project].

7B Student 2: I think we understand it more.

Many students underscored the value of the nutrition unit and the final projects involving the creation of a food network and related television programs and advertisements, indicating that selecting teaching and learning activities that focused on daily activities, such as menu planning and food choices, facilitated language learning.

7C Student 1: Yeah, the baking, all the baking and stuff that we did, that made it fun for the class but also you got to learn a lot about it.

7C Student 2: You learn how to read a recipe and do it and learn all the numbers.

7C Student 1: I found that was really, really helpful

Students also highlighted the value of using authentic, meaning-based activities to learn French. As one group of 7B students explained:

7B Student 1: Making sundaes.

P. Marshall: Why did that help?

7B Student 1: Because we had to learn the ingredients in French.

7B Student 2: Because, what if you go to a restaurant and you don't know what you are going to order. It would be like I want a sundae, what kind of sundae, I don't know.

P. Marshall: So you think you learned because you learned something that
might be useful for you one day?

7B Student 2: Yes.

This exchange highlights the value of authentic, meaning-based learning tasks. The students considered the unit related to regular, daily activities in their own lives, such as meal preparation and menu planning, to aid in learning because it is something that may be useful for them one day. Learning about language that they may authentically need to use, according to these students, assists in learning language.

Other students described the motivating aspect of selecting project-based activities that relate to themes and items important in their life, such as food. In the following excerpt, a group of students in the comparison class focus group refer to the value of the activity in which students had to write recipes.

P. Marshall: Describe the activities that helped you learn this year.

7C Student 1: The ones with food.

All students: Yes.

7C Student 1: When you put food in front of us we want to eat it so let’s just get it done.

7C Student 2: And we have to write what, like the description of the thingy, if we know what it is because it’s something that is making us determined to do it. It’s our motivation.

7C Student 3: Like setting a goal, like putting a carrot in front of us and we start writing.

Other students preferred the experiential, communicative nature of the learning tasks because it was communicative and didn’t necessitate written assignments.
7C Student 1: When it’s hands on, you get to work with your hands and you get to talk about it like “Oh, we are making pizzas.” We did the hands-on and we did the French stuff ‘cause we were saying it in French and we didn’t have to write it down.

7C Student 2: We were saying it in French.

7C Student 1: We didn’t have to write it down.

As this group further explained, the opportunity to speak the TL while engaging in a project-based, hands-on activity assisted with language retention.

I think the hands on is best, rather than the writing. You don’t really care about the words or stuff, you are just doing the work; but, if you are doing hands-on, then it’s in your brain because you have to say it. (7C student 2)

Another student identified the interactive nature of the learning tasks as different from the writing that occurs in their core subjects (English, math, history, geography).

Yeah, the hands on work because we like to be interactive with things I couldn’t think of a different word so like, when you get to make masks and stuff we get to draw it and we’re not just sitting there writing things down, because after French class we’re going to be going into core and we’ll be writing all afternoon. (7C student)

Several students selected the use of drama in the classroom as a useful, communicative tool. A group of 7A students noted that:

7A student 1: We liked it when we did a lot of plays.

7A student 2: ‘Cause we didn’t have to just sit there and write down a whole bunch of stuff in French. We actually got to, like, act it out.

7A student 1: Yeah, act it out.
7A student 2: When you were doing it, it kind of helped everyone seeing what you were talking about.

In this excerpt, the students explain that the opportunity to engage in communicative tasks, as opposed to written tasks, was a valuable opportunity in the learning process. They highlight the use of the gestures and actions as tools to assist with comprehension.

Other students considered the dramatic tasks to assist with conversational tasks. When asked what activities were most helpful to learning, one student in 7B replied:

The plays because it taught us how to make sentences and phrases. (7B student)

Other students in his focus group agreed with dramatics as a valuable learning tool, in this case, though, because they necessitated proficiency and promoted a high level of performance.

7B Student 1: Yep, the plays, because we had to speak fast, before you could get the play going.

7B Student 2: You had to know what you were doing.

These statements all highlight the opportunity for students to engage in meaning-based, if not authentic, communicative tasks. The comments of the students promote the usefulness of communicative learning activities as FSL learning tools. Other students seemed to concur with that point of view; however, instead of selecting particular activities that they found useful, they highlighted activities that were not useful because they were not communicative or particularly authentic. In particular, these students disliked the listening comprehension activities that were used in the classroom, even though the voices used for these tasks were French L1 speakers. As one group illustrates:

7A Student 1: I don't know, I just couldn't understand what they were saying. I could read it but I can't listen to it.
7A Student 2: Yeah, they speak too fast.


7A Student 1: At the beginning of the year I couldn't even listen to it, I laughed.

P. Marshall And now?

7A Student 1: No, I just don't find it funny because I have been listening to it for a long time. It kind of got boring after a while.

7A Student 2: The CD's don't really help because they speak too fast and sometimes they will be like [gibberish spoken] and slur all their words.

7A Student 3: I could have it right there, knowing what they are saying and then they could just be like [gibberish spoken], like thirty pages later in two seconds. They speak too fast but when you are reading it, you can read at your own speed.

7A Student 2: I don't think the CD's work because you don't know who is talking or how many people are talking at the same time and it's so fast.

P. Marshall: [later in the conversation] What do you think could be used instead of a CD to help you listen and learn?

7A Student 1: Two people interacting, having a conversation.

7A Student 2: Yeah, talking slower.

7A Student 3: Subtitles.

7A Student 1: I think real people saying it, cause man . . . In real life it's not the same.
This excerpt illustrates that students value the authenticity of communicative tasks, and the opportunity to engage in meaningful, spontaneous dialogue with other students, or to witness authentic dialogue between French language speakers as opposed to listening to activities on a CD.

Other students indicated that the listening comprehension tasks were not useful because they did not actively engage in the purpose of the task.

We only guessed. . . Most of the time you learn but you just couldn’t understand them so you couldn’t really write anything down, or you didn’t remember anything that was on the tape. (7B student)

I didn't like the tapes, I am not very good at listening because after a while you lose interest and give up. (7B student)

Students in the compact CF class also indicated that the opportunity to participate in collaborative learning groups promoted learning.

Stay with the group work. (7B student)

And then being able to talk it over with people in your group, so you are not just the only one who doesn’t understand it, there are other people to talk to that don’t understand it too. (7B student)

If some people get it and some people don't, then those people can help each them and each other. (7B student)

Students in the comparison focus groups, though, indicated that collaborative work was detrimental to learning, and preferred more individual tasks.
I think some of them would be better in individual because your partner sometimes just walks off and starts talking with somebody else. (7C student)

Sometimes its good in groups, it depends on what you are doing - when you are doing sheet work or something and then get individual, because then you are more focused on the sheet, because when you are in groups, you are sitting there, okay we have to do this, this, and this and then you read something and it looks like a funny word and then you start laughing and then you start talking about the weekend and what you want to do the next recess and stuff like that. (7C student)

I like group work but I admit I am really talkative, so I never get any work done but I like it. (7C student)

These statements suggest that students believe that in collaborative groups, the potential to participate in off-task discussion exists, whereas individual work encourages more on-task behavior.

One student in the comparison focus groups suggested that individual tasks are more effective because proficiency and achievement are scored on an individual basis.

When you are individual and you get something finished and you do good on it, you know like “I did it myself” and it makes you feel good about yourself because you are not like “oh yah, my friend did that, I got a good mark, I passed.” (7C student)

The use of the TL in the classroom was a focus in all planned curricular activities. Students in the focus groups were asked to consider the use of the TL in the classroom. Students primarily focused on the use of French spoken by the teacher. According to the focus groups, student perceptions of how much time the teacher used French varied from 50% to 90% of the total classroom time. Students who indicated a perceived lower percentage of French usage by
the teacher suggested that the amount of group work and behavioral issues resulted in the lower usage of the TL.

I would say about 60% because we wrote stuff down most of the time, were in group work a lot. (7A student)

Yeah around 50 [percent] because [indistinguishable] group work. (7A student)

Sixty to 70 [percent] because a lot of times you had to explain to a lot of us in English because people were fooling around and not paying attention. (7A student)

Other students in the compact CF group affirmed that the use of the TL by the teacher in the class was beneficial to learning.

7A Student 1: You always spoke French for stuff at the end where the tests come because it was really important.

7A Student 2: And that helped.

In another 7A focus group, students discussed the positive impact of TL use in the classroom.

7A Student 3: French is hard.

7A Student 4: It's not what it sounds like in French and then we say what it is.

7A Student 3: Yes, and then we know how to say it.

7A Student 4: French that's slower, you slow down.

7A Student 5: You can actually see the person speaking French instead of just a blank TV screen.

7A Student 3: And you know who is talking. Like if it was [name of another student] you would know what she looks like.
Students in the 7B focus groups also highlighted the value of TL use in the classroom.

A lot was done in English last year, but this year we actually had to figure out what you were trying to say and stuff. (7B student)

Students in this particular focus group continued the discussion, noting:

7B Student 1: We didn’t like the instructions on the sheet being in English.

P. Marshall: So you think the teacher speaking French helps?

7B Student 1: Yeah

7B Student 2: Yeah

7B Student 1: You get to hear, you know how you were teaching us all the verbs and stuff, we get to hear you say that and we just know…..oh I know that word and so it sounds familiar.

In a second 7B focus group, students also underscored the value of French language use by the teacher to facilitate learning.

7B Student 3: I think it was helpful because if you listen to it, like on the tapes they say it so fast you can't understand what they are saying, but when the teacher says it they say it slow and it helps you understand.

7B Student 4: Yes, like when say it, you can repeat it and if we don't get it you can keep saying it. With the tape you have to push buttons and it wastes more time.

Other students highlighted key strategies used to promote comprehension of the L2.

7B Student 5: You would say key words that we might know and then we picked up from there.
7B Student 6: Or you would write it on the board.

P. Marshall: So the French word on the board . . .

7B Student 6: Yeah

7B Student 5: Or words that sound like the same.

7B Student 7: Or you would point to something.

7B Student 5: And then when you asked the people, like you ask the person what it meant so they could explain it to the whole class in English.

As evidenced by these exchanges, students in the compact CF group identified the use of the TL, by the teacher in particular, as a useful strategy for language learning in the FSL classroom.

Students in the comparison group also expressed satisfaction with the amount of TL used by the teacher in the classroom; however, the reasons given were less specific pedagogically.

7C student 1: There was just enough that we could handle because if you overload it, we are like, “No way.”

7C student 2: I thought it was perfect.

7C student 1: Because too much French, my brain gets all confuzzled.

In this case, students seemed unable to specifically identify any pedagogic advantages to the use of the TL in the classroom; instead, these students specified that the amount was sufficient, but only because they were unable to listen to anymore.
**Perceptions of Student Choice**

Only the focus groups in 7B discussed the concept of negotiating tasks and task choice, identifying by the opportunities they had to select their activities, which differed from some of the other classes. Generally, they liked this aspect of the pedagogic approach.

7B Student 1: They did different things, like friends in 7A would say “have you done this” and we would say “no” and then we would told them what we were doing and they were like “we never learned that.”

P. Marshall: Part of that is negotiation. Remember we negotiated what you wanted to cook or bake, so 7A never did sundaes for example, they never thought of it.

7B Student 2: Did we ever say that we wanted to cook?

7B Student 1: Yeah, we said we wanted to do that.

In another focus group session, students expressed the following views of negotiation:

P. Marshall: So you liked being able to choose some of the activities that you did this year.

7B Student 3: Yes, if we were in group or just you assigning one thing, we actually like a couple things to pick from so we get a little bit of something we like.

P. Marshall: It's what we call negotiation [students negotiate tasks and select choices], where you have some input...you get to suggest some activities and you get to choose. . .

7B Student 4: It was good.

7B Student 3: I liked it.
7B Student 5: I liked it.

One student in the third focus group indicated that negotiation (the element of choice) was one of the activities that most assisted his learning.

You would get to choose your oral and stuff and then if they made you do something and then you didn't really get it, then you wouldn't really do as good, but if you get to choose then it would be better. (7B student)

In this section, I described the findings from the student focus group sessions. I identified emerging patterns and themes, and supported each pattern with representative comments. A detailed discussion of the findings will be presented in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this section, I presented the qualitative findings of the study. I described the patterns that emerged from an analysis of the teacher journal entries. Then, I presented the independent observations from videotapes of classroom teaching in order to determine the extent to which by my teaching approach was consistent across the three classes. Finally, I reported the findings from the student focus group sessions. A detailed discussion of these findings follows in the next chapter.
CHAPTER EIGHT:
DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study according to the three research questions investigated in this research. The first section summarizes and interprets the proficiency scores of the students in order to address the first research question and determine the extent to which the compact CF program had a positive impact on French language outcomes. In the second section, I consider the qualitative data findings from the teacher journals to discuss the second research question related to the implementation of a communicative/experiential pedagogic approach in both traditional and compact CF formats. Next, in response to the third research question, I discuss the teacher, parent and student questionnaires, as well as the data from the student focus groups, in order to determine the perceptions and attitudes of these stakeholders toward the CF formats and the implementation of a multidimensional approach. This is followed by a discussion of the shortcomings and limitations of the study. Finally, I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study with relation to CF education.

French Proficiency Test Results

In this section, I will discuss the proficiency scores of the three classes in order to address the first research question, in which I investigated whether a compact CF program, in which only the distribution of time changes, would have a positive impact on French language outcomes (e.g., greater demonstrated proficiency in speaking) when communicative and experiential teaching strategies were implemented.
A review of the pre-test and immediate post-test results indicates that the three classes performed similarly on many of the testing measures, as there were no significant differences among the groups on the majority of the proficiency tests. In this, the findings from the present study add to the differing results in the secondary block scheduling literature, as reviewed by Zepeda and Mayers (2006), as well as those of Bickel (1999).

A comparison of the present findings and those in the Lapkin et al. (1998) study of compact CF models, on which the present study is based, also demonstrate differing results. In the previous study, students in the compact CF classes demonstrated significantly greater achievement in reading and writing test scores, but no significant difference in listening and speaking. In this study, only the greater scores and growth in some writing tasks are congruent with the higher writing scores by the compact classes in the Lapkin et al. study (see Table 33).

Table 33
Summary of Test Results: Comparison of Lapkin et al.’s (1998) Study and Present Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill area</th>
<th>Lapkin et al. (1998)</th>
<th>Present study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>No significant difference</td>
<td>No significant difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>No significant difference</td>
<td>Some test-specific significant gains for one compact CF class (7A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Some significant gains in compact CF classes</td>
<td>No significant difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Some significant gains in compact CF classes</td>
<td>Some test-specific significant gains in compact CF classes(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(^a\)Compact CF class 7A performed significantly better than compact CF class 7B (but not comparison class 7C) on the first composition task; Compact class 7B demonstrated significantly higher gains on the second composition task than compact class 7A and comparison class 7C.
However, unlike Lapkin et al. (1998) study, the gains in the present study were not as great, nor were they as widespread, occurring in only some of the writing components. Also, there were no significant differences noted in reading scores, which is a departure from that earlier study. Therefore, what is evident from the overall findings is that the results indicate that the compact CF classes maintained a similar pattern of growth to the comparison group across the majority of the test scores, suggesting that students in the compact CF class performed similarly to the comparison class.

These results were in contrast to the differences that I had expected to see. Based on the Lapkin et al. (1998) study, I expected to see significantly greater differences in achievement in the compact classes. Based on my reflections in the teacher journal, and from my experiences as the teacher in the present study, I speculate that these results do not represent the actual achievement level of some of the students. During the assessment periods, I did notice that in one of the compact classes, several of the participating students did not seem to put forth their best effort in completing some of the immediate post-tests. Some students seemed to circle multiple choice answers quickly, without listening to or reading the prompts. Also, on the writing tests, some students left pages blank, or wrote unrelated messages in English across the pages. Additionally, my perception of compact class 7A was that they had demonstrated growth in speaking achievement; however, due to lack of post-test speaking test data, I was unable to confirm this perception.

Delayed post-test data the following September indicated that students performed similarly on curriculum-specific language items. Findings from the researcher-developed reading and writing tests, which measured the extent to which students had retained curriculum-specific language skills and knowledge, indicated that there was no significant difference among the
groups. The one exception to this was the first reading task, for which students were to put the steps of a recipe in the correct order. In this case, the second compact CF class, 7B, demonstrated significantly higher scores than those of the first compact CF class, 7A, but not those of the comparison class, 7C. Since on most test components students across the three classes performed similarly, therefore demonstrating similar language retention, this one outlying test result could indicate a particular curriculum focus in one class. In other words, perhaps recipe writing was taught more extensively in 7B, and students had a greater opportunity to practice reading recipes than in class 7A.

Similarly, on the delayed listening and the speaking tests there were few statistically significant differences on any of the test scores. These results indicate that students retained similar levels of language skills and knowledge over the non-instructional period between the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test, indicating no significant difference between non-study periods of 2 or 7 months. The one area in which small, significant differences were noted between groups was in the retention of speaking test items. That is, both compact CF classes demonstrated some significant differences in retention on one of the components of the speaking test. Since the comparison group did not demonstrate any significant retention in the delayed post-test comparisons, it could be argued that there were some positive effects on the retention of speaking language skills for those students in the compact CF classes. However, as this difference was noted on only one of the components of the test, and not on the total speaking test set, it is not enough to claim a positive effect of the compact CF scheduling, or an outperformance of the compact class in relation to the traditionally-scheduled comparison class. Rather, I suggest that the delayed post-test data indicate that students in the compact CF classes
retained language gains in a similar manner to the comparison class, performing no worse, and in some cases, slightly better, than students in the traditionally-formatted comparison class.

Considering that all post-test data essentially highlighted similar patterns of achievement across the compact CF and comparison classes, I conclude that although no positive effects were indicated on French language outcomes, contrastingly there also were no negative effects noticed.

This result is in contradiction to the findings by Lightbown (2000) in her review of the language teaching practices of the past years, in which she concluded that the intensity of time is a greater predictor of language learning success than the starting age of instruction. As well, my findings do not seem to coincide with the compact CF results from the earlier Lapkin et al. (1998) study, after which this present study was modeled, or with the intensive L2 research literature (Germain & Netten, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1991, 1994, 1997; Netten & Germain, 2004a; Spada & Lightbown, 1989) that supports the claim for intensive scheduling or formatting to ameliorate L2 acquisition. Although it cannot be expected that students studying French in a compact CF format would achieve in a similar manner to those students in an intensive language program, in which the number of hours of French instruction in one year is double or more, I did expect to see a similar pattern of higher proficiency scores in the more intensive format. However, since the results demonstrated no negative effects in French proficiency scores, suggesting that students performed in a similar manner, I question the reasons why students in the more intensive classes did not achieve greater proficiency than those in the comparison class. I suggest that one possibility is that the compact CF periods in my study were not intensive enough. As in the Lapkin et al. (1998) study, in consultation with the participating principal, I chose to double the number of daily minutes of CF periods for half the school year; however,
unlike the previous study, the length of the 5-month compact period was only 76 minutes, 4 days a week, in opposition to the 80-minute classes 5 days a week in the Carleton case study. At the time of this research study, students in the participating school accumulated less than 100 hours of CF instruction by the end of their Grade 7 year (an approximate 95 hours in total); a different distribution of those hours may have permitted more intensity, thereby yielding different results. Also, the student and community profiles indicated that students lived in a community in which a French cultural presence was essentially non-existent, which was unlike the study setting for the Ottawa-Carleton study. This suggests, therefore, that their only contact with the French language and culture was within the boundaries of the FSL classroom. One could hypothesize from the research on time in L2 education, as well as the neutral results from this study, that perhaps a second year following a compact CF scheduling may result in more positive effects on French language achievement and more significant differences between the compact and the traditionally-scheduled classes.

Another reason for the unexpected results may be related to the participating students themselves. In the teacher journals, I had reflected on the perceived higher rate of behavioral incidences in 7B, the second compact CF class, as well as a perceived higher level of apathy toward and ownership of the French language learning process in the comparison class of 7C. On the student questionnaires, students ascribed a lesser desire to continue their French language studies in high school, and one or both of the compact CF classes indicated a lesser value for learning French, lower agreement with the statement that French is necessary for a good job or for university entrance and lesser agreement with French as a favorite subject. The negative results from the student questionnaires and the teacher reflective journal imply decreased student motivation to study French. This finding of decreased motivation in the early adolescent years is
a pattern that has been described in the early adolescent literature (Eccles et al., 1993). I will
discuss this concept further when I consider the outcomes of the student qualitative data in
response to the third research question.

Implementation of Pedagogic Approach

In this section, I will discuss the results in relation to the second research question: Can a
“communicative/experiential” approach to teaching and learning be implemented in similar ways
in traditional and compact CF formats?

As part of the multidimensional approach to FSL education in Canada, as proposed by
the NCFS (R. LeBlanc, 1990), the communicative/experiential syllabus is the approach that
many Canadian FSL educators have indicated difficulty in implementing within the traditional
format of the short, CF periods (Lapkin et al., 2006). The question asked in this study was
whether such an approach could be implemented in a similar way in both the traditional CF
format (38-minute periods, in this study) and in the compact CF format (76-minute periods).

A review of the teacher journals in this study indicated that some elements of a
communicative/experiential approach to FSL teaching and learning had been implemented in
similar manners within the traditional and the compact CF classrooms. For example, although
school protocol regarding acceptable online usage restricted prohibited authentic, communicative
tasks with French-language speakers outside of the classroom, I was able to implement similar
meaning-based topics and activities (e.g., nutrition; menu planning) in both CF formats.
Observations of my teaching as reviewed by two independent adjudicators indicated that I taught
similarly in the compact CF and comparison classes. I spoke using either the TL or a mix of
French and English, primarily selected tasks which focused on the skills of listening and
speaking, used extended texts, and introduced pre-activities before lessons. Adjudicators also indicated that I personalized tasks in a similar manner, usually by offering students choice of task.

However, I did notice that the shorter duration of the comparison class seemed to impede several of the more communicative tasks, suggesting that the more intensive periods promoted the use of such teaching and learning activities. I was unable to complete a similar number of planned learning activities across the classrooms, and I experienced difficulty in trying to implement the same tasks in a similar manner in the comparison class. My journal entries indicated that I perceived 7A and 7C to have progressed further in the planned units of study than students in 7B, primarily as a result of a higher rate of off-task behaviors in the second compact CF class. However, although 7B completed fewer tasks, they, like 7A, did complete tasks that were more communicative in nature, as outlined by Tremblay et al. (1990), than those implemented in the comparison class. In my reflections I indicated that I perceived the longer classes to support this type of task, for example, peer-to-peer exchanges and student negotiation of meaning from French print and media texts. As well, in the traditionally-scheduled comparison class, notes in my daybook and journal indicate that communicative activities, tasks and games that foster student exchanges in French were often eliminated due to time constrictions and the need to complete the collaborative tasks, whereas in the compact CF format, the longer, more intensive periods facilitated the implementation of these types of tasks. Adjudicator observations of my classroom teaching indicated that I acted more as facilitator in compact CF class 7B, whereas in comparison class 7C I acted more frequently in the role of expert. If, as the teacher journals indicate, I focused more frequently on task completion in the comparison class, often eliminating collaborative tasks which promote a more facilitative teacher
role, then it stands to reason that I assumed the role of expert more often in order to encourage students to complete the necessary tasks, rather than giving them time to co-construct their learning with me. In Hilmer’s (1999) follow-up study to the Lapkin et al. (1995) study on which this current research study is based, the teacher speculated that the longer periods of study would have permitted more communicative/experiential learning activities, and acknowledged that were she to have the longer periods again, she would structure her pedagogic approach and curriculum implementation accordingly. In this current study, the notes and reflections in my teacher journal indicate that I perceived the longer periods to have facilitated a more consistent implementation of communicative/experiential learning activities. This is consistent with the finding by Hays (1998), in whose doctoral research the teachers indicated a preference for the more intensive block-scheduled periods as they facilitated the implementation of more student-centered, communicative instructional strategies.

An interesting finding from the teacher journals was the differing level of acceptance of student choice of task as a learning tool within the FSL classroom. Students in the compact CF classes seemed more likely to assume ownership of their learning by using negotiation to determine some of their learning and assessment activities, whereas students in the comparison class seemed unwilling to participate in this process. Turnbull (1998) concluded that pedagogic implications such as negotiation and student ownership in the program may also have promoted higher student proficiency in French in addition to the implementation of a multidimensional syllabus. In the present study, there did seem to be a correlation between the willingness and desire on the part of the students to negotiate their learning tasks and their level of involvement and risk-taking in the communicative tasks implemented in each classroom. It is apparent from an examination of my teacher journals that the class that most embraced negotiation as a tool
(7A), thus taking ownership of the learning and assessment assignments, also seemed to be the class that, as their program of study progressed, viewed the more communicative/experiential tasks as positive learning approaches. As well, in my teacher journals, I considered this class as having demonstrated a more positive attitude toward learning than the other classes, as well as greater learning of the language. On the other hand, 7C, who most resisted the use of negotiation as a teaching and learning tool, also seemed to be the class most resistant to the communicative/experiential activities in the classroom. Eccles et al. (1993) cited an inability to participate in decision-making in the learning process as a contributing factor to decreasing student motivation. In this study, students were invited to participate in making decisions regarding the teaching and learning activities; however, only the two compact CF classes seemed willing to do so. My perceptions of student attitudes and motivations toward the learning activities seem to correspond to the Eccles et al.’s conclusion. The class that I perceived to have more positive attitudes and motivation toward learning French was the same class that I perceived to demonstrate the greatest student participation in decision-making within the class. Similarly, my perception that 7C was the class that was most resistant to the classroom activities corresponds to their lack of participation in classroom decision-making. Reasons for the varying participation are unknown; however, I posit that the more intensive periods may have facilitated the implementation of activities and projects more interesting to the students; as I introduced more of these types of activities to the compact CF classes, it is possible that they perceived a greater possibility of suggesting further activities of this nature to me. The more traditional, comparison class may not have considered these types of activities to be possible within the confines of the French classroom, perhaps because I did not implement them in the same manner in their class as in the other, more intensive periods. It is also possible that the intervening
variable of lack of motivation was stronger in this class than in the other classes; however, without data to support this supposition, it is difficult to ascertain its validity.

A more communicative approach suggests the use of the TL as the language of instruction. In this, I perceived that I was able to speak French in a similar manner in both the traditional and the more intensive compact format, suggesting that some aspects of communicative/experiential teaching could perhaps be implemented in similar ways. What was not consistent, though, was the perceived acceptance or rejection of the use of French in the classroom by the students in each format. Over time, the first compact CF class, 7A, seemed to embrace the use of French as the language of teaching and ceased to question its use as a teaching tool. Likewise, 7C, the comparison class, accepted the use of the TL in the classroom, although they did demonstrate some resistance to the TL in the middle of their program of study, but then accepted it again as the year drew to a close. Interestingly, in compact CF class 7B, students at first embraced the use of the TL in the classroom, using various strategies to make meaning. As their period of study progressed, however, they were the class that became most resistant to the use of French in the classroom. This increasing disinterest in the use of French as a teaching tool could stem from a variety of reasons. Firstly, as indicated by the classroom observations for 7B and 7C, I spoke primarily using the TL, but did use English for behavior management issues and for clarification purposes. Since the teaching journals indicate that I perceived student misbehaviors to increase as their program of study progressed, it is therefore also possible that my use of English increased as I used it to manage off-task behaviors, thereby diminishing the use of the TL as the primary language in the classroom. I posit that student resistance toward the use of the TL may have increased as I introduced more English into the classroom.
Stakeholder Perceptions

In this section, I will discuss the perceptions of all stakeholders, as reported in the student and parental questionnaires, as well as during the focus group sessions, in order to answer the following research question: What are the perceptions and attitudes of all stakeholders toward the CF format, and the implementation of a multidimensional approach?

The results from the parental questionnaires indicated, overall, a high satisfaction rate with the CF program in which their children were enrolled. Parents indicated general satisfaction with the length of the CF format (whether traditional or compact), and indicated greater satisfaction with the daily learning activities and tasks than did the students.

Student results from the questionnaires were mixed and seemed to suggest more questions than answers. Overall, students seemed to indicate less agreement with the various post-questionnaire items than they did on the pre-questionnaire. Students across the three classes expressed less agreement with the teacher’s use of the L2 as a useful tool for language learning, indicating that they did not perceive the use of the TL by the teacher as helpful to their learning of French. To some extent, this seemed to contradict the findings in the teacher journal, in which I noted that 7A seemed to have embraced the use of the TL in the classroom, as well as 7C, albeit to a less consistent extent.

Students also indicated stronger disagreement with the questionnaire statements “I want to continue studying French in high school,” “Knowing French is important to getting a good job,” and “Knowing French is important to getting into a good college/university.” Additionally, the two compact CF classes indicated stronger disagreement with the questionnaire statement, “French is one of my favorite subjects.” Again, these results were surprising when compared to the reflections in the teacher journals, at least for the compact CF class of 7A. The teacher
journals did indicate a higher rate of behavior in 7B, as well as a higher level of apathy and less ownership on the part of 7C, which could suggest lower satisfaction rates in general.

As a teacher of students at the intermediate level, I question whether these responses to the questionnaire items are indicative of students at this age in general rather than a true representation of their actual beliefs regarding their CF experiences. In other words, did students perceive the questionnaire as another paper-and-pencil test, and therefore did not take the time to truly consider the questions? As indicated by the early adolescent motivation literature (Barber & Olsen, 2004; Eccles et al., 1993), students may not have perceived the questionnaire as truly giving them a voice or an opportunity to assist with educational reform. Unlike the participatory nature of the focus groups, students may have perceived the questionnaire to be a pencil and paper test, quite unlike the collaborative, experiential activities that the student voice literature ascribes as preferred activities of early adolescents and adolescents (Corbett & Wilson, 1998; Hopkins, 2010; O’Connell Schmakel, 2008). In this case, decreased motivation to put forth full effort into completing the task may have been a precipitating variable in the conflicting questionnaire results.

I also question the extent to which students understood the questionnaire items and the rating scale. One result in particular leads me to question student comprehension. One of the compact CF classes, 7A, indicated a higher level of agreement with the statement that they had learned as much French as they need to know. Again, this is the class that seemed the most receptive to the learning process, and the class that I perceived to have learned the most. It is certainly possible that the students in 7A answered this question as they did because they felt that they had learned so much French, which would be in opposition to having learned enough. Another contradictory statement is the self-assessment of language gains. Across the three
classes, there was no significant difference in this category other than in speaking, in which students self-assessed any language gains as lower than they ascribed on the pre-questionnaire. In the case of 7A and 7B, who did post some significant growth on the speaking post-tests, this lower self-assessment is disturbing; especially since the Canadian studies of students who did not continue in CF indicated a perceived lack of proficiency as a reason (APEF, 2004; CPF, 2006).

The seemingly contradictory data in the questionnaires and the teacher journals highlights the need for mixed methods approaches in research studies, particularly including the use of more participatory research methods, such as focus groups, when working with young people (Woodman & Tyler, 2007). The more participatory nature of the focus group sessions did elicit clearer and more in-depth responses from the students, thus permitting more in-depth study of some of the conflicting items. As well, focus groups sessions are, by nature, collaborative discussion groups, as participants have the opportunity to build their responses on those of others in the group. In the student voice research literature, adolescent learners underscored a preference for learning and assessment tasks that engaged the learner in dynamic activities (Corbett & Wilson, 1998), opportunities for collaboration, (Corbett & Wilson, 1998; Hopkins, 2010; O’Connell Schmakel, 2008), and discussion groups (Hopkins, 2010). All of these activities are characteristic of focus groups, and in opposition to the task of written questionnaire completion, suggesting that perhaps, the results from the focus group sessions may be more indicative of the participants’ true beliefs and opinions regarding their CF experiences.

As in the Lapkin et al. (1998) study of compact CF, students in the focus group self-assessed greater language gains during their most recent FSL program of study than in previous years. In this study, however, students in both the compact CF and the comparison class self-assessed greater gains. As well, students indicated a preference for the format in which they had
been enrolled during the year; students in the compact CF format indicated a preference for the longer period, and students in the comparison format indicated preference for the more traditional, shorter period. However, the reasons behind the students’ stated CF format preferences are interesting. Students in the compact CF classes cited primarily pedagogic reasons for preferring the compact CF class. For example, students indicated that the compact CF format facilitated task introduction and completion, permitted more comprehensive learning and more in-depth study of the language, and thus the opportunity to practice and become more proficient in their FSL studies, and supported the implementation of more collaborative, communicative tasks. Students in the compact CF classes, therefore, clearly viewed the longer, more intensive period as an opportunity for greater FSL learning, as well as a greater opportunity for more interesting, collaborative learning tasks. Thus, students in the compact CF class were motivated primarily by the ability they ascribed to the longer class period to enhance their ability to learn French, suggesting that these students considered their self-assessed greater learning to be a result of the more intensive periods. This may be attributed to the fact that the activities in which they engaged were indicative of those preferred by adolescents: collaborative tasks, more interesting activities. In fact, one student indicated that the compact schedule was not only beneficial to the learning of French, but also to some of her other subjects, suggesting that students can benefit from compact scheduling in other subject areas as well, and that careful scheduling can positively impact not only the CF program but also other subject programs.

Students in the comparison class seemed unwilling or unable to cite any pedagogic reasons for selecting the more traditional format, other than indicating that they preferred shorter periods. Dörnyei (2001), in his framework of L2 motivation, outlined that the motivation process should be discussed in stages, each responsible for a different facet of L2 study. In the initial
state, learners are initially motivated by such factors as learner beliefs, environmental support or hindrances, and attitudes towards the L2 and its speakers. In the second stage, which determines the extent to which their initial motivation to learn the L2 is sustained, students are exposed to the additional influences such as teacher and parental influence, classroom activities and the overall learning experience. Finally, in the third stage, motivational retrospection, grades and their beliefs about their self-worth influence students (pp. 21-23). It can be concluded that students who feel more engaged in the learning process, enjoy the learning activities and experiences, and can view the value of the learning tasks and activities, will be more motivated to continue their language studies. Although students in the compact CF classes did not specifically indicate a greater engagement in the learning process, they did indicate a preference for the more collaborative, communicative tasks and activities, suggesting that a higher value was placed upon them; therefore, it stands to reason that these students may also be more motivated to continue their language studies than the students in the comparison class, who did not attach any particular value to the types of learning activities in which they participated over the course of their period of study.

It is possible that the general satisfaction among students in both the compact CF classes and the traditionally-scheduled comparison class may have been impacted, in part, by their perception of me as teacher. As indicated in the early adolescent literature (Corbett & Wilson, 1998; O’Connell Schmakel, 2008), a key ingredient in engaging students in learning opportunities is strict, but fair and respectful teaching. My perception of myself as teacher is that I have firm, clear and consistent rules and routines in my classroom, with all classes that I teach. As indicated in the methodology, I collaborated with the school resource teacher to understand the individual needs of students in all three classes, and to provide individual instruction and
assistance when required. If students also perceived my teaching practice to be strict but fair, then they may have been generally satisfied with the program that I implemented, whether it was a subject that they enjoyed or not.

This may also, in part, explain the high satisfaction rate among the parents who responded to the survey. If their children considered that I, as the teacher, respected them, and provided students with individual assistance when required, then they may have communicated this to their parents, thus producing a generally high parental satisfaction rate. Or, it could be that students did not discuss or complain about my class or me as a teacher, and therefore the lack of complaints may have positively impacted the parental satisfaction rate.

It is true that even with a stated preference for the compact CF period, some students in the second compact CF class of 7B indicated that the length of the period seemed excessive. However, notations in the teacher journal indicated that there were more frequent incidences of off-task behavior in this class, therefore suggesting that student engagement may not have been as consistent as in 7A. If student engagement was lower, or was interrupted by off-task behaviors, this may have contributed to a feeling of long class periods. Also, one of the students in 7B pointed out the disparity of the two semesters, suggesting that the second semester in which she studied had more interruptions, and that future planning of compact programs should take this into consideration. This corresponds with many of my journal notations regarding missed periods due to a variety of school and sporting events, as well as a lack of French-speaking supply teachers. Also, the timing of the compact CF classes was immediately before the students’ lunch break; students may have become restless as the period drew closer to lunch, contributing to the feeling of a long class period.
Nonetheless, the fact that students in the compact CF classes identified pedagogic reasons in selecting the more intensive period as their preferred CF format is noteworthy.

**Limitations of the Study**

In this section, I consider the limitations of the study with regards to the research design and the instruments used.

One limitation is the size of the study itself. From a statistical point of view, the sample size is small, and therefore generalizability of findings and study validity is limited. As a case study, these findings reflect regional and topical issues and findings. In order to generalize the results of this study, a greater number of participants would be required, perhaps expanding the study into several schools within the school board. Also, a greater number of participants would permit more powerful statistical analyses.

The testing instruments used for most of the proficiency tests may also have been a limitation. Although these tests were widely-piloted across Canada, they were developed in 1988, and may have been less relevant or valid for the students of the school. The lower student scores on the test may have been a result of this lack of relevance, and may have contributed to some students not wishing to complete their tests, or not giving their full effort.

Another limitation of the study was my role as teacher researcher. Although acting as the teacher in the study did provide me with rich teacher reflections, there were various ethical considerations that needed to be met which impacted on the study. Firstly, I was unable to collect returned questionnaires, and therefore was not able to control the frequency of reminders across the classes. Secondly, I was not able to control for accuracy in test administration for those tests that I ethically could not administer. Since this was the case, I was not able to oversee or correct
the mistake that was made in administering the immediate speaking post-tests to class 7A, and therefore was unable to use these entries. Third, human memory is not infallible, and I recognize that the teacher journal entries are only the truth as I, the teller, perceive it; this suggests that validity will be difficult to establish (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Additionally, I did not have an independent observer in the classroom to determine the extent to which I changed my teacher persona across the classes, and whether I was perceived as fair or strict by all students. It is not possible, then, to definitively ascertain how students perceived my pedagogic approach, and to determine the impact that it may have had on student responses. My explanations of student responses are limited to my perception of myself as teacher, and to my perception that I did not change my respect for any students, and that any differentiation was in pedagogy only to address individual student needs and requests for assistance.

Other shortcomings arose with regard to data collection in this study. Due to technological errors, I only had videotapes of classroom teaching recorded in two of the three classes. Also, although I developed writing tests for the delayed post-test, I did not administer the dictée component, thus losing the opportunity to measure a component of writing proficiency growth over time. As well, in light of the conflicting data received from the student questionnaires and the focus group sessions, it may have been prudent to pilot test the questionnaire items.

As the teacher and researcher, it is not possible to eliminate all bias. However, in the role of researcher, I was vigilant in the planning of all tasks, in completing my reflections, and in ensuring that independent adjudicators monitored the recorded videotapes of my teaching. All planned learning opportunities were described in detail in my daybook, and any changes in
instruction or implementation were recorded. To the best of my ability, I ensured that reflections were completed on a daily basis, and immediately after each class session. In the role of teacher, I concerned myself with what was important to the class, and to the needs of the students. I ensured that I collaborated with all necessary school support staff, and that I understood the needs of individual students in the class and differentiated my support to students according to those needs.

**Implications of this Study**

Perhaps the most significant implications of this study are those that focus on pedagogy. Students in the compact CF classes clearly outlined pedagogic reasons for preferring the more intensive periods. In Ontario, teachers are expected to report two times a year on student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2010). This facilitates different distributions of time over five-month periods or semesters, as was done in the present study in which instructional time for French was doubled for 5 months of the year. However, this same amount of time could be distributed in a different manner. For example, in the years following the present study, I continued to teach compact CF classes. As in this study, CF classes were taught in semestered, 5-month periods, and therefore the intensity was twice that of a traditionally-scheduled class. However, instead of doubling each daily class, as was done in the present study, I taught four classes of 50-minutes in length, as well as an intensive period of 100 minutes during each five-day cycle. This particular model may offer the advantages outlined by students in the focus groups sessions: (a) periods lengthy enough to enable implementation of more communicative and experiential learning opportunities; and (b) periods short enough to prevent boredom.

Different distributions of time over an academic year could also be implemented. The findings in this study indicated that the retention of language proficiency was not affected in a
greater or lesser manner in the compact CF classes, even when students had been absent from formal language study for a period of 7 months. Therefore, instead of dividing the academic year into semesters, as was done in the present study, school administrators and teachers could create intensive periods of study over a two-, three- or four-month period, as suggested by one of the distributions of time in the Lapkin et al. study (1998). In that study, one of the compact CF classes engaged in daily periods of 150 minutes CF instruction over a 10-week period. I suggest investigating formats in which an intensive period of study is scheduled at the start of the school year, perhaps for the first two months, in order to focus on oral language tasks and communicative, experiential language learning opportunities. This intensive period could then be followed by a more traditionally-scheduled distribution of time throughout the year to continue to build on the language proficiency accrued during the intensive periods. This approach is similar to an IF format (see Germain, Lightbown, et al., 2004), but without an increase in overall time at the end of the year. Also, unlike the IF format, which is a five-month intensive period within an academic year, compact CF formats may provide intensive periods of language study over several years and across standard CF programs. These program formats also enable school districts, administrators and teachers flexibility in implementing more intensive periods into regular CF programs.

Students participating in the focus group sessions self-assessed greater gains in language proficiency, which is critical for students to consider continuing FSL studies past the mandated years of study. As well, the notations in the teacher journal indicated that not only did the compact class format facilitate the implementation of more communicative/experiential teaching and learning tasks, but that the students recognized the value of these types of learning activities. Students assumed greater ownership in the more intensive formats; students who assume
ownership of their learning are more likely to continue learning. In an era of declining enrolment, encouraging students to take ownership in their learning, and to self-assess gains in language proficiency, are critical to motivating students to continue FSL studies.

**Future Directions**

This study suggests several future directions. The results of demonstrated proficiency were conclusive, indicating that the students in the compact CF class performed no worse than those in the comparison class; in essence, language gain and retention were demonstrated in a similar manner. As the stated goal of the Government of Canada is to increase the number of functionally bilingual students, we need to introduce program formats that will enable educators to meet this goal, particularly within CF, which is the FSL program in which the majority of Canadian students are enrolled. Therefore, it is important to continue to investigate the concept of compact CF classes, expanding the case study to include different compact formats, as in the Lapkin et al. (1995) study, and different populations of FSL learners in Ontario, in order to determine the effect that this type of intensity can have on student French language proficiency and motivation to learn. I suggest that several formats of distribution need to be investigated. The length of intensity, as well as the implications for the school timetable must be considered. Since different distributions of CF study will impact on other subject areas, it may be of interest to determine which other subjects may benefit from more intensive periods. In the present study, students in the compact CF classes studied music and visual arts in a more intensive period for the other half of the school year. Future research may be required to determine the impact on achievement in those subject areas also compacted or impacted by more intensive periods of study.
Also, longitudinal study of student retention of language proficiency over time must be undertaken in order to determine long-term effects of compact CF program formats. The students in the present study retained curriculum-specific knowledge in a similar manner. What will be the effect on student achievement and retention of language proficiency over time if students continued to study French in more intensive distributions?

As well, the present study emphasizes the need for mixed methods research in educational studies, and, in particular, the need to introduce participatory methods, such as focus groups, with early adolescent learners in order to identify and understand student responses and perspectives in research studies.

**Conclusion**

This study suggests that compact CF formats promote similar levels of student proficiency in French. It has also revealed that it is feasible to implement the multidimensional, project-based curriculum approach in classes of different distribution of time and in a region of Ontario in which students receive little exposure to the French language outside of the classroom. A review of the proficiency test data in the study suggests that students in the compact CF formats performed similarly to those in the traditionally-scheduled comparison classes. Focus group data, however, indicated that students in the compact CF classes distinctly indicated a greater preference for the more intensive periods because they offered opportunities to engage in learning activities preferred by early adolescent learners. Greater interest in the learning activities and tasks promotes greater enjoyment, and subsequently greater motivation to continue studying French. In conclusion, I recommend further study of compact CF models, in order to determine their effect on French language proficiency and student motivation to study French.
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Appendix A
Revised MOLT Assessment Instrument

CLASSROOM CHECKLIST FOR LANGUAGE TEACHER OBSERVATION

School: _________________________  Grade: ______     Visit_____      Page: _____
Teacher: __________________  Date: __________________ Observer: ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode #</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY (language, discipline, management, project, etc)</th>
<th>DETAILS: (circle appropriate choices)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher language: L1  L2  Mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student language: L1  L2  Mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student mode: Listen / Speak / Write / Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Materials: Minimal text / Extended text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogy: Pre-activity / Cold start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personalization: Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Role: Expert / Sharing / Facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher language: L1  L2  Mix
Student language: L1  L2  Mix
Student mode: Listen / Speak / Write / Read
Materials: Minimal text / Extended text
Pedagogy: Pre-activity / Cold start
Personalization: Yes / No
Teacher Role: Expert / Sharing / Facilitator
Appendix B

Outline of Sample Unit and Learning Activities

| Unit Name | *Vivre en bonne santé*  
(Living in good health)* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Focus</td>
<td>Students discuss healthy living, including a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Students will prepare a video presentation in the context of a healthy network lifestyle show. Students will work in groups to prepare either a healthy cooking show, a talk show highlighting sports or nutrition experts, or a commercial for a health-related product. Each student will prepare a personal written program detailing their positive choices for an active lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Communicative/Experiential Objectives | • respond to questions on healthy lifestyles  
• reflect on students’ own healthy lifestyle  
• discuss how to make informed decisions about their lifestyle choices  
• describe the elements of healthy eating  
• analyze and evaluating eating choices of teenagers  
• express and justify tastes, preferences and opinions  
• read recipes to identify pertinent information and prepare recipe item  
• write recipes of healthy dishes and present to peers  
• examine the influence of the media on teenagers’ lifestyle decisions  
• participate in the preparation of the class healthy lifestyles network (video preparation and editing) |
| Language Objectives | Ontario Curriculum FSL document expectations  
Overall Expectations:  
By the end of Grade 7, students will:  
• listen to and talk about short, oral texts in structured and open-ended situations;  
• read a variety of classroom and simple authentic materials, 200 to 400 words long, and demonstrate understanding;  
• communicate information and ideas in writing, in structured and open-ended situations, for different purposes; and,  
• identify and use the vocabulary and the grammar and language conventions appropriate for this grade level.  
Specific Language Expectations:  
• present tense of the irregular verbs vouloir, pouvoir, partir, sortir, and devoir, with singular and plural subjects  
• double verb constructions (e.g., Je veux écouter de la musique)  
• imperative of some regular -er, -ir, and -re verbs  
• demonstrative adjectives (ce/cet/cette/ces)  
• the prepositions à and de plus the definite article (e.g., au/aux, du/des) |
| Cultural Objectives | • examine various lifestyle choices of teenagers in France  
• research and comparing the European eating habits to Canadians, and the impact on healthy lifestyles  
• identify and describe foods from Francophone and other cultures |
| General Language Education Objectives | • learn to use dictionaries, government documents, and magazines as resources (FSL curriculum expectation)  
• activate prior knowledge and experience  
• learn to use the context, illustrations, and familiar vocabulary to assist with aural and written comprehension of texts  
• use models, making changes and additions  
• work in small groups to develop the TL and social skills  
• participate in the learning process by negotiation tasks, activities, and assessment procedures  
• evaluate one’s own learning and that of one’s peers |

*Note. The participating school owned the FSL educational program *On y va*, used in the Core French classroom. As a teacher, I was expected to use this program as one of many resources to provide authentic communicative activities (see Anderson, D., Chemeris, P., Edgar, K., Masschaele, D., & Salvatori, M. (2001). *On y va*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Addison Wesley).
Appendix C
Frequency of Use Tables:
Student Questionnaire

Table C1
Use or Comprehension of a Language Other Than English Or French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>7A N = 24</th>
<th>7B N = 19</th>
<th>7C N = 15</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C2
Students Who Had Lived In a Francophone Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>7A N = 24</th>
<th>7B N = 19</th>
<th>7C N = 15</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing value</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table C3

**Frequency of Use of English in the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>7A N = 24</th>
<th>7B N = 19</th>
<th>7C N = 15</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half the time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing value</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table C4

**Frequency of Use of French in the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>7A N = 24</th>
<th>7B N = 19</th>
<th>7C N = 15</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half the time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table C5

**Frequency of Use of Another Language in the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>7A (N = 24)</th>
<th>7B (N = 19)</th>
<th>7C (N = 15)</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half the time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table C6

**Beginning Grade for CF Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>7A (N = 24)</th>
<th>7B (N = 19)</th>
<th>7C (N = 15)</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table C7

**Student Self-Assessment of French Language Ability Compared To Grade 7 Peers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>7A (N = 24)</th>
<th>7B (N = 19)</th>
<th>7C (N = 15)</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing value</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table C8

**Student Self-Assessment of General Academic Success Compared To Grade 7 Peers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>7A (N = 24)</th>
<th>7B (N = 19)</th>
<th>7C (N = 15)</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing value</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Sample of Listening Comprehension Test

Script:
-Olivier, quelle est ta matière préférée?

-Ma matière préférée, je pense que c’est plutôt l’histoire. C’est dans les matières nouvelles qu’on a cette année et je trouve que c’est plus intéressant que le français, c’est toujours la grammaire, grammaire, maths toujours les chiffres, ça devient fatiguant.

-Quelle sorte d’histoire est-ce que tu étudies cette année?

-On a vu la préhistoire et on commence le chapitre en Égypte.

-Pas l’Égypte contemporaine, l’ancienne n’est-ce pas?

--Oui, l’ancienne Égypte.

Question: Quelle est la matière préférée d’Olivier?

(a) le français
(b) l’histoire
(c) les mathématiques
(d) la géographie
Salut Philippe!


Ton ami, Olivier

Question

1. Les étudiants ont:

   (a) traversé le fleuve St-Laurent.
   (b) voyagé loin du fleuve.
   (c) voyagé le long du fleuve.
   (d) nagé dans le fleuve.
Dictée:

*Recorded Script:*

Veux-tu en voir des cyclistes? On en attend environ 20,000 à Montréal.

*Student Response:*

_________________________ en voir _________________________ cyclistes?

On en ______________________ environ 20,000 _________________________.

*Composition 1 : Une annonce*

Tu cherches un ou une correspondant/e. Écris une annonce pour le magazine *Québec* avec ton nom, ton adresse et ton âge. Mentionne trois de tes intérêts.
Appendix G
Sample of Speaking Proficiency Test

Students were asked to order one dish from each section of a menu, excerpt below. Points for pronunciation were awarded for the phonemes underlined.

La Carte

Jus d’orange
Jus de tomate
Soupe aux légumes
Potage du chef

Salade aux oignons et aux oranges
Salade aux épinards et aux champignons
Appendix H

Researcher-developed, Curriculum-specific Reading Achievement Test

Partie A: Le sucre à la crème!

Lis la recette suivante. Mets les directives en bon ordre en écrivant les numéros 1 à 6 à côté de chaque phrase.

Le sucre à la crème

Ingrédients
- du sirop d’érable 500 mL – 2 tasses
- du sirop de maïs 15 mL – 1 cuillère à soupe
- de la crème légère 175 mL – ¾ de tasse
- de la vanille 1 cuillère à thé
- des noix hachées 175 mL – ¾ de tasse

Préparation

___ Puis, ajouter la vanille et les noix.

___ Premièrement, verser le sirop d’érable, le sirop de maïs et la crème dans une casserole.

___ Troisièmement, laisser refroidir jusqu’à 100°F (50°C). Commencer à remuer. Le mélange doit être épais.

___ En dernier, laisser refroidir avant de découper en carrés.

___ Deuxièmement, laisser bouillir sans remuer jusqu’à 234°F (112°C). Le mélange doit former une boule molle.

___ Ensuite, verser dans un plat beurré.

Scoring:
1 mark for each correctly identified item.
Partie B: Un bon régime

Imagine que tu es diététiste. Écris un paragraphe pour expliquer comment suivre un bon régime de nutrition et d’activité physique.

Dans ton paragraphe, donne cinq (5) suggestions pour suivre un bon régime. Dans ton paragraphe, tu dois utiliser les verbes vouloir, pouvoir et devoir.

Scoring :

5 marks  5 suggestions (1 mark for each suggestion)
3 marks  correct use of irregular verbs (1 mark for each of the three used correctly)
2 marks  coherence; articles; use of complete sentences
Appendix J

Student Questionnaires Administered During Pre-Test and Post-Test Periods

STUDENT PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

*A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective*

This questionnaire is part of a study on Core French program formats. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather data about your language background and your experiences in Core French. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers as honestly as possible since this will help me to better understand your language learning background and your attitudes toward the Core French program this year. Your answers will be strictly confidential. Your name will be replaced by a numerical code, and no one will see the questionnaires except the researcher.

For questions which ask information about your parents, “mother” refers to your mother, your stepmother, or your female guardian; “father” refers to your father, your stepfather, or your male guardian.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

Name: ____________________________________________

Gender: □ Female
        □ Male

A. YOUR FAMILY AND HOME LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

1. Are you or your parents French Canadian? □ Yes □ No

2. Do you have any ancestors who were French Canadian? □ Yes □ No

3. Have you ever lived in a place where French was used for everyday activities (e.g., shopping, restaurants, etc.)? □ Yes □ No

4. Does anyone in your household understand French?

   Mother □ Yes □ No
   Father □ Yes □ No
   Siblings □ Yes □ No
   Other □ Yes □ No
5. Place an ‘X’ in the box beside each person that best describes how their French compares to yours. Please check an answer for each person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Is there any language, not counting English and French, which you understand or speak?  
□ Yes  □ No

7. How often are English and any other language spoken in your home? Place an ‘X’ in one of the boxes beside each language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Hardly Ever</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Half the Time</th>
<th>Most or all of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. YOUR FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

1. Please check the grade when you started Core French.

   Kindergarten _____  Grade 1 _____  Grade 2 _____  Grade 3 _____  Grade 4 _____  Grade 5 _____  Grade 6 _____  Grade 7 _____

2. Were you ever in an immersion program? Please check each and every grade you were in an immersion program.

   kindergarten _____  Grade 1 _____  Grade 2 _____  Grade 3 _____  Grade 4 _____  Grade 5 _____  Grade 6 _____
C. THE VALUE OF LEARNING FRENCH

1. Following are a number of statements with which some students agree and others disagree. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by putting an ‘X’ in the box that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Remember, when you are giving your opinion, there is no right or wrong answer!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of Grade 8, most students have learned all the French they will need later on.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve learned as much French as I need now.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to continue studying French in high school.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important in getting a good job.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important to get into a good college/university.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French will only help me in a government job.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French because I want to speak with French-speaking persons.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French because I want to travel to French-speaking provinces or countries.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am learning French only because it is mandatory.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT OF YOUR USE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

1. Compared to your Grade 7 peers, how well are doing in learning French?
   □ Below Average □ Average □ Above average

2. Compared to your Grade 7 peers, how well are you doing in school in general (e.g., in your other school subjects)?
   □ Below Average □ Average □ Above average

3. Since you began learning French, how much do you think you have improved in the following areas? Place an ‘X’ in the box that best describes how much you have improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greatly Improved</th>
<th>Slightly Improved</th>
<th>Did Not Improve</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My ability to speak French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to read French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to listen to and understand spoken French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to write in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My self-confidence in learning French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My motivation and desire to learn French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My knowledge and understanding of other French-speaking cultures.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Please indicate how well you can do the following tasks in French. Place an ‘X’ in the box beside each statement to indicate the level of difficulty or ease you experience for each task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>With little or no difficulty</th>
<th>With some difficulty</th>
<th>With much difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand a French newspaper or magazine.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French TV commercial.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French TV program.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a film in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat online in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a short story in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand a song in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give street directions to someone, face to face.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a personal web page in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a group discussion entirely in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please indicate how recently (if at all) you have done each of the following in French. Place an ‘X’ in one of the boxes beside each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Within the past week</th>
<th>Within the past month</th>
<th>Within the past 6 months</th>
<th>Within the past year or more</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked with friends between classes at school.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked on the telephone in French for at least a few minutes.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked in French to a person whose first language was French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the past week | Within the past month | Within the past 6 months | Within the past year or more | Never
---|---|---|---|---
Chatted online in French. | □ | □ | □ | □ | □
Watched a French TV program. | □ | □ | □ | □ | □
Watched a French movie that did not have subtitles. | □ | □ | □ | □ | □
Listened to music or music programs in French | □ | □ | □ | □ | □
Read a French book outside of school or school work. | □ | □ | □ | □ | □

6. Please rank your skills in French, from 1 to 4 (strongest to weakest).

Speaking ____
Listening ____
Writing ____
Reading ____

E. YOUR FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

Please indicate how useful you find each of the following activities in learning French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working on projects.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing pronunciation exercises.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing oral presentations in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to recorded conversations in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Very Useful</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Not Useful</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing grammar exercises.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the culture of French-speaking people.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a dictionary list.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a dictionary.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating into English.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about how the French language works.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing how French and English work.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking in French during class.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing the teacher speak French in class.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Now, place it in the envelope, seal the envelope, and write your name on the front. All envelopes will be collected in the main office, and your name will be replaced with a numerical code.
STUDENT POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective

This questionnaire is part of a study on Core French program formats. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather data about your experiences in Core French this year. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers as honestly as possible since this will help me to better understand your attitudes toward the Core French program this year. Your answers will be strictly confidential. Your name will be replaced by a numerical code, and no one will see the questionnaires except the researcher.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

Name: _________________________________________

Gender: □ Female
         □ Male

A. THE VALUE OF LEARNING FRENCH

1. Following are a number of statements with which some students agree and others disagree. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by putting an ‘X’ in the box that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Remember, when you are giving your opinion, there is no right or wrong answer!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of Grade 8, most students have learned all the French they will need later on.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve learned as much French as I need now.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to continue studying French in high school.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important in getting a good job.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT OF YOUR USE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

1. Compared to your Grade 7 peers, how well are you doing in learning French?
   
   □ Below Average   □ Average   □ Above average

2. Compared to your Grade 7 peers, how well are you doing in school in general (e.g., in your other school subjects)?

   □ Below Average   □ Average   □ Above average

3. Since you began learning French, how much do you think you have improved in the following areas? Place an ‘X’ in the box that best describes how much you have improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing French is important to get into a good college/university.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am learning French only because it is mandatory.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French is one of my favorite subjects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French is as important as other school subjects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Please indicate how well you can do the following tasks in French. Place an ‘X’ in the box beside each statement to indicate the level of difficulty or ease you experience for each task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>With little or no difficulty</th>
<th>With some difficulty</th>
<th>With much difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand a French newspaper or magazine.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French TV commercial.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French TV program.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a film in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat online in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a short story in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand a song in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give street directions to someone, face to face.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a personal web page in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Please indicate how recently (if at all) you have done each of the following in French. place an ‘X’ in one of the boxes beside each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within the past week</th>
<th>Within the past month</th>
<th>Within the past 6 months</th>
<th>Within the past year or more</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked with friends between classes at school.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked on the telephone in French for at least a few minutes.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked in French to a person whose first language was French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatted online in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a French TV program.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a French movie that did not have subtitles.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listened to music or music programs in French</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a French book outside of school or school work.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please rank your skills in French, from 1 to 4 (strongest to weakest).

Speaking  
Listening  
Writing  
Reading
C. YOUR FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

1. How satisfied were you with each of the following elements of your Grade 7 Core French program? Please check one answer for each element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat unsatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My overall Grade 7 Core French program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the class period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily language learning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please indicate how useful you found each of the following activities in learning French. Check one answer for each activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working on projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing pronunciation exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing oral presentations in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to recorded conversations in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing grammar exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the culture of French-speaking people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a dictionary list.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a dictionary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating into English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Please complete the following sentences. Write down the first thing that comes to your mind.

a) One thing I liked about French class this year was _________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

b) One thing I didn’t like about French class this year was _________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

c) One thing that really helped me to better learn French was _________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Now, place it in the envelope, seal the envelope, and write your name on the front. All envelopes will be collected in the main office, and your name will be replaced with a numerical code.
Appendix K
Letter for Administrative Consent from
Director of School Board

July 17, 2004

Name of School Board Director
Address of School Board

Dear _________________:

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am writing to ask for your administrative consent, as Director of Education for the [name of school board], to conduct the research study entitled A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective at Lakeview Senior Public School. My proposed doctoral research study will investigate an alternative organization of Core French, a compact Core French model, in which the yearly instructional time is massed or ‘compacted’ into a shorter period of time, yet the total number of instructional hours remains the same. My principal focus will be on the pedagogical approach, as I hypothesize that longer class periods should facilitate a more communicative/experiential teaching approach within a multi-dimensional framework. At the beginning and at the end of the data collection period, students will complete reading and writing achievement pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests.

For this study, I would like to select three Grade 7 classes from the participating senior public school to serve as participants in the study. Each class will consist of an approximate 30 students; therefore, the total number of participating students will be approximately 90. The selection of participants will be decided in collaboration with the school principal; projected enrolment figures for the 2004/05 school year suggest that the school will have three regular Grade 7 classes. In this case, these three classes will be those asked to participate in the study. In the event that the school has more than three regular Grade 7 classes, I will randomly select three of the regular Grade 7 classes to participate in the study.

All potential participants and their parents/guardians will be given an information letter and consent form. All students will complete test and questionnaire materials, but only the tests of those who have agreed to participate will be scored. Students will complete a set of pre-tests during the first two weeks of September, a set of post-tests immediately following the completion of their Grade 7 Core French programs, and a set of delayed post-tests during the second week of September 2005. Each set of tests will consist of four tests: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each test will be written during one, 40-minute period, on one of four consecutive days. In addition, students will be asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to measure student attitudes toward their Core French program format, the various teaching strategies implemented in the classroom, their self-assessment of language proficiency and improvement, and students’ language background, French language heritage or other language learning experiences.
Short surveys will also be given to parents of participating students and to the teaching staff of the participating school in order to assess their perceptions of student experiences in the CF classes and French language learning. All questionnaires will be anonymous. In order to assess the extent to which I implement the curriculum activities in an equal manner across the three classes, I will audiotape and digitally videotape six periods in each of the three classes. The audiotape will record my voice; in the event that a student name is heard on the tape, it will be erased and will not appear in the transcription. The videotape will be altered in order to obscure the faces of any students recorded.

I want to reassure you that all questionnaires, audio and video recordings and transcripts, scores and test results will remain confidential, and will not be used to report on student academic achievement. All audio and videotapes will also remain confidential. The selected participants will not be under any obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. They may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if they wish, and they may refuse to answer any of the interview questions. Parents/guardians may also withdraw their child from this study at any time, for any reason, if they wish. All data generated from this study will remain confidential. Each student’s name will be replaced by a numerical code, and I will take great care that each student’s identity will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. The name of the school and the school board will also be given a pseudonym, and any specific identifying characteristics of location (such as the city name) will be obscured and kept confidential in the pilot study, the thesis, and in any subsequent presentations or publications.

All data from the research study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the student researcher’s office, and then destroyed two years after my thesis defense. The raw data gathered during this research study will be known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. My findings will be published in my doctoral thesis which will be made available to the board, the school, the teachers, and the students and their parents upon request. A summary of findings will also be made available to you upon request.

If you agree to my research proposal, I will officially contact [name of participating principal] to seek her consent to conduct the study at [name of participating school]. Upon receipt of her consent, I will proceed with making all the necessary arrangements which will include seeking students’ and parents/guardians’ permission. It is understood that you may ask me to stop my study at any time without giving a reason.

Please keep this letter for your future reference, and tear off the section below, sign and date it, and return it to me in the attached envelope. Also, I ask that you forward a copy of your board’s ethical review policy to me, that I may provide complete documentation of the study.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at [phone number and email address] if you have any further questions about this study. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sharon Lapkin, at [phone number and email address].
Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall  
Ph.D. candidate  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

I have read Pamela Marshall’s letter of July 17, 2004 and give permission for the research study *A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective* to be carried on in Lakeview Senior Public School. I understand that I may request the researcher to stop her study at any time without giving a reason.

Name:  
_______________________________________________

Signature:  
_______________________________________________

Date:  
_______________________________________________
Appendix L
Letter for Administrative Consent from
Principal of Participating School

August 31, 2004

Name of Principal
Address of Principal

Dear [name of principal]:

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am writing to ask for your permission, as principal of [name of participating school] to conduct the research study entitled A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective in your school. My proposed doctoral research study will investigate an alternative organization of Core French, a compact Core French model, in which the yearly instructional time is massed or ‘compacted’ into a shorter period of time, yet the total number of instructional hours remains the same. My principal focus will be on the pedagogical approach, as I hypothesize that longer class periods should facilitate a more communicative/experiential teaching approach within a multi-dimensional framework. At the beginning and at the end of the data collection period, students will complete reading and writing achievement pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests.

For this study, I would like to select three Grade 7 classes from the participating senior public school to serve as participants in the study. Each class will consist of an approximate 30 students; therefore, the total number of participating students will be approximately 90. The selection of participants will be decided in collaboration with the school principal; projected enrolment figures for the 2004/05 school year suggest that the school will have three regular Grade 7 classes. In this case, these three classes will be those asked to participate in the study. In the event that the school has more than three regular Grade 7 classes, I will randomly select three of the regular Grade 7 classes to participate in the study.

All potential participants and their parents/guardians will be given an information letter and consent form. All students will complete test and questionnaire materials, but only the tests of those who have agreed to participate will be scored. Students will complete a set of pre-tests during the first two weeks of September, a set of post-tests immediately following the completion of their Grade 7 Core French programs, and a set of delayed post-tests during the second week of September 2005. Each set of tests will consist of four tests: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each test will be written during one, 40-minute period, on one of four consecutive days. In addition, students will be asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to measure student attitudes toward their Core French program format, the various teaching strategies implemented in the classroom, their self-assessment of language proficiency and improvement, and students’ language background, French language heritage or other language learning experiences.
Short surveys will also be given to parents of participating students and to the teaching staff of the participating school in order to assess their perceptions of student experiences in the CF classes and French language learning. All questionnaires will be anonymous. In order to assess the extent to which I implement the curriculum activities in an equal manner across the three classes, I will audiotape and digitally videotape six periods in each of the three classes. The audiotape will record my voice; in the event that a student name is heard on the tape, it will be erased and will not appear in the transcription. The videotape will be altered in order to obscure the faces of any students recorded.

I want to reassure you that all questionnaires, audio and video recordings and transcripts, scores and test results will remain confidential, and will not be used to report on student academic achievement. The selected participants will not be under any obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. They may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if they wish, and they may refuse to answer any of the interview questions. Parents/guardians may also withdraw their child from this study at any time, for any reason, if they wish. All data generated from this study will remain confidential. Each student’s name will be replaced by a numerical code, and I will take great care that each student’s identity will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. The name of the school and the school board will also be given a pseudonym, and any specific identifying characteristics of location (such as the city name) will be obscured and kept confidential in the pilot study, the thesis, and in any subsequent presentations or publications.

All data from the research study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the student researcher’s office, and then destroyed two years after my thesis defense. The raw data gathered during this research study will be known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. My findings will be published in my doctoral thesis which will be made available to the board, the school, the teachers, and the students and their parents upon request. A summary of findings will also be made available to you upon request.

If you agree to my research proposal, I will proceed with making all the necessary arrangements, which will include seeking students’ and parents’/guardians’ permission. It is understood that you may ask me to stop my study at any time without giving a reason.

Please keep this letter for your future reference, and tear off the section below, sign and date it, and return it to me in the attached envelope.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at [phone number and email address] if you have any further questions about this study. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sharon Lapkin, at [phone number and email address].
Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]

I have read Pamela Marshall’s letter of August 31, 2004 and give permission for the research study *A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective* to be carried on in Lakeview Senior Public School. I understand that I may request the researcher to stop her study at any time without giving a reason.

Name: ________________________________

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix M
Parental Information Letter and Consent Form:
Experimental Classes 7A and 7B

September 7, 2004

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in investigating issues related to Core French. I am particularly interested in studying the extent to which alternative Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is *A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective*. I would like to enlist your child’s help to investigate how different program formats may help students to better learn and retain the French language. The principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your and your son/daughter’s permission to participate in this study.

This year, your child will study Core French in daily, 80-minute class periods (Monday to Thursday), for 5 months of the year. During the other 5 months of the year, your child will study art and computer. The total number of hours of French study will be the same, and your child will participate in the same learning and assessment activities as all other Grade 7 students in the school. All activities and tests will reflect the recommended approach for teaching French as a second language in Canada, and will meet the requirements in the Grade 7 Ontario curriculum. Also, the total number of hours in all other subjects remains the same. This is basically a semester system. Some of your child’s other classes are also scheduled on this semester system (Family Studies and Design and Technology). The purpose of the semester system is to permit double periods in those subjects that require a more intensive learning period, without actually adding to the total number of hours in each school year and without taking any hours from other subjects.

The study will involve completing a reading, writing, speaking and a listening test. The tests will be given by me over the course of four days. Each test will take up part of the students’ regular Core French period on each day. The test should help students review material they studied last year in Grade 6, as well as new material learned this year in Grade 7. They will be asked to complete three sets of these tests: 1) a pre-test in September 2004; 2) a post-test immediately after they have completed their Grade 7 Core French program; and, 3) a delayed post-test the following September 2005. Students will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning and the end of their Grade 7 Core French program.
All students in the class will complete these tests, since they will serve as review activities of the Core French program; however, only the tests of those students who agree to participate in the study will be marked and analyzed. All data will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your son/daughter’s performance as part of his/her regular Core French class. I will not know which test or questionnaire belongs to which student, since all tests and questionnaires will be turned over to [name of principal], who will store them in a locked filing cabinet in her office.

Please be assured that your son/daughter is under no obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. Your son/daughter will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the pilot testing period, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you or your son/daughter wishes, and without any negative consequences. If your son/daughter chooses to withdraw, he/she must notify the principal and his/her test responses will not be used. There will be no penalty for withdrawal reflected in the final mark for the course.

Also, please be assured that your son/daughter’s privacy will be protected at all times during the study. The raw data will be kept confidential, and will be known only to me and to the other members of my thesis committee. My findings will be published in my doctoral thesis which will be made available upon request to interested parents. A summary of the thesis or brief report will also be made available upon request. The identity of your son or daughter will be kept confidential in the thesis and any subsequent reports. [Name of principal] will assign a numerical code to conceal the identity of your son or daughter, which will be used during the data collection and analysis process. At no time will I know the names of participating students. The name of the schools and the school board will be given a pseudonym, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your son/daughter, school or characteristics of the board will be obscured.

All data generated during this study will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your son or daughter’s performance as part of his/her regular Core French program. Only I and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all; you will have access to the raw data collected about your son/daughter. None of the test scores will be used to assign report card marks. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

I hope that you will allow your child to participate in this study as it will enable me to develop reading and writing achievement tests that will more accurately, reliably and fairly assess French language proficiency. You may, of course, refuse permission, or your child may refuse or may withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without negative consequences.

Please complete and tear off the attached consent form, and return it to [name of principal], sealed, in the envelope provided. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information, or contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sharon Lapkin, at [phone number and email address].
Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall  
Ph.D. candidate  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto  
[contact information]

□ I, ________________________________, give permission for my son/daughter,  
_______________________________ to participate in the above-mentioned study,  
which involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that my  
son/daughter may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without  
his/her withdrawal affecting his/her marks or the instruction he/she will receive in Core  
French this year.

□ I, ________________________________, do not give permission for my son/daughter,  
_______________________________ to participate in the above-mentioned study, which  
involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that his/her non-  
participation will not affect his/her marks or the instruction he/she will receive in Core  
French this year.

Signature of parent/guardian: ______________________________

Name (please print): ______________________________

Date: ______________________________
 Appendix N

Student Information and Assent Form:
Experimental Classes 7A and 7B

September 7, 2004

Dear Student:

I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in studying how different Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective. I would like to ask your help in investigating how different program formats may help you to better learn and keep French language skills. Your principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your permission to participate in this study.

This year, your Core French classes will be semetered, so you will study Core French in daily, 80-minute class periods (Monday to Thursday) for 5 months of the school year. During the other 5 months of the year, you will study art and computer. The total number of Core French hours in the year will remain the same, and you will participate in the same learning and assessment activities as all other Grade 7 students in the school. All activities and tests will reflect the recommended approach for teaching French as a second language in Canada, and will meet the requirements in the Grade 7 Ontario curriculum. The purpose of the semester system is to give you double periods in those subjects that need extra time, without adding to the total number of hours in that subject and without taking any hours from other subjects. Some of your other subjects, such as Family Studies and Design and Technology, are already scheduled in semesters.

The study will involve completing a reading, writing, speaking and a listening test. You will complete one test each day, over four days. The tests will be given by me during your regular Core French class, and will take only part of the class period. The test should help you review material you studied last year in Grade 6, as well as new material learned this year in Grade 7. You will be asked to complete these tests three times. The first time will be during the first week of school in September 2004. The second time will be after you have completed your Grade 7 Core French program. The third time will be during the first week of school in September 2005 (your Grade 8 year). You will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning and the end of your Grade 7 Core French program.

All students in the class will complete these tests, since they will serve as review activities of the Core French program; however, only the tests of those students who agree to participate in the study will be marked and analyzed. All data will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your performance as part of your regular Core French class. I will not know which test or questionnaire belongs to which student, since all tests and questionnaires will be turned over to [name of principal], who will store them in a locked filing cabinet in her office. She will also white out your name and replace it with a number. Your test marks and questionnaire responses
will not be used for report card purposes or any other purposes not related to this study. Only myself and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all raw data (test answers and scores and questionnaire results); you will have access to the raw data collected about you. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

Please be assured that you are under no obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. You will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the study, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you wish. Your name will be replaced by a numerical code, and I will take great care that your identity will not be revealed in any other fashion.

The name of the school and the school board will be given a false name, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your school or the board of education will be concealed.

I hope that you will agree to participate in this study. If you do agree, please complete and tear off the attached consent form, and return it to [name of principal], sealed, in the envelope provided. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information.

Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]
□ I, ________________________________, agree to participate in the above-mentioned study. I realize that this study involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without my withdrawal affecting my marks or the instruction I will receive in Core French this year.

□ I, ________________________________, do not wish to participate in the above-mentioned study, which involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that my non-participation will not affect my marks or the instruction I will receive in Core French this year.

Signature of student: __________________________________________________

Name (please print): __________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________________________
Appendix O

Parental Information and Consent Form:

Comparison Class 7C

September 7, 2004

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in investigating issues related to Core French. I am particularly interested in studying the extent to which alternative Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective. I would like to enlist your child’s help to investigate how different program formats may help students to better learn and retain the French language. The principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your and your son/daughter’s permission to participate in this study.

This year, your child will be studying Core French in daily, 40-minute class periods (Monday to Thursday), throughout the 10 months of the academic year. The total number of Core French hours in the year will remain the same, and your child will participate in the same learning and assessment activities as all other Grade 7 students in the school. The pedagogic approach implemented in the classroom will reflect the recommended approach for teaching French as a second language in Canada, and will meet the requirements in the Grade 7 Ontario curriculum.

The study will involve completing a reading, writing, speaking and a listening test. The tests will be given by me over the course of four days. Each test will take up part of the students’ regular Core French period on each day. The test should help students review material they studied last year in Grade 6, as well as new material learned this year in Grade 7. They will be asked to complete three sets of these tests: 1) a pre-test in September 2004; 2) a post-test immediately after they have completed their Grade 7 Core French program; and, 3) a delayed post-test the following September 2005. Students will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning and the end of your Grade 7 Core French program.

All students in the class will complete these tests, since they will serve as review activities of the Core French program; however, only the tests of those students who agree to participate in the study will be marked and analyzed. All data will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your son/daughter’s performance as part of his/her regular Core French class. I will not know which test or questionnaire belongs to which student, since all tests and questionnaires will be turned over to [name of principal], who will store them in a locked filing cabinet in her office.

Please be assured that your son/daughter is under no obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. Your son/daughter will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the pilot testing period, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you or your son/daughter wishes, and without any negative consequences. If your
son/daughter chooses to withdraw, he/she must notify the principal and his/her test responses will not be used. There will be no penalty for withdrawal reflected in the final mark for the course.

Also, please be assured that your son/daughter’s privacy will be protected at all times during the study. The raw data will be kept confidential, and will be known only to me and to the other members of my thesis committee. My findings will be published in my doctoral thesis which will be made available upon request to interested parents. A summary of the thesis or brief report will also be made available upon request. The identity of your son or daughter will be kept confidential in the thesis and any subsequent reports. [Name of principal] will assign a numerical code to conceal the identity of your son or daughter, which will be used during the data collection and analysis process. At no time will I know the names of participating students. The name of the schools and the school board will be given a pseudonym, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your son/daughter, school or characteristics of the board will be obscured.

All data generated during this study will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your son or daughter’s performance as part of his/her regular Core French program. Only I and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all; you will have access to the raw data collected about your son/daughter. None of the test scores will be used to assign report card marks. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

I hope that you will allow your child to participate in this study as it will enable me to develop reading and writing achievement tests that will more accurately, reliably and fairly assess French language proficiency. You may, of course, refuse permission, or your child may refuse or may withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without negative consequences.

Please complete and tear off the attached consent form, and return it to [name of principal], sealed, in the envelope provided. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information, or contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sharon Lapkin, at [contact information]

Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]
☐ I, ____________________________________________, give permission for my son/daughter, ____________________________________________ to participate in the above-mentioned study, which involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that my son/daughter may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without his/her withdrawal affecting his/her marks or the instruction he/she will receive in Core French this year.

☐ I, ____________________________________________, do not give permission for my son/daughter, ____________________________________________ to participate in the above-mentioned study, which involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that his/her non-participation will not affect his/her marks or the instruction he/she will receive in Core French this year.

Signature of parent/guardian: ____________________________________________

Name (please print): ____________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
Appendix P
Student Information and Assent Form:
Comparison Class 7C

September 7, 2004

Dear Student:

I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in studying how different Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective. I would like to ask your help in investigating how different program formats may help you to better learn and keep French language skills. Your principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your permission to participate in this study.

This year, you will be studying Core French in daily, 40-minute class periods (Monday to Thursday), throughout the 10 months of the academic year. The total number of Core French hours in the year will remain the same, and you will participate in the same learning and assessment activities as all other Grade 7 students in the school. All activities and tests will reflect the recommended approach for teaching French as a second language in Canada, and will meet the requirements in the Grade 7 Ontario curriculum.

The study will involve completing a reading, writing, speaking and a listening test. You will complete one test each day, over four days. The tests will be given by me during your regular Core French class, and will take only part of the class period. The test should help you review material you studied last year in Grade 6, as well as new material learned this year in Grade 7. You will be asked to complete these tests three times. The first time will be during the first week of school in September 2004. The second time will be after you have completed your Grade 7 Core French program. The third time will be during the first week of school in September 2005 (your Grade 8 year). You will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire at the beginning and the end of your Grade 7 Core French program.

All students in the class will complete these tests, since they will serve as review activities of the Core French program; however, only the tests of those students who agree to participate in the study will be marked and analyzed. All data will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your performance as part of your regular Core French class. I will not know which test or questionnaire belongs to which student, since all tests and questionnaires will be turned over to [name of principal], who will store them in a locked filing cabinet in her office. She will also white out your name and replace it with a number. Your test marks and questionnaire responses will not be used for report card purposes or any other purposes not related to this study. Only myself and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all raw data (test answers and scores and questionnaire results); you will have access to the raw data collected about you. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my
office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

Please be assured that you are under no obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. You will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the study, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you wish. Your name will be replaced by a numerical code, and I will take great care that your identity will not be revealed in any other fashion.

The name of the school and the school board will be given a false name, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your school or the board of education will be concealed.

I hope that you will agree to participate in this study. If you do agree, please complete and tear off the attached consent form, and return it to [name of principal], sealed, in the envelope provided. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information.

Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]
☐ I, ________________________________, agree to participate in the above-mentioned study. I realize that this study involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without my withdrawal affecting my marks or the instruction I will receive in Core French this year.

☐ I, ________________________________, do not wish to participate in the above-mentioned study, which involves completing French language proficiency tests. I understand that my non-participation will not affect my marks or the instruction I will receive in Core French this year.

Signature of student: ____________________________________________________________

Name (please print): ______________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________________
Appendix Q

Parental Information and Consent Form:
Student Focus Groups

Monday, June 6, 2005

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in studying how different Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research *A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective*. I would like to ask your help in investigating how different program formats may help students better learn and keep French language skills. Your principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your and your child’s permission to participate in this study.

This year, your child participated in daily Core French class periods (Monday to Thursday). Now that students have completed their program, I am interested in hearing about some of their experiences and opinions in Core French this year. Therefore, I’d like to run a noon-hour focus group, consisting of 10-15 students from your child’s class. Participation will be completely voluntary. During the session, your child will have an opportunity to discuss his/her experiences with other members of the class. I will run the focus groups during a lunch hour. To compensate students for their time, I will provide a pizza lunch for all participants. The actual time commitment will be 30 to 40 minutes, and all conversation will be recorded by audiotape.

Please be assured that your son/daughter is under no obligation to participate in these focus groups; participation is completely voluntary. Your son/daughter will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the focus group session, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you or your son/daughter wishes, and without any negative consequences. If your son/daughter chooses to withdraw, he/she may notify either the principal or me. There will be no penalty for withdrawal reflected in the final mark for the course. Non-participation will not affect instruction or marks received by your child.

Also, please be assured that your son/daughter’s privacy will be protected at all times during the study. The raw data will be kept confidential, and will be known only to me and to the other members of my thesis committee. My findings will be published in my doctoral thesis which will be made available upon request to interested parents. A summary of the thesis or brief report will also be made available upon request. The identity of your son or daughter will be kept confidential in the thesis and any subsequent reports. I will assign a numerical code to conceal the identity of your son or daughter, which will be used during the data collection and analysis process. The name of the schools and the school board will be given a pseudonym, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your son/daughter, school or characteristics of the board will be obscured.
All data generated during this study will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your son or daughter’s performance as part of his/her regular Core French program. Only I and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all; you will have access to the raw data collected about your son/daughter. None of the test scores will be used to assign report card marks. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

I hope that you will allow your child to participate in this study as it will enable me to evaluate the effectiveness of the Core French program this year. You may, of course, refuse permission, or your child may refuse or may withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without negative consequences.

Please complete and tear off the attached consent form, and return it to the box in the office, sealed, in the envelope provided. Please return the form by Friday, June 10. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information, or contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Sharon Lapkin, at [contact information].

Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]

I give permission for my son/daughter, ____________________________________ to participate in the above-mentioned focus group, which involves meeting during a lunch hour with some of his/her classmates to discuss elements of the Core French program. I understand that my son/daughter may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without his/her withdrawal affecting his/her marks or the instruction he/she will receive in Core French this year.

Signature of parent/guardian: ____________________________________________

Name (please print): ______________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________
Appendix R
Student Information and Assent Form:
Student Focus Groups

Monday, June 6, 2005

Dear Student:

I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As part of my thesis research, I am interested in studying how different Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective. I would like to ask your help in investigating how different program formats may help you to better learn and keep French language skills. Your principal, [name of principal], and your school board have agreed that I may ask for your permission to participate in this study.

This year, you participated in daily Core French class periods (Monday to Thursday) for a total of approximately 100 hours of French. You have already completed some reading, writing, speaking and listening tests, and a questionnaire as part of this same study. Now that you have completed your Core French program, I am interested in hearing about some of your experiences and opinions about the activities in the class and the format of the program. Therefore, I’d like to ask for your participation in a small focus group session. The focus group will consist of 10-15 students from your class. You will have an opportunity to discuss your experiences with other members in your class. I will run the focus groups during a lunch hour. To compensate you for your time, I will provide a pizza lunch for all participants. The actual time commitment will be 30 to 40 minutes. I will record the sessions by audiotape.

All data will remain confidential, and will not be used to evaluate your performance as part of your regular Core French class. Your recorded comments and responses will not be used for report card purposes or any other purposes not related to this study. Only I and the other members of my thesis committee will have access to all raw data (my written notes and the audiotapes); you will have access to the raw data collected about you. All raw data collected during the study will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office. At the end of the study, the data will be stored in the same locked cabinet for two years. At the end of the two years, it will be shredded and destroyed.

Please be assured that you are under no obligation to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. You will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout the study, and may withdraw at any time, for any reason, if you wish. Non-participation will not affect your marks or the instruction you receive. Your name will be replaced by a numerical code, and I will take great care that your identity will not be revealed in any other fashion.

The name of the school and the school board will be given a false name, and when I write the final report, any identifying information about your school or the board of education will be concealed.
I hope that you will agree to participate in this study. If you do agree, please complete and tear off the attached assent form, and return it to the box in the office, sealed, in the envelope provided. Please return this assent form by Friday, June 10. You may keep the letter for your information and future reference. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me for more information.

Sincerely,

Pamela Marshall
Ph.D. candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
[contact information]
Appendix S
Sample Focus Group Questions

1. Describe your Core French class this year. Tell me about the learning activities.

2. Tell me about the timetable. What did you like about the length of your class period? What did you dislike? Do you have any suggestions?

3. How much do you think you improved your French language skills this year? In what areas did you improve this year? Where did you see the most improvement?

4. Did you notice any differences between your learning and the learning of those in the other French classes?

5. What activities were helpful to you in learning French?
Appendix T
Parental Questionnaires:
Experimental Classes 7A and 7B

PARENT/GUARDIAN QUESTIONNAIRES
A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As I wrote earlier this year, I am investigating issues related to Core French as part of my doctoral research; in particular, I am examining the extent to which alternative Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain information about your perceptions of your child’s experiences and language learning in his/her Core French classroom this year. The information from this questionnaire will be used to better implement Core French program formats. As parents or guardians of Core French students, your opinions and input are extremely valuable and important to my study.

Please take a few minutes to read and complete the following questionnaire. All responses and comments will be anonymous. When you have completed the questionnaire (including any additional comments that you wish to write), seal it in the enclosed envelope, then return it to the school. The envelopes are stamped and addressed, so all you need to do is drop it in the mailbox. If you prefer to drop it off at the school yourself, there will be a labeled box in the main office in which all questionnaires will be collected.

Thank you for your assistance with my study.

A] GENERAL FAMILY INFORMATION QUESTIONS:

1. a) Please check the statements that best apply to you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Fairly well</th>
<th>Fluently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak French:</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read French:</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write French:</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand French:</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) I learned French from: school □ friends □ family □ other

c) I am French Canadian: Yes □ No □

2. a) Does anyone currently living in your household use French in the home?
Yes □ No □
b) IF YES, how often is French used?

Hardly ever □     Sometimes □     About half the time □     Most or all of the time □

3. a) Does anyone currently living in your household use a language other than English or French in the home?

Yes □     No □

b) IF YES, how often is this language used?

Hardly ever □     Sometimes □     About half the time □     Most or all of the time □

4. What is the highest level of education you and your spouse/partner have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary or some high school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some community college, business or technical school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from community college, business or technical school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate studies</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What kind of work do you and your spouse/partner do? (For example, homemaker, dentist, bank teller, manager of an office, self-employed, nurse.)

Mother/Female Guardian: __________________________________________________

Father/Male Guardian: _______________________________________________________

B] YOUR CHILD’S FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

This year, your child studied French in 80-minute periods, Monday to Thursday, for 5 months of the school year. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, based on your perception of your child’s experiences in French this year, or based on what your child has expressed to you regarding their program.

1. How satisfied were you with each of the following elements of your child’s Grade 7 core French program? Please check one answer for each element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat unsatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall Grade 7 Core French program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. How well would your child rate their success in learning French this year?
   □ Better than last year       □ As well as last year       □ Worse than last year       □ Not sure

3. How would your child rate their success in learning French this year compared to his/her Grade 7 peers?
   □ Below Average       □ Average       □ Above average       □ Not sure

4. How would your child rate his/her success in school in general compared to his/her Grade 7 peers?
   □ Below Average       □ Average       □ Above average       □ Not sure

5. How do you think your child would rank his/her skills in French, from 1 to 4 (strongest to weakest).
   Speaking       _____
   Listening       _____
   Writing       _____
   Reading       _____

6. This year in Grade 7, how much do you think your child has improved in the following areas? Place an ‘X’ in the box that best describes your perception of his/her improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greatly Improved</th>
<th>Slightly Improved</th>
<th>Did Not Improve</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to speak French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to read French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to listen to and understand spoken French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to write in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her self-confidence in learning French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her motivation and desire to learn French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greatly Improved | Slightly Improved | Did Not Improve | Not Sure
---|---|---|---
His/her knowledge and understanding of other French-speaking cultures. | □ | □ | □ | □

7. Describe how much your child enjoyed French this year compared to last year.
- Enjoyed less than last year □
- Enjoyed about the same □
- Enjoyed more than last year □
- Not sure □

8. Did your child speak less, more or about the same French in class this year than in Grade 6?
- Spoke less French this year □
- Spoke more French this year □
- Spoke about the same French this year □
- Not sure □

9. Do you think the program was harder this year, about the same, or easier than in Grade 6?
- Harder than Grade 6 □
- About the same □
- Easier than Grade 6 □
- Not sure □

10. Please indicate how useful your child found each of the following activities in learning French this year. Check one answer for each activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working on projects.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing pronunciation exercises.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing oral presentations in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to recorded conversations in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in French.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing grammar exercises.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the culture of French-speaking people.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a dictionary list.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Very Useful</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Not Useful</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a dictionary.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating into English.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about how the French language works.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing how French and English work.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking in French during class.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing the teacher speak French in class.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Considering your child’s Grade 7 Core French program as a whole, how well did it meet your expectations for your child?

   Very well □
   Fairly well □
   Not well □
   Not sure □

12. If you wish to make any other comments about this year’s program, please do so here:

___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  
___________________________________________________________________________  

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.  
Please enclose and seal this questionnaire in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope and return the questionnaire to the school.
Appendix U
Parental Questionnaires:
Comparison Class 7C

PARENT/GUARDIAN QUESTIONNAIRES
A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective

My name is Pamela Marshall, and I am a doctoral student in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. As I wrote earlier this year, I am investigating issues related to Core French as part of my doctoral research; in particular, I am examining the extent to which alternative Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain information about your perceptions of your child’s experiences and language learning in his/her Core French classroom this year. The information from this questionnaire will be used to better implement Core French program formats. As parents or guardians of Core French students, your opinions and input are extremely valuable and important to my study.

Please take a few minutes to read and complete the following questionnaire. All responses and comments will be anonymous. When you have completed the questionnaire (including any additional comments that you wish to write), seal it in the enclosed envelope, then return it to the school. The envelopes are stamped and addressed, so all you need to do is drop it in the mailbox. If you prefer to drop it off at the school yourself, there will be a labeled box in the main office in which all questionnaires will be collected.

Thank you for your assistance with my study.

A] GENERAL FAMILY INFORMATION QUESTIONS:

1. a) Please check the statements that best apply to you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Fairly well</th>
<th>Fluently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak French:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read French:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write French:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand French:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) I learned French from: school □ friends □ family □ other □________

c) I am French Canadian: Yes □ No □
2. a) Does anyone currently living in your household use French in the home?
   Yes □ No □

   b) IF YES, how often is French used?
      Hardly ever □ Sometimes □ About half the time □ Most or all of the time □

3. a) Does anyone currently living in your household use a language other than English or French in the home?
    Yes □ No □

   b) IF YES, how often is this language used?
      Hardly ever □ Sometimes □ About half the time □ Most or all of the time □

4. What is the highest level of education you and your spouse/partner have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary or some high school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some community college, business or technical school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from community college, business or technical school</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate studies</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What kind of work do you and your spouse/partner do? (For example, homemaker, dentist, bank teller, manager of an office, self-employed, nurse.)

   Mother/Female Guardian: _______________________________________________________
   Father/Male Guardian: _________________________________________________________
B] YOUR CHILD’S FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

This year, your child studied French in 40-minute periods, Monday to Thursday, for the full 10 months of the school year. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, based on your perception of your child’s experiences in French this year, of based on what your child has expressed to you regarding their program.

1. How satisfied were you with each of the following elements of your child’s Grade 7 core French program? Please check one answer for each element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat unsatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall Grade 7 Core French program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the class period (40-minute periods, Monday to Thursday, 10 months)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily language learning activities</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final projects</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How well would your child rate their success in learning French this year?
   □ Better than last year       □ As well as last year       □ Worse than last year       □ Not sure

3. How would your child rate their success in learning French this year compared to his/her Grade 7 peers?
   □ Below Average       □ Average       □ Above average       □ Not sure

4. How would your child rate his/her success in school in general compared to his/her Grade 7 peers?
   □ Below Average       □ Average       □ Above average       □ Not sure

5. How do you think your child would rank his/her skills in French, from 1 to 4 (strongest to weakest).
   Speaking _____
   Listening _____
   Writing _____
   Reading _____
6. This year in Grade 7, how much do you think your child has improved in the following areas? Place an ‘X’ in the box that best describes your perception of his/her improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greatly Improved</th>
<th>Slightly Improved</th>
<th>Did Not Improve</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to speak French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to read French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to listen to and understand spoken French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her ability to write in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her self-confidence in learning French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her motivation and desire to learn French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/her knowledge and understanding of other French-speaking cultures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Describe how much your child enjoyed French this year compared to last year.

- Enjoyed less than last year ☐
- Enjoyed about the same ☐
- Enjoyed more than last year ☐
- Not sure ☐

8. Did your child speak less, more or about the same French in class this year than in Grade 6?

- Spoke less French this year ☐
- Spoke more French this year ☐
- Spoke about the same French this year ☐
- Not sure ☐

9. Do you think the program was harder this year, about the same, or easier than in Grade 6?

- Harder than Grade 6 ☐
- About the same ☐
- Easier than Grade 6 ☐
- Not sure ☐
10. Please indicate how useful your child found each of the following activities in learning French this year. Check one answer for each activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working on projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing pronunciation exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing oral presentations in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to recorded conversations in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in French.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing grammar exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the culture of French-speaking people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a dictionary list.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a dictionary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating into English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about how the French language works.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing how French and English work.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Speaking in French during class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing the teacher speak French in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Considering your child’s Grade 7 Core French program as a whole, how well did it meet your expectations for your child?

- Very well  □
- Fairly well □
- Not well   □
- Not sure   □

12. If you wish to make any other comments about this year’s program, please do so here:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. Please enclose and seal this questionnaire in the enclosed, addressed, stamped envelope and return the questionnaire to the school.
Appendix V
Teacher Questionnaire

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective

Hello everyone. As you may be aware, I am investigating issues related to Core French as part of my doctoral research; in particular, I am examining the extent to which alternative Core French program formats help improve student language proficiency. The title of the research is A Case Study of Compact Core French Models: A Pedagogic Perspective.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain information about your perceptions of student experiences and language learning in the Core French classrooms this year. The information from this questionnaire will be used to better implement Core French program formats. As teachers of Core French students, your opinions and input are extremely valuable and important to my study.

This year, 7C students studied French in 40-minute periods, Monday to Thursday, for the full 10 months of the school year, whereas 7A and 7B students studied French in 80-minute periods, Monday to Thursday, for 5 months of the school year. Please take a few minutes to read and complete the following questionnaire. All responses and comments will be anonymous. When you have completed the questionnaire (including any additional comments that you wish to write), seal it in the enclosed envelope, then return it to my mailbox in the staff room.

Thank you for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

Pam Marshall Gray
QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. How satisfied were you with each of the following elements of the Grade 7 Core French program? Please check one answer for each element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat unsatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall Grade 7 Core French program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of the class period:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 40-minute periods, 10 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 80-minute periods, 5 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily language learning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How do you feel grade 7 students responded to the program format? Do you feel that they preferred one format over another? Please explain.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. How do you feel grade 7 students responded to the teaching and learning activities? Did they express preferences for particular activities over others? Please explain.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. Did you see or hear differences between the two program formats (traditionally-scheduled 7C and the compact classes of 7A and 7B)? Please describe.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
5. Please describe any changes that you noticed in student French language proficiency.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

6. Please describe any changes that you noticed in student motivation to study French.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. The students in 7A and 7B studied French for 5 months of the year, and then for the other 5 months they studied Art and Computers. Do you consider this scheduling to be effective? Please explain.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

8. What subjects would you suggest for the other half of the Core French semester? Please explain.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

9. If you wish to make any other comments about this year’s program, please do so here:
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. Please enclose and seal this questionnaire in the enclosed, addressed, envelope and place in Pam Marshall’s mailbox.