French as a Second Language Teacher Influence on Grade 9 Student Attitudes of French in Ontario

By

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Abstract

Khezzane (2014) describes being bilingual in Canada as a ticket that opens doors and allows a person go anywhere they choose. The Ontario French as a Second Language (FSL) curriculum was designed with the objective to help students speak French fluently, however, most students graduate without the ability to do so. The purpose of this research study was to determine the role FSL teachers play in creating a learning environment where students develop a positive attitude towards French. Findings were collected through semi-structured interviews with two experienced FSL teachers: one secondary school Core French teacher and one elementary school French Immersion teacher. Data suggests that the current FSL curriculum gives teachers more flexibility to cater their lessons to students’ learning needs and interests. Additionally, teachers’ perceptions of French affect their ability to make second-language learning a valuable experience for their students. Both teachers suggest that creating incentive for students to pursue French after Grade 9 stems from making the French language classroom interactive, engaging and enjoyable for all students. After the implications of this topic are discussed, recommendations and further research is suggested.

Key Words: French Pedagogy, Bilingualism, FSL Curriculum
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context

Findings show that learning and speaking French gives an individual a number of advantages living in Canada. Bilingualism opens doors to numerous cultural and professional opportunities. Khezzane (2014) explains that being bilingual allows one to acquaint themselves with more people in the world. In addition, further employment prospects reveal themselves when an individual speaks two languages. French is a language spoken not only across Canada, but also around the world. Research by Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) suggests that children who experience involvement with another culture through a foreign language are more conscious of a global community. Teachers who teach French at an elementary level are responsible for bringing the awareness of French culture into the classroom and enabling their students to better understand and appreciate this culture. Furthermore, experience with a foreign language can serve to support children with their intercultural competence (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004). Thus, children who recognize and value multiple cultures are more likely to be open-minded of the differences among people. Research also shows that individuals who learn a second language are better at solving complex problems and tend to be more creative than those who do not (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991), where learning a musical instrument has a similar positive cognitive outcome. When students are enabled by their teachers to learn French, they are placed at a considerable advantage, as they are required to think more critically and use more creative reasoning as they progress into later high school years and adult life. Therefore, the French as a Second Language (FSL) curriculum must ensure that students receive the best possible French education to succeed in their future academic and professional endeavours. FSL teachers must
not only help their students appreciate the value of French, they must prepare them for its practical use in their community and the real world.

1.1 Research Problem

There are still unanswered questions about the effectiveness of the different FSL options in Ontario, as each program has a range of pros and cons that vary with every student. Arnot and Mady (2003) found that students in French immersion (FI) programs have a higher quality of articulacy and general knowledge of the French language in comparison to students in Core French (CF) programs. Many FI teachers recount that implementing Reasoned and Coherent Writing in Immersion (ÉCRI) resulted in a “significant increase in the quality of students’ written work and overall motivation to write in French” (Arnot & Mady, 2003, p. 105). The success of programs in the province becomes apparent when witnessing the students’ ability to speak French fluently. FI programs begin as early as Grade 1, whereas CF does not begin until Grade 4. Although French is mandatory in Ontario until Grade 9, there are many concerns as to how effective the CF program is. Genesee and Jared (2008) found that “students in Core French programs have consistently scored lower on tests of reading comprehension and word recognition than students in immersion programs” (p. 141). In addition, “FI graduates outperform CF graduates in terms of their overall output, producing longer responses and more complex sentences” (Lappi-Fortin, 2014, p. 96). Since FI immersion programs have consistently shown to be more effective in producing more fluent and confident French-speakers, it appears that the objectives of each FSL program might be a cause for this distinction. Whether it is the implementation of the FSL curriculum or a flaw in the curriculum itself, it is a major concern that most Grade 9 CF students lose interest in this important subject matter sooner than their
peers in FI. It is the responsibility of the FSL educator to facilitate their students’ confidence in speaking French and to help them recognize the benefits of learning French.

1.2 Research Purpose

This study examines the FSL curriculum in Ontario, how the FI and CF programs are implemented and what should be done to support students’ continued growth in French language learning. Despite the grounds for implementing the FSL program for a bilingual Canada, there appears to be limitations with regards to the effectiveness of the program in persuading students to continue studying French at a secondary level. The motive for this research paper was to examine whether Grade 9 students’ lack of interest in French is related to teacher involvement and their provision of incentives to pursue French or whether the issue might be related to weaknesses in the curriculum itself. It is likely a combination of both, however, it is entirely possible for teachers to control how they instruct and depict the French language, despite the challenges they may encounter with the curriculum. The findings should allow education professionals and researchers to examine the questions concerning the FSL curriculum more thoroughly and prompt teachers to expand their French language knowledge and instruction.

1.3 Research Questions

With the awareness that the French language must be taught encouragingly by teachers to foster the confidence of French language students and their abilities, the primary question guiding the research is: How do FSL teachers make French language learning a positive experience for their students to willingly take French in Grade 9?

The subsidiary questions guiding the research concerning French teacher influence on student attitudes of French are as follows:

1. What are the end goals of French as a Second Language programs in Ontario?
2. How do the teaching strategies and objectives of the French Immersion program differ from those of the Core French program?

3. Why do French Immersion programs appear to be more successful than other French as a Second Language programs?

4. How do French teachers create a desire or incentive for Grade 9 students to continue studying and speaking French?

1.4 Reflexive Positioning Statement

Being born in Toronto to a family who speaks multiple languages, I was enrolled in a French immersion program throughout my elementary and secondary education. Because one of my parents was an immigrant to Canada, I learned to speak English, Russian and French fluently. I feel as though I have benefitted greatly from speaking three languages in Ontario, a province that is immensely multicultural and where there are frequent occasions to communicate in a language other than English. Speaking multiple languages is also of value when travelling to countries or regions where English is not spoken. This ability has allowed me to submerge myself into additional cultures in a unique way, which would have never been possible if I had not begun learning French and Russian from a young age. Frequently speaking, writing and practicing French and Russian from the age of five allowed me to increase my ability to use the languages’ vocabulary and terminology. I have met several young adults in Ontario who stopped taking French after Grade 9 since the CF program was no longer mandatory. They acknowledge that they could have benefitted from a more comprehensive and effective program, which should have taught them how to enjoy using the language, rather than it being an arduous task. Perhaps the real concern causing regret in many adults is not their lack of ability to speak French, but the
fact they did not feel motivated to persevere with their French language learning after the inopportune fact that it was no longer mandatory in high school.

In my experience as a teacher candidate and a scholar, enjoying and knowing how to communicate in French has helped me extensively and will continue to do so. I was given an opportunity to teach and advocate for students who may not recognize, or merely have not been properly presented with, the significant value of being bilingual in Ontario. Per contra, I take into consideration that perhaps some students may fare better speaking a single language. The school should be the place where students can explore their possibilities and where they are given every opportunity to challenge their abilities and exceed expectations.

1.5 Preview of the Whole
To address the research question, a qualitative research study has been conducted to examine the impact French teachers have on student attitudes of learning French. Two experienced Ontario FI and CF teachers describe their personal experiences with French education, as students and as teachers. They explain the teaching methods and strategies they use in the classroom and the elements that they consider when they design their lessons. In chapter 2, the literature review reports the findings regarding the benefits of having a bilingual education in Canada as well as changes and nuances between the FSL programs in Ontario, particularly FI and CF programs. In chapter 3, the research outline comprises the approach and procedures considered for the purpose of this study, including the data analysis, the ethical review and the methodological strengths and limitations. In chapter 4, the research findings from the interviews are reported. The qualitative data is discussed and its significance considered in light of the existing literature on the value of speaking French and the Ontario FSL curriculum. In chapter 5, I identify the narrow implications of the research findings for my own teacher identity and practice as well as the broad
implications for the educational research community. I also articulate a series of questions raised by the research findings, and point to areas for future research. The findings of this study aim to support FSL educators and researchers to investigate the significance of speaking French in Ontario and how the language should be prioritized and taught accordingly. Ultimately, speaking, learning and teaching French should be gratifying for teachers and students alike.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature in the areas of cultural and cognitive benefits that a child acquires when learning a second language from a young age. The implications for Core French (CF) and French immersion (FI) teachers in Ontario are explored, with a focus on the progress of CF and FI programs throughout the years of the changing Ontario curriculum. French teachers play a significant role in promoting a positive relationship between the student and the French language. Themes relating to student interest in continuing to learn French after Grade 9 are then considered.

I begin by reviewing the literature surrounding French language learning and consider how students may value and benefit from being proficient in French in Ontario. Next, I review research on the CF program to investigate the quality of French education students have received in the past versus the quality they are currently receiving, whether the program’s insufficiencies are due to the goals of the curriculum itself or perhaps the absence of French from a child’s early age. From there, I explore the strengths of FI programs in Ontario and examine the ways in which the achievements of students in FI programs consistently surpass those of students in CF programs. Finally, I aim to uncover the role French teachers play in determining their students’ outlook towards and interest in learning French. There appears to be a strong correlation between student fluency in French and student willingness and motivation to pursue learning French at a secondary level.

2.1 Role of the Teacher in Fostering Student Connection with French Language

Learning French from a young age allows a child to think in different ways and to decipher new language codes that they could not have otherwise. Bamford and Mizokawa (1991)
explain that those who learn a second language think more creatively and have a higher ability to solve complex problems. A child benefits in many ways from learning a second language from an early age. Teachers are responsible for promoting a child’s development as they stimulate the child’s mind and look out for the child’s best interest. FSL educators are essential in enabling a student’s ability to learn the French language. Students who speak French tend to be more confident and more creative with the realization of their work. Also, acquiring French from an early age enriches and enhances the cognitive development of a child. The awareness of the value of the French language promotes cultural awareness in Canadian and French settings. Considering this, students should be encouraged and encouraged by their teachers to pursue learning French in Grade 9.

2.1.1 Promoting enhanced higher order thinking

Metalinguistic awareness refers to the ability to see language as an art and a process. According to Vygotsky (1986), metalinguistic reflection plays an important role in a child’s ability to control cognitive processing. As an individual begins to acquire skills in two languages, they are more likely to reflect on the distinct acquisition of these languages. As a teacher, to foster a child’s cognitive growth, they must give a child the necessary tools to enjoy the French language, eventually working their way to fluency. Hakuta (1986) argues that children who study a second language from an early age show greater cognitive flexibility, are better at problem solving and display higher order thinking skills. It is essential for children to learn about the nature of language and for them to experience communication in a second language in the classroom with a teacher (Elizabeth Ratté, 1968). Ratté (1968) found that second language learners tend to have better listening skills and more perceptive memories than their peers who speak one language. Improved cognitive abilities ameliorate a child’s capacity to process new
information and allow teachers to use communication as a learning tool more effectively. Being able to listen carefully and process auditory information is essential, especially considering the growing importance of communication through listening in a modern world (Ratté, 1968). Learning a second language proficiently, especially one as valuable as French, allows a child to think creatively and solve problems in a unique way.

2.1.2 Increasing cognitive development

In the same regard as thinking creatively, acquiring French language skills from an early age enriches and enhances a child’s cognitive development. A critical period occurs at a time when the brain is optimally capable of acquiring a specific ability, such as language acquisition. An individual’s learning experiences provide the right environment for the brain to develop. Teachers are responsible for providing this environment for their students. Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) believe that what comes easily and naturally to a child may become more challenging for an older learner. Therefore, ideal language learning for children must be acquired with the support of teachers who spend more time with their students than a parent or guardian does. In a study conducted by Bamford and Mizokawa (1991), it was discovered that second language learners are more creative and better at solving complex problems than their peers. Children who learn two languages have a stronger capacity to think imaginatively (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991), which allows for teachers to plan more student-led, creativity-based lessons.

2.1.3 Expanding cultural awareness

A teacher can help bring cultural awareness into the classroom. A strong awareness of differing cultures in the world is essential, especially in a Canadian setting, an increasingly multicultural and multiethnic society. Children must learn to recognize other communities and groups of people who live around them, whose culture differ from their own. Curtain and
Dahlberg (2004) explain that exposure to a foreign language “serves as a means of helping children to intercultural competence. The awareness of a global community can be enhanced when children have the opportunity to experience involvement with another culture through a foreign language.” Early realization of the French language promotes cultural awareness as it gives children a unique insight into French culture and builds their experience with the culture in a unique way. Furthermore, children who have an appreciation for more than one culture are more likely to be more tolerant of the differences among people (Carpenter & Torney, 1974). This is of vital importance in Toronto and Ontario, where there is a great number of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, many interactions in the workforce occur on a global level. Teachers who recognize the value of the unique characteristics of their students and all individuals can educate their students to appreciate these traits in the same way.

2.2 Changes in the Core French Program in Ontario

The CF program was established with the introduction of FSL into the Ontario curriculum. The Official Languages Act was a significant marker in Canadian history, which revolutionized French language learning. One purpose of the Act was to “ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada” (Government of Canada, 1998). Finally, both languages would have equal designations in Canada. In 1998, bilingualism became an integral component to the lives of Canadian citizens as French became Canada’s second official language. In 2001, the shift of focus on the implementation of the FSL curriculum in Ontario meant that educators must now consider how French should be taught using the CF curriculum document and, perhaps more importantly, how French language learners will understand French and make use of it in their daily lives.

2.2.1 Core French historical context
Since 1998, CF students have been required to accumulate a minimum of six hundred hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. The role of CF teachers is to provide students with learning activities and differentiated instruction so that students can communicate effectively in French. The primary aim of the CF program 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, 1998). The curriculum document was revised in 2001 and again in 2013 to better suit the teaching needs of educators and learning needs of students. Currently, Ontario’s three FSL programs, CF, Extended French (EF) and FI, have been placed in a single document. In this document, various teaching strategies applicable to the three programs are considered through the strands of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in French.

2.2.2 Weaknesses of the Core French program

The CF program aims to give students basic skills in French, however, there are many areas in which the program is lacking. Acquiring a second language is optimal when occurs during a child’s critical period for language acquisition, which is evidently before Grade 4. Despite evidence the supports this, students are not enrolled in CF until Grade 4, where it becomes mandatory until Grade 8. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) states that school boards have the authority to introduce a CF program earlier than Grade 4. This would be conditional on whether the school has the support and the means to offer the program correctly. Since most schools will not have the faculty to offer CF and will therefore not offer it until Grade 4, which is past a child’s critical period for learning a new language, most students will not begin learning French until a period where they are not benefitting from it as much as they might if it were introduced at an earlier onset. Furthermore, CF is being taught as a subject for one period
each day or a few times a week. Typically, this is not enough time for language acquisition to happen in the same capacity that it occurs in FI programs. The success of the CF program would also depend on a teacher’s capabilities and efforts, such as using differentiated instruction to meet every one of their students’ needs in the classroom. The CF program would be vastly more beneficial to students if it were to be introduced in the primary grades. Learning a new language could “reaffirm literacy principles that are being taught in the mainstream classroom…English…and for both languages to benefit” (Arnot & Mady, 2003). The transfer across languages is most likely to occur when literacy skills are well established in one language.

2.3 Teacher Influence in French Immersion Programs

The Ontario curriculum’s FI program appears to have great success in motivating students in French and encouraging them to pursue learning the French language at a secondary level and in their adult life. Moreover, FI students appear to be more confident with their French speaking abilities and tend to outperform their peers in alternative French language programs. The research shows that FI teachers succeed in giving students the French literacy skills and fluency needed to make the better choice to continue taking French after Grade 9.

2.3.1 Success of French immersion programs

Research of early FI programs has revealed that students with more exposure to French achieve higher levels of proficiency than students in programs with less contact with French. When comparing students in all types of immersion programs and students in CF programs, the findings consistently show that “[FI students] score significantly higher than [CF students] on tests of word recognition and reading comprehension” (Genesee & Jared, 2008, p. 141). The evidence suggests that FI programs are more efficient in making students proficient French-speakers. In addition, Lappi-Fortin (2014) found that “French Immersion graduates outperform
Core French graduates in terms of their overall output, producing longer responses and more complex sentences” (p. 96). It appears that in the right setting, with the appropriate support from teachers and administrators, students’ aptitude in French can flourish. Although many students in FI programs tend to excel, the program is not ideal for some students. In a 1997 study, principals and teachers cited “academic difficulty” most often as the primary reason students had for leaving FI programs (Obadia & Thériault, p. 516). It would be interesting to note how these facts have changed over the last two decades. While FI programs may be too academically rigorous for some students, and their parents who do not have the resources to fully support their child’s second language learning, the program is unquestionably the right choice for the student whose ambition is to speak French with fluency.

2.3.2 Students’ perspectives of French language learning

When students are confident with their abilities in French, this might motivate them to pursue their studies at a secondary level. Whether a student has a proficient French-speaking parent, or one who speaks another language and understands the task of learning multiple languages, will also inform the student’s attitude towards French. While FI education has been successful in fostering bilingualism rates among young Canadian students, research indicates that student participation rates decrease significantly at the secondary level (Makropoulos, 2010). There are a variety of factors that may influence how students feel about taking French after it is no longer mandatory. They may be less willing to take French due to the added stresses of a strict academic FI program in combination with the lack of initiatives to encourage pursuing French language learning. Students have admitted to feeling excluded in FI programs because of discriminatory treatment encountered from their teachers (Makropoulos, 2010). Students may feel as though they do not fit the mould since teachers are not encouraging them to pursue
French if it should require more effort, however, there should be no mould. Makropoulos (2010) also uncovered that the orientation and delivery of the secondary FI curriculum were incompatible with their respective abilities and interests. These elements would explain the disengaged attitudes of some FI students.

2.3.3 French immersion teacher involvement and subsequent student interest

Students who study languages tend to be more confident and content (Andrade et al., 1989). Although Canadian students are conscious of the benefits of learning and speaking a second language, it appears that this is often not enough for them to pursue it. While students whose native language is neither English or French are often “not encouraged…sometimes actively discouraged, from enrolling in French as a Second Language education” (Brennick & Shea, 2010), native English and French speakers are strongly encouraged to pursue French through promotional and advocacy initiatives. It is apparent that student interest in French will determine their achievement and willingness to make an effort in their French studies. Brennick and Shea (2010) explain that FI programs continue to be a priority for university-oriented students who are interested in acquiring bilingual educational capital. As for other learners, the incentive to pursue French language learning is lacking. All students, regardless of their race, languages spoken and academic abilities, should be encouraged to pursue French, as learning the language develops their cognition and speaking the language will significantly help them in their future specializations.

2.4 Conclusion

In this literature review, the research on the cognitive, cultural and social benefits of learning French from an early age in Canada was examined. First, the FSL teacher’s role in promoting enhanced higher order thinking in their students, increasing their cognitive
development and expanding cultural awareness and experiences was evaluated. Second, an overview of the evolution of CF programs in Ontario was provided, as well as the advancements teachers have made and certain shortcomings of the CF curriculum. Third, findings that explain the relationship between FI programs and student perspectives of French language acquisition were provided. It was discovered that French teachers have an immense potential to influence the decision students make whether to pursue their French education after Grade 9. This review sheds light on the amount of recent attention, or lack thereof, that has been paid to student interest, motivation and achievement in the French language. The review also raises questions about the implementation of the FSL curriculum and suggests the need for further research in the areas of FSL education in Ontario. Considering the review of existing literature, the researcher endeavours to learn ways in which the FI and CF curriculum may be enhanced by the French teachers who exercise it daily, such that in the future students may be inspired to pursue their studies in French after Grade 9.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology and the numerous methodological decisions made by the researcher are described. The reasoning behind these decisions as they are connected to the purpose of the research and the research questions are explained. This chapter will begin with a discussion of the research method and procedures. After, the primary means by which data was collected is described. Subsequently, the participants of the study are identified, the sampling criteria is listed, the sampling procedures are described and some details regarding the participants’ backgrounds are provided. Then, the way in which the data has been interpreted and analyzed is explained, prior to recognizing the important ethical issues that have been addressed and are considered. Finally, some of the methodological limitations of the study are outlined, while highlighting and acknowledging the study’s strengths.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This study was conducted using a qualitative research study approach, which includes a review of literature that is pertinent to the research questions and the purpose of the study. This qualitative research study involves the transference of two semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with teachers who meet the respective criteria, ensuring that the data gathered is relevant to the purpose of the study. While quantitative research is praised for being efficient, there is less of a focus on the specific person and their experiences, as quantitative research requires data collection on a large scale, which often involves predictive statistical analyses (Tetnowski & Damico, 2001). The interpretation of qualitative facts allows for greater depth and personal, thorough understanding. Tetnowski and Damico (2011) explain that qualitative data is collected “within natural and authentic settings” (p. 23) and it provides “rich descriptive data
within the authentic context” (p. 23). The reliable collection of data allows the researcher to compare the information to other findings and extrapolate the data to explain its significance effectively. The qualitative research study also allows for more focus on the individual in the situational context of an interview, as the “qualitative methodology must enable the researcher to incorporate the participants’ perspective on the phenomenon investigated” (Tetnowski & Damico, 2001, p. 23). The researcher gains an awareness of the interviewee’s standpoint. In the context of this research study, the FSL teachers will relay their experiences learning and teaching French as well as their efforts to encourage students to cultivate their French language learning motivation. Because qualitative research is personal in nature, the data collected may often be subjective. In addition, the reasons behind the interviewees’ standpoint differ “depending on the research question and the disciplinary perspective of the researcher” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). The researcher is aware of the limitations of a qualitative research study, as these have been taken into consideration as the data is obtained, further investigated and methodically discussed.

Qualitative research permits the researcher to investigate the data obtained from the interviews with great attentiveness. This form of data collection lets the researcher establish the way that information provided connects to show the reasons behind the occurrences being studied. Cooper et al. (2002) argue that qualitative research has significant implications for developing efficient curricula, refining instructional strategies and enriching pedagogical theory. To continue developing the curriculum and to persistently uncover new effective ways to teach it, qualitative research is used as a stepping-stone. The qualitative data that was uncovered through the interviews conducted in this study incorporates an authentic perspective on the way that French is being taught in Ontario, in FI and CF programs. The information was analyzed
with the purpose of determining whether there are ways to improve the instruction of the French language to benefit both teachers and students, such that Grade 9 students have a clear incentive to persevere and recognize the value of pursuing their French language education.

Given the purpose of this research and the answers that were looking to be uncovered, the use of a qualitative research approach was appropriate, as the purpose of the study was to examine and pursue an in-depth understanding of personal and detailed experiences that FSL teachers have encountered throughout their teaching careers. These detailed accounts provide the researcher with a thorough understanding of the FSL teachers’ occurrences in the classroom as well as parental involvement, school climate and the resources available to adults who play a significant role in student achievement in French. The qualitative research encountered is essential to creating change, as teachers and researchers are constantly ameliorating how students should be educated, what is best for them and for the future of the education system in Ontario.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Qualitative research must be conducted in the appropriate setting. One valuable method of collecting data in qualitative research is through interviews. According to Gill et al. (2008), research interviews discover the “views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters” (p. 291). Conducting an interview with a knowledgeable FSL teacher provides a multifaceted understanding of the teacher’s perspectives and ideas concerning the reasons why students may be less motivated to learn French after Grade 9 and what factors might promote the contrary. For the interview process to run naturally and successfully, the researcher continuously listens to the participant and converses with them accordingly.

There are three basic types of interviews that can be conducted for research purposes: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. This study focuses on a semi-structured interview.
A semi-structured interview consists of “several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge to pursue an idea or response in more detail” (Gill et al., 2008, p. 291). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews have been conducted. A semi-structured interview follows an organized series of questions in a timely manner; however, there is room for adaptability and improvisation if deemed necessary by the researcher during the interview. The versatility of the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer and the interviewee to be variable and sensitive to each other’s thoughts and expressions throughout the duration of the interview.

Rather than holding a group interview, the individual face-to-face interviews are conducted privately with each teacher selected to share their thoughts and beliefs. The individual interview “allows the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). The individual interview allows for more depth into the participants’ opinions, experiences and beliefs. Considering this, the interview questions (Appendix B) are organized into four sections. The interview begins with the participant’s background information, followed by questions about their experiences with their selective FSL program in Ontario. After, the interviewee is questioned on their opinions regarding second language instruction, specifically French pedagogy. The interview concludes with questions related to supports, resources, challenges and next steps for French teachers. The following are examples of the types of questions asked:

1. Do you think it is important for students growing up in a diverse country such as Canada to learn a second language such as French?

2. What are the teaching strategies you use to effectively instruct and assess your students’ French listening, speaking, reading and writing skills?
3. How do you inspire your students and create an incentive for them to continue their studies in French after elementary school?

3.3 Participants

To conduct and accomplish successful research interviews, the researcher selected participants who meet the criteria and agreed to take part in the study. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) explain that research participants should be selected based on meaningful sampling that seeks to maximize the depth and richness of the data to properly address the research question. Below, the methodological decisions made to have properly selected the interview participants are addressed.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The following criteria will be applied to all teachers participating in the study:

1. Teachers must have at least one year of experience teaching French at an elementary level (Grades 4 to 8) in Ontario.
2. At least one participant will have experience teaching French in a Core French and/or Extended French program.
3. At least one participant will have experience teaching French in a French immersion program and/or school.
4. Teachers are currently working in Toronto or GTA.
5. There will be both male and female participants.

Due to the methodological parameters and the detailed, in-depth nature of the study, the researcher conducts qualitative research interviews with two participants. To accurately contend with the principal research question, the participants interviewed have an appreciation for French language learning and wide-ranging knowledge of French instruction. In addition, the
participants have different experiences teaching FSL programs at an elementary level, as the
focus of the study is to discover potential reasons for students’ lack of interest in French when
they reach high school. The participants have been or are currently employed in the Greater
Toronto Area (GTA) for the purpose of this study, to preserve a multicultural and multilingual
lens. Lastly, both male and female participants have been interviewed, varying in age, to amplify
the richness of the data obtained from this small sample.

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

The participants chosen for this study are teachers who have openly agreed to an in-depth
interview because they consider the research being done as relevant and valuable to all
educators, students and members of the school community. The interview is meant to be a
“personal and intimate encounter in which open, direct, verbal questions are used to elicit
detailed narratives and stories” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317). Thus, both the
researcher and the participant must feel comfortable with one another for the participant to share
their ideas openly and for the researcher to ask the right questions. The use of purposeful
sampling of participants in this study will make the best use of the depth and richness of the data
to properly address the research question. Moreover, the participants can recommend other
individuals who share a similar interest in uncovering the answers to the inquiries of the study.
This allows for future researchers to revisit the subject matter and conduct further investigations
if it is available.

3.3.3 Participant biographies

Rachel and James are the two participants of this study, whose names have been altered
to protect their identities. James was born in Quebec and grew up speaking French with his
family. He has been teaching Core French in the GTA for seven years. James was in the Core
French program before going on to study French in university. He is qualified to teach French, special education, religion, fine arts and ESL to grades 7 to 12.

Rachel grew up speaking French, in a city outside of Toronto. She has taught Core French to Grades 4 to 8, Extended French to Grades 7 and 8 and French Immersion to Grades 1 and 3. Rachel taught French immersion for eleven years and for the last five years, she has been working a vice principal at a French immersion school in the GTA.

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data was gathered from the responses of the participants in the in-depth interviews conducted and the findings were analyzed. While the investigation of the participants’ experiences attempts to remain as objective as possible, the approach used to analyze the results is the deductive approach. While the inductive approach involves analyzing data with little or no predetermined structure, the deductive approach involves using a set framework to analyze data (Burnard et al., 2008). Because the interview was planned and arranged prior to when it took place, the researcher was aware of the questions that would be asked and, therefore, the researcher could anticipate the responses received from the participants. The researcher’s goal was not to decide the analysis process in advance. The researcher remained aware of the limitations of the approach, where the data may be inflexible and potentially biased if it was interpreted based solely on the researcher’s predictions. To prevent these biases from having occurred, the data was used to address the initial research question directly. Additionally, while analyzing the data presented, the researcher recognized that some of the findings were invaluable to the purpose of the research study. Lastly, the researcher aimed to draw on common themes from the findings, to have a better understanding of the significance of the research. This allows the researcher to use the discovered information to explain where change is needed, to use the
inconsistencies to interpret the themes that emerged from the findings and, finally, to find potential solutions to the research questions.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

A qualitative study gives the researcher subjective experiences and allows the researcher to illustrate personal aspects of their participants’ lives. Due to the intimate nature of qualitative research, many ethical and moral issues arise. A principle ethical issue lies in the intricacy of the interview process, which investigates a private life and places accounts in the public arena (Birch et al., 2002). This remains an issue because, although participants in qualitative studies are aware that their personal stories become public, it may often be forgotten as they express their sincere beliefs to the researcher, who has gained their complete trust. Still, qualitative studies continue to be commonly used today, as many researchers have recognized that “when the object is concrete human experience, then qualitative methods are the most adequate means of knowledge production” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 162). People are more likely to provide the most accurate and detailed accounts of their experiences when their personal experiences and feelings are involved in the recollection of their story.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) provide four ethical issues that relate to the interview process. The first, reducing the risk of unanticipated harm, the second, protecting the interviewee’s information, the third, effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study, and lastly, reducing the risk of exploitation.

The researcher intended to reduce the risk of unanticipated harm by being honest and open about the details of the research study with the participants interviewed. The questions were designed to give way to as much information about the research topic as possible and to “address the aims and objectives of the research” (Gill et al., 2008, p. 292). To avoid the unexpected, the
participants were provided with the questions they were going to be asked, in advance, such that they had sufficient time to read them and share any uncertainties or concerns with the researcher prior to the interview. In this manner, the interviewee felt confident and prepared to answer the interview questions. The researcher aimed to protect the participants’ information by providing them with a consent form (Appendix A), which they signed and which remains confidential. The consent form also effectively informed interviewees about the nature of the study, stating the study’s purpose and their own purpose and significance to the study. The researcher planned to reduce the risk of exploitation by informing each participant that their interview would be recorded for accuracy purposes. Each participant was also given the right to stop the interview at any time. The form also informed the participants the data collected from the interview would be used strictly for this study. Lastly, participants were given the option to receive the full report of their interview and the study upon its completion.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

Although qualitative research studies succeed where they provide thorough and personal accounts that lead to comprehensive data, they may fall short in other regards. The greatest weakness of this study is that the data is not representative of the entire population of elementary school teachers who teach FSL in Ontario, due to the small sample size of participants. Nonetheless, the interviews provide more insight than a quantitative study into potential explanations as to why the majority of students lack interest in pursuing their French studies.

A qualitative study is not scientific like a quantitative study and there is no hypothesis or apparent prediction for the outcome or potential results of the data collected. For this reason, the data may be understood and interpreted in a partial fashion by the researcher because of the researcher’s predisposed notions and beliefs. The researcher was in a FI program from Grade 1
up until Grade 12. The researcher also has experience teaching French as she plans to be a French teacher, therefore she has strong consideration and a deep understanding of the ways in which French is taught in Ontario. However, despite the researcher’s goal to remain unbiased, it is imperative that she was aware of the drawbacks of the interview design as information was extracted.

The ethics clearance for this study allowed the researcher to speak with only teachers. It did not allow the researcher to interview students that the study is addressing. This prevented the researcher from asking students themselves about their positive or negative experiences in the FSL program they are enrolled in. Regardless of this ethical limitation, the study allowed the researcher to gain teachers’ perspectives on the research subject, provide an account of their experiences teaching the FSL curriculum and facilitate the researcher’s understanding of the guiding questions. Another limitation, due to the researcher’s guidelines, is the time constraints. The study is conducted over a period of two years. It would be of interest to the researcher if more time was allotted to investigate how student motivation in French changes over time, whether the FSL program determines student interest or whether there is a stronger correlation between the French teacher’s skill and student attitudes of French.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher began by explaining the research methodology used for this study and the choice to use a qualitative research study approach, by highlighting the qualitative study’s strengths and contrasting it with the quantitative study. Next, the researcher described the instruments of data collection, the different types of interviews used for qualitative research and the decision to conduct three in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The researcher proceeded to identify the participants of the study, listing the exact criteria applied to all participants. The
researcher then explained how participants would be recruited using purposeful sampling to increase the richness and depth of data obtained. The researcher illustrated how the data would be analyzed using a deductive approach, followed by an examination of common themes and inconsistencies. Ethical issues such as consent, participation factors, right to withdraw, confidentiality and storage of information were considered. Finally, the methodological limitations of the study were discussed, such as the impossibility to generalize findings, the likelihood of personal biases and the inability to choose the type of participant. The researcher also highlights the study’s many strengths and advantages. In the following chapter, the research findings are considered and reported in detail.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines and analyzes the findings obtained from French language teachers who were interviewed as part of this research study. I interviewed two elementary school teachers, one Core French (CF) and one French immersion (FI), both who teach in the GTA, as a part of this study. They shared their thoughts and experiences pertaining to teaching the French as a Second Language (FSL) curriculum in Ontario.

French language educators share similar apprehensions of the value of learning and speaking French. While the teachers interviewed come from different French backgrounds, which have undoubtedly influenced their French teaching pedagogy, there are common patterns that emerged from the details of the interviews. The patterns derived can be divided into three themes. The first theme examines teacher perspectives on the FSL curriculum and, more specifically, the curriculum in relation to their experiences teaching CF and FI. The second theme looks at professional development opportunities and experiences teachers have had, their professional identity and teaching practices, and strategies that influence their pedagogy. The third theme of this study examines teacher perspectives on learning a second language in Canada, and more specifically, learning French in the multicultural city of Toronto. The challenges of teaching and learning French and the ways in which teachers create incentive for their students to continue studying French will also be discussed. The existing literature regarding these topics will be discussed throughout the exploration of these themes to accurately evaluate how the diverse instruction of the French language in Ontario affects Grade 9 students’ incentive to persevere and their ability to recognize the value of their studies in French. For the
purpose of this study, the names of the participants have been altered to protect the identity of the teaching professionals.

James has been teaching CF for seven years in the GTA. He was born outside of Canada and speaks languages other than French and English. He began learning French in Montreal where he grew up. James was in the CF program before going on to studying French in university. He is qualified to teach French and has taught French from Grades 9 to 12. James plays a very active role in his school community, having a leading role in diverse committees. The students who attend the school where James works come from predominantly affluent families, which may be attributed to the school area.

For the last few years, Rachel has been working as a Vice Principal at a FI school in the GTA. Before that, she taught FI for eleven years. Rachel began learning French in Grade 4 and switched to French immersion in Grade 7. She majored in French in university and studied abroad in France. Rachel has taught CF to Grades 4 to 8, Extended French (EF) to Grades 7 and 8 and FI to Grades 1 and 3. Students who attended the schools where Rachel taught FI came from mostly middle class families, in areas that have historically been white, however, are quickly changing and becoming more multicultural.

4.1 The FSL Curriculum

Since the introduction of bilingualism in 1998, the FSL curriculum has evolved to meet the needs of students in Ontario. The CF program’s primary goal 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, 1998). When the document was revised, the CF, EF and FI curriculum expectations were placed in a single document. While teachers are required to follow the curriculum and use it
to guide their teaching, James contends that it should not necessarily dictate how each topic should be taught, especially in the case of learning how to speak French. James explains that teachers cannot simply rely on the curriculum and its textbooks to teach a language. He suggests that teaching a second language involves finding different means, textbooks aside, to help students speak French and to give them a more meaningful understanding of the language.

4.1.1 Former Core French curriculum

While the former CF curriculum is still favoured by many teaching professionals who prefer following an explicit focus on content, other teachers felt limited in their ability to manipulate the curriculum to cater to the learning needs of their students. James explains how his experiences teaching the former curriculum are very dictated to the teacher. He argues that the former curriculum directs the French teacher towards precise expectations for them to accomplish, for instance, to cover a certain number of grammar rules by the end of a specific grade level. James describes that the former curriculum could not cater to students who were never going to excel in French, as it did not make it easy for teachers to make learning the subject enjoyable, which is an essential component to teaching students at all age levels.

Rachel began teaching French more than a decade prior to the current revised curriculum. She attests that the past curriculum “was very bureaucratic.” She explains, “French teachers got so hung up on that one small expectation of grammar, especially with the old [FSL] curriculum. I saw the old curriculum causing a lot of anxiety in our students.” Rather than improving students’ mental states and their confidence, French used to be considered as more of a burden to students. She taught before the inquiry model was established. To negate the unconstructive qualities of the curriculum, Rachel tried to use “a lot of hands on activities” and to “make things as relevant to the kids’ lives as possible.” Rather than focusing on the rules and regulations of the former
FSL curriculum, Rachel was trying to help students make a personal connection to the French language. The pitfalls of the former CF curriculum may also be attributed to the general lack of priority towards French language learning in the past, when James started out at a FI school. His parents wanted him to attend a FI catholic school, but there were none at the time. When James was in his last year of high school, the enrolment for Grade 12 French was so low that it was not offered. James explains that there are now many FI catholic schools in Toronto. There has been a seemingly recent growth of attention towards French education, as the advantages of FI programs are becoming the increasingly popular option.

4.1.2 New and improved Core French curriculum

While it still might be argued that the CF curriculum provides too few hours of French in the student’s schedule, its general triumph over the former curriculum speaks volumes. Unlike the past, when French education was not a priority in Ontario, parents are seeing the tremendous value of being able to speak French in the GTA and across Ontario and Canada. James explains, “right now parents are really pushing their kids to do French…It’s that change of perspective that is getting kids to take it and I think teachers are really doing a lot of work together to make the kids enjoy the program.” When French is perceived as beneficial to children and parents alike, teachers can set goals that cater to their students’ likes and dislikes. With the new CF curriculum, James does not feel as though he is forced to ask his students to memorize a series of verbs with no practical function. When they do have to memorize, it is added to the practical use of the language. He notes that it is more important for students to know “how to ask for directions and the difference between left and right” than to know how to conjugate some verbs in a variety of tenses that they will not get the opportunity to use and will, thus, completely forget. James explains how he enjoys the freedom of being able to choose what to teach his students.
I like the new curriculum. I know a lot of the older teachers don’t and I know why…teach them French. Just teach them French. Which is nice because then you have a little more freedom to teach it. And that’s why I like it. If I thought of a really cool activity, I’m not going to check the curriculum, whether it’s something I can do because…at the end of the day can they speak French? That’s more important [than grammar]. But you still need a little bit of the old traditional way. I still teach a little bit of the old curriculum but it’s mixed. If you’re forced to teach all those grammar points, then you’re more worried about ‘did I teach those grammar points’ than ‘did I teach them French,’ which is a big difference.

It is evident that while James holds the new CF curriculum in high regard, he is still appreciative of the strict attributes of the former curriculum. Like any subject, teaching French requires structure, however, for students to realize their potential in French, French teachers may now control how the curriculum is used in their classroom to meet the needs of each individual student. Rachel shares a similar opinion. She believes that the new curriculum “lends itself to much more conversation.” Obviously both teachers value the importance of being able to communicate rather than conjugate, to listen attentively rather than aimlessly. The CF program continues to be questioned for beginning in Grade 4, at an age where students are past the critical period for language acquisition and, therefore, have more difficulty acquiring a new language. Hence, it is evident that CF teachers make use of the time they have with students by making their French classes practical and enjoyable.

4.1.3 French immersion framework

Enrolling their child in a FI school is a priority for many families. Brennick and Shea (2010) found that French Immersion programs continue to be a priority for students who are
interested in attending a postsecondary school and acquiring bilingual educational capital. Although these students, who are likely influenced by their parents, have the most interest in attending a FI school, it is not always a priority for many students and families. The FI program should be advantageous to a student’s acquisition of the French language as well as their ability to excel in other subjects, which are certainly impacted by the program. Parents may worry that their child’s English will suffer if their child is spending more time learning French than English. While this may be accurate in certain cases, Rachel believes that most students “will learn English either way,” as they communicate in English on a consistent basis outside of school and at home. Likewise, Makropoulos (2010) explains that students can become successfully proficient in French without it being harmful to the preservation of their English language skills.

Rachel outlines the strengths of a good FI program: the teachers, a supportive administration and more opportunities for professional development. While research shows that FI students often “score significantly higher on tests of word recognition and reading comprehension” (Genesee & Jared, 2008, p. 141) than CF students, it does not necessarily ring true for every student. For instance, the students who, or whose parents, find the program too academically rigorous would not agree that the program is of value to their educational needs. Another factor that varies from student to student is the level of student engagement. Rachel maintains that there are always students who are less or more motivated to succeed in French. Nonetheless, she believes that the most valuable attribute of the FI program is the fact that students begin learning French from a young age. Rachel says, “that’s the most important.” Curtain and Dahlberg’s (2004) findings can attest to the benefits of learning French from a young age, when the brain absorbs the new language with more ease. The brain’s capacity to learn significant elements of a language is intensified during the child’s critical period for
language acquisition. While introducing French to students at a young age seems like the key for many students’ success in French, Makropoulos’ (2010) findings indicate that student participation rates in FI decrease significantly at a secondary level. Therefore, it is important that students who are enrolled in a FI program, most importantly, want to be there and have the resources to succeed. If students are struggling academically, unenthusiastic or not benefitting from learning French, it is important that they reconsider, with the help of their parents, guardians and teachers, whether pursuing French in FI is the right choice for them and their learning necessities.

4.2 Teacher Experience and Pedagogy

Teachers’ experiences acquiring the French language unquestionably influence how they teach the language. Rachel and James have had predominantly positive experiences learning French and would like their students’ experiences to be just as positive. Andrade et al. (1989) found that students who study languages tend to be more confident and content. The French teacher should remember that the principal objective of teaching students another language is to enhance their enjoyment of school and provide them with self-confidence. The teacher’s ability to have a positive impact on students is influenced by the support they have from their administrators, coworkers and students’ parents. When Rachel worked as a French teacher in a FI school, she explains how much parental support she received at that time: “It was as much about making it an enjoyable experience for students as it was making it an enjoyable experience for parents.” Rachel placed a lot of value on communicating with parents by informing them of the materials students are learning in class and the ways in which they can support their child at home. In a current school setting, the possibilities of teacher-parent communication are made infinitely more attainable with the access to technology. Teachers can benefit from using Google
classroom or creating a personal blog for parents to be aware of the concepts being learned in the French classroom, homework and upcoming evaluations. In addition to the advantage of online communication with parents, the blog would allow students to easily access and revisit any ideas that were discussed in French class.

4.2.1 Professional development

Professional development (PD) is an essential component for French teaching professionals to improve their language teaching practice. Wernicke (2010) explains that a “major challenge in meeting the continued demand for French language education is the critical need for effective professional development and teacher education for FSL teachers” (p. 5). Even though there are PD opportunities available to teachers, it is not usually compulsory for teachers to participate. Therefore, many teachers choose to not make PD a priority. James values the PD opportunities available to him. He attends the Ontario Modern Languages Teachers’ Association’s (OMLTA) spring session every year. At the OMLTA session, teaching professionals collaborate with other educators and discuss their professional learning. Another conference that James attends is entitled Cooperative Learning. This symposium is not specific to French teachers, however, it provides educators with different teaching strategies to incorporate into language teaching. James explains that he does not “expect to learn step-by-step” how to teach when he attends a conference. Instead, he learns about a new topic or idea and modifies it to fit his teaching objectives. Rachel also believes in the importance of networking and meeting with other French teachers, “to learn from each other and with each other.” The workshops that she found the most useful concerned classroom management and the shifting Ontario curriculum. It seems that teachers benefit most from meeting other teachers and exchanging ideas and PD opportunities provide teachers with the occasion to do so. Rachel
explains that she has always preferred to work collaboratively with other teachers. She describes that she “was fortunate to have really great coworkers to work with. We bounced ideas off each other.” Sharing ideas with other teachers, regardless of whether they are beginner teachers or have several years of experience, allows teachers to re-examine their own teaching practice and continually discover ways to improve their pedagogy. Wernicke (2010) explains that meeting and interacting with other professionals can be especially rewarding when it is done in another cultural and geographical context. Teachers who have the means to study abroad showed a considerable increase in language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and teaching strategies (Wernicke, 2010).

4.2.2 Professional identity

Based on the interviewees’ responses, it appears that being a French teacher is integral to their professional identity. While James began his teaching journey as a fine arts teacher, he could not imagine being anything other than a French teacher now. The more he was immersed in teaching French, the more he saw his students’ improvement and their increasing understanding.

Seeing that improvement in students made me want to be a French teacher, liking the program a lot more. At the end of the day you see kids so excited about something, that really makes it worthwhile. The kids come back after university and they’re so excited to tell you that they used French. Elementary school kids rarely come back, but high school kids do.

James noticed the influence he has over his students’ potentials and their ability not only to speak French, but to legitimately enjoy being able to communicate. When Rachel taught FI, being a French teacher was also an integral part of her professional identity. She states, “it’s how
people saw me. I was a French teacher. Once you get into that mould it’s hard to break out of it. And I didn’t mind it. I didn’t feel like it was a negative thing. I didn’t try to get out of it because I loved it.” Evidently, French teachers take pride in their vocation and with just cause. Having a strong professional identity allows professionals to apply themselves with confidence and determination.

4.2.3 Teaching practices and strategies

The pedagogical practices and strategies that teachers use to inform their teaching and support their students to learn a new language will vary across grades and levels of proficiency. James notes that teachers must make sure to involve their students in fun, engaging and age-appropriate activities with their students for them to learn French beneficially. Likewise, when Rachel taught primary age students, she used hands on activities to engage her students. She wanted her students to be able to make a connection to the French language by making her activities as relevant to the children’s lives as possible. Rachel did guided reading with her students and took advantage of the many resources available online. When she taught CF, she used the Acti-vie kit. Using a variety of supports and different methods of learning French that catered to every student meant that more students could benefit from the learning. James also explains that he would not prefer to let curriculum restrictions control the way that he teaches French. He does not rely on textbooks to teach a course, especially the French language. He believes that it is essential for teachers to “use the textbook as a direction…use it more as supplementary.” When discussing the usefulness of textbooks in a French language-learning context with coworkers at a teaching conference, James found that

The teachers who are really excited about their teaching and language acquisition are the ones who work outside of the textbook and use the textbook more as a guide…It
does not make sense of kids to memorize a bunch of adjectives and verbs that they will never use…[Using French in conversation] is more useful…If they learn words they aren’t going to use, they aren’t going to remember it. They will remember “Je suis allé” because they will talk about where they went.

It is in the teacher’s discretion to decide the extent to which the textbook is implemented in the class. Quite often, following along in a textbook and doing exercises with no real-world use does not teach students about inquiry or how to think critically. Littlewood (2012) explains that a superior language teacher should integrate new ideas into the classroom by “including more interaction, eliciting more creative responses from the students in his classes, and contextualizing these not only in situations provided by the textbook but also in the students’ personal experience” (p. 354). Hence, students should partake in activities that reflect their interests and experiences. It is important teachers modify their teaching styles and their lessons to cater to the specific age group and learning needs of their students. In younger grades, James mostly assesses speaking and practice. He chooses to vary his lessons with teacher-directed and student-directed instruction, depending on the atmosphere of the class. James also places learning goals at a high significance. He believes that it is important for students to “see what they are working towards. And it’s a nice checklist.” Learning goals should be established to provide each student with clear and realistic objectives, which they should aim towards achieving, with the purpose of motivating them and bettering their proficiency of the language.

Elementary level French is taught differently from Grade 9 because there are distinctive learning goals to be focused on to achieve a desirable outcome for the students. In Grade 9, James begins by teaching in English and slowly incorporates more French into the program, as his students’ French abilities progress. He explains that he uses this method since, if students are
not understanding the language or what he is saying, the students are not going to learn anything. James describes that students may pick up on certain words, however, not thoroughly enough that they would be able to use those words to communicate themselves. Instead, when the James explains to them, “this is how you say this,” they become more capable of using French and, therefore, truly appreciating it. James also believes in the value of practice and repetition. Research also shows that learning a language is a process of acquiring a habit through repetition. “Forming a habit...is described as developing the ability to perform a particular linguistic feature such as a sound, a word, or a grammatical item automatically, that is, without paying conscious attention to it” (Kumaravidelu, 2006, p. 100). When learning a second language, the language student acquires the structure of French through practicing and repeating words, expressions and sentences used to communicate, which become unconsciously imprinted in the language learner’s memory. Ultimately, the notion of training the mind to remember the language suggests that teachers should constantly look for ways to facilitate student communication in the classroom.

4.3 Teacher Perspectives

The FSL teachers who were interviewed originate from different cultural and academic backgrounds, yet they share many similar opinions regarding French pedagogy in Ontario. Rachel happened to enjoy teaching the first grade the most: “That’s when I felt I was making the most impact and I wasn’t just teaching students French. I was teaching them to enjoy and appreciate school.” It is the French teacher’s role to help their students appreciate the value of speaking French. Nevertheless, this can be challenging, as Rachel describes that it is “hard to tell a thirteen-year-old to think of their future beyond school.” Instead of telling students they should pursue learning French, teachers must find ways to reveal its usefulness. James thinks students
that will appreciate when the teacher comes across as optimistic and looks for “the positive of things.” He adds that teaching French can be challenging since many students are not motivated to learn a new language. However, he believes that students’ potential lack of interest should be an expectation and teachers must use their knowledge and resources to teach French and allow students to enjoy learning French to the best of their ability. FSL educators should teach the French language by envisioning that their students will pursue French in high school and beyond.

4.3.1 Learning a second language in Canada

Learning a second language has several cognitive and social benefits. Rachel is aware of these benefits and she believes that it is important for a child to learn a second language, “whatever language that may be.” She adds, “I really believe in the power of learning a second language and everything that comes with that.” Research conducted by Hakuta (1986) revealed that children who study a second language from an early age show greater cognitive flexibility, are better problem solving and display higher order thinking skills. Learning a second language grows and expands your brain, biologically speaking. Rachel adds that children who learn another language also “become open and accepting” towards the new language and its origins. When children are given the opportunity to experience a connection with another culture through a foreign language, they become more understanding towards another community (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004). In addition to the social benefits, James explains that learning a second language gives the child more options to communicate in any given location. If an individual is travelling or disoriented in another country, knowing another language will mean that they have “at least have two languages to…back you up, to help you communicate…You also see a lot of countries that are starting to have different languages and different people speaking those languages.” There is always an advantage to knowing multiple languages. In terms of living in
Canada, James thinks that learning French is beneficial to students. He believes that Toronto is “very diverse compared to a lot of other cities in Canada so it’s good to know Canada’s national language.” Having the ability to communicate efficiently in French is advantageous for students’ future job prospects and to be an effective member of a high economic society such as Toronto and GTA. James explains, “you need to know multiple languages,” because there are many companies in the GTA whose employees are required to interact with businesses in foreign countries. In the same regard as James, Rachel suggests that “when you live in Canada, there are working skills, habits and opportunities that open up to you when you speak French.” Since the ultimate objective of the Ontario education system is to ensure the best possible outcome for its students, the curriculum should be preparing students for success beyond school, as they enter the workforce and become contributing members of society. Students should be receiving a French education that benefits them entirely.

4.3.2 Challenges faced by teachers and students

Even though students are given the opportunity to learn French in schools, they also face challenges acquiring the new language. James describes his own experiences learning French as difficult and adds that this may be because he had to learn multiple languages simultaneously. He adds, “learning a second language in Toronto is hard, mainly because you’re not exposed to that language 24/7.” Since most parents are not able to speak French with their children at home, the only place students practice the language is at school. In the mandatory CF program, there are limited periods of French happening in students’ schedules. In FI programs, the primary reason students have for leaving the program is academic difficulty (Obadia & Thériault, 1997). Thus, depending on the interest of the student and whether the students’ parents can fully support their
child’s second language learning, one FSL program may be better suited towards a child than another.

In addition to factors beyond the student’s control, the transfer across languages is more likely to occur when literacy skills are well established in the first language (L1), which, in Ontario, is likely English. In 2013, Arnot and Mady found that the instruction of CF in the primary grades could help reiterate shared literacy principles that are being taught in the mainstream classroom and for both languages to profit. The facilitation of acquiring the principles of the second language (L2) would only occur if the student’s literacy skills in the L1 were apparent (Arnot & Mady, 2013). Difficulty with both languages arises for some students who would not automatically obtain those benefits, especially the students whose parents’ L1 is not English.

Many challenges also arise for FSL teachers. Rachel has had students who sincerely liked French, but struggled to learn it and students who were good at French, but did not seem to enjoy it. In a situation where students’ interests and abilities are so diverse, it is in the discretion of the teacher to decide to what degree they should push their student and whether it is best for them to leave them be. James has experienced classrooms where students “are completely uninterested” in learning French. He explains that in those situations, it is most advantageous for teacher and student to make the learning enjoyable for the students. If a student is not interested in the subject, James does not force them to study. Once students are in high school, it is important that they pass and his challenges lie in motivating students who are completely unenthusiastic about French to do well enough in the course to pass. He tells students to watch an episode on Télévision française de l’Ontario (TFO), but he is aware that most his students will never choose to watch TFO over cartoons, despite his justification of the advantages of interacting with the
French language on a regular basis. Lack of resources is another challenge faced by FSL teachers. Rachel says that a supportive administration is hard to come by and many administrators do not necessarily have the funds to ameliorate the French program. She adds that “finding resources is a challenge. I had to make a lot of my own. Especially resources for older kids who are reading at a lower level. Many of those resources are designed for younger kids. But it’s changing. Publishers are getting better at that.” With a growth in demand for French education, the increase of available resources for French teachers is an integral element in supporting a teacher’s ability to help their students view the French language in a positive light.

4.3.3 Student attitudes towards French

Ensuring that students have a positive attitude towards French is an integral component to creating incentive for students to study French after Grade 9. James believes that an efficient approach to compelling his students to have a positive attitude towards French is “to make it so that the kids feel like they’re learning something but at the same time they feel like they’re having fun.” Learning French should never feel like a cumbersome task. Teachers should set boundaries to enjoy their presence in the French classroom alongside their students, rather than constantly making rules and acting superior. James sets a tone that he is not always serious, however, he says that it is important to make the distinction between instances when students can joke around and ones where they are required to follow up when he asks something serious of them. He believes that

Kids learn better when they feel that they can trust you and it’s all about the relationship building. That’s also a reason I’m a teacher, because I like to be there for the student and really build a relationship with the kids. Kids like to know that they are cared for...You’re going to have kids who feel like they’re invisible in the classroom
and when you feel like that you feel like no one cares about you, no one knows about you. So I try to make an effort to remember every single kid in my class.

Students feel more comfortable in a classroom where there is trust and they feel respected. They are also more likely to have an affirmative attitude towards a subject where their efforts are appreciated. Rachel finds that positive attitudes towards French are also more likely for “students who had support from their parents” at home. James believes that his students’ attitudes towards French have been mostly positive because many of his students want to continue French with him as their teacher the following year. “That means something…they enjoy it and they’ve learned something. This year I’m taking them to Carnaval in February and the kids are really excited. It’s a good opportunity for them to practice French, in Quebec, and use the language.” Rachel also states that real-world application of the language is essential. She says, “That’s when you really learn to love the language. When you’re actually using it.” Providing students with the right tools to take pleasure in their experiences with the language should ultimately result in their genuine enjoyment of learning French.

4.3.4 Creating incentive for students to learn French

When in high school, James explains that students are ultimately motivated by marks. It is human nature to pursue a course if a student excels in it and to stop taking the course if the student feels unsuccessful. He adds that students in Grade 12 are also motivated by the certificate they receive upon completion of the CF program. “It just says they’ve completed four years of French, but it’s something that they can see and that they can put on their resumes and cover letters.” Contrary to older students, who have essentially finalized their academic decisions and objectives, elementary age students greatly benefit from receiving encouragement from their teachers to pursue French. Rachel notes that young students require exposure to French; they
must “engage in conversation” and “be faced with real-world experiences.” The activities that students participate in should require them to converse with one another in the classroom. By communicating effectively, students can form a personal connection to French. Kennedy and Trofimovich (2016) explain that communication is the process of two speakers co-constructing meaning to achieve understanding. It is not solely the task of the person speaking to create meaning in what they say. All persons involved in the dialogue construct its understanding together. These findings suggest that Rachel and James recognize the value of facilitating students’ interactions and finding meaning in the interactions.

The data collected indicates that FSL teachers believe students must genuinely appreciate studying French to make the decision to pursue it after Grade 9. In her French classroom, Rachel attempts to make the learning as fun as possible. When Rachel taught FI, she “tried to really embody the attitude that [she] wasn’t just there to teach them French. [She] was teaching them to love school. The French was almost secondary.” Her purpose was for students to not see school as a burden, but rather, to be engaged and eager to learn in French class. When students are disinterested in school, their motivation to learn decreases. Likewise, James explains that it is important to “encourage those kids and make them more interested in learning the language and not see it as difficult. You want to make them have fun so that they want to continue and they see that there’s a benefit.” He adds that students can appreciate when their teacher does not have all the answers to every question. It makes a difference knowing that their teacher is there to learn with them.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the opinions, experiences and personal knowledge of two experienced French teaching professionals were observed. Both FSL teachers believe that learning French in
Canada is beneficial to all students. In the GTA, there is a multitude of cultures and constant interactions between students and adults from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Students who can appreciate another culture, such as French, are more likely to be more tolerant of the differences among people (Carpenter & Torney, 1974). Learning French allows the student to be cognisant of other people’s culture, their values and beliefs. The teacher plays the most crucial role in making French valuable to their students. It was noted that in the past, while the CF program was meant to successfully prepare its students to speak French, there appeared to be a few underlying matters regarding the program’s efficiency that prohibited students from realizing their full potentials in French. The CF program has changed, and should continue to change as society progresses, to better meet the needs of its teachers and students. Aside from the implementation of the FSL curriculum, there are many PD opportunities available to French teachers that could greatly benefit them. Studying abroad in a French-speaking region would allow the French language speaker or learner to be fully immersed in the cultural setting of the language, an experience that is nonpareil. Other PD opportunities allow teachers to learn from knowledgeable education experts and co-constructively with fellow enthusiastic teachers, who attend the conferences and workshops with the same determination and purpose.

The findings also determine French teachers building a relationship with their students is fundamental to teaching the French language. When students feel safe and comfortable in a classroom, they are more likely to relax and genuinely enjoy themselves. Children will not benefit from teachers telling them the importance of learning French, but rather allowing them to experience its practical usage in a gratifying manner. FSL teachers believe that when students are enjoying the French period and are engaged in the classroom, they begin to have a positive outlook towards the language. Most students become disengaged from a French program if they
did not relate with the French being taught in the school (Makropoulos, 2010). A positive outlook towards the language and an authentic connection with its culture encourages students to pursue French after Grade 9. Finally, based on their experiences learning and teaching French, the teachers interviewed believe that students want to learn French when they partake in authentic tasks that help them see its everyday value. Like any subject in school, students need to see that their efforts are making a positive difference, being recognized and improving their skills. When students find meaning in the concepts they learn, they are motivated to pursue new and more advanced concepts.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the instruction of the French as a Second Language (FSL) curriculum in Ontario and teacher influence on student incentive to pursue their French studies at a secondary level. To properly assess the FSL program in Ontario, the study looked at the former and current Core French (CF) programs as well as the French Immersion (FI) program. The issues that guided the study focus on the objectives of CF and FI programs and FSL teacher pedagogy. Following the outline and introduction of the study, the literature review presents the reader with existing research regarding the benefits of learning a second language in Canada, the progress of FSL programs in Ontario and the relationship between FSL programs and student perspectives of French language learning. A brief discussion of the methodology used for this study is followed by a further examination of the data extracted from two interviews with French elementary teachers. The findings suggest that students are more likely to continue their French studies after Grade 9 if they have a positive outlook towards learning French.

5.1 Key Findings

The qualitative data collected and presented in Chapter 4 sheds light on different perspectives of the instruction of the FSL curriculum. Through the lens of two experienced FSL teachers, three central elements emerged. It should be noted that these patterns might not hold true to the experiences of all teachers, merely the experiences of those interviewed. First, the continual development of the FSL curriculum will maintain that both students and teachers are
receiving its full benefits. Second, taking into consideration that French teachers’ experiences affect how they perceive the language, the opportunities available to them will unquestionably influence the ways that French is implemented and taught in the classroom. Lastly, for students to make continued progress in their acquisition of the French language, teachers must be prepared to entice them to learn French.

Not unlike other curriculum subjects, the regular assessment of the FSL curriculum will ensure that both teachers and students are benefiting from its content. Since the Ontario FSL curriculum was updated, most recently in 2013, to better suit the needs of its teachers and students, teachers could focus on making French language learning an enjoyable experience for students, rather than a burdensome task. Teachers can use the FSL curriculum to determine their program, however, it should not dictate how the language is taught, only that it needs to be taught. One teacher explained that teaching French requires the teacher to look beyond the textbooks and curriculum. Both teachers shared similar viewpoints, which include the notion that teachers must develop new and creative ways to make learning French a meaningful experience for their students, for French to be valuable and for students to enjoy learning it.

Both French teachers had positive experiences learning and becoming fluent in French, as they were in stimulating learning environments. It is likely for this reason that they are now passionate about teaching the language and ensuring that it is the same positive experience for their students. The opportunities that teachers seek out to better themselves as educators influence their ability to be effective teachers. These include, but are not limited to, professional development opportunities, such as conferences, seminars and workshops, and temporarily moving to or studying in a region where French is the only language spoken. As the demand for French education increases, there is difficulty meeting the escalating need for FSL teacher
education and professional development opportunities (Wernicke, 2010). A positive outlook towards learning French, coupled with a greater number of available and accessible resources for FSL teachers, will make certain that the French classroom is a consistently engaging environment for students to learn an invaluable language. If students in FI and CF programs enjoy learning French in the classroom and appreciate its value outside of the classroom, they will be looking to pursue their French studies when they finish elementary school.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Broad implications

Canada has two national languages, English and French. While in cities like Montreal, students learn both languages from a young age and can speak them fluently by the time they graduate, this is not the case in Toronto. There is simply not the same emphasis on French education in Ontario. FI programs begin in the first grade, which, according to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004), is the optimal time for an individual to acquire a language, as the process is easier and comes more naturally for a child than an older learner. The CF program does not begin until Grade 4, which is past the optimal time for language acquisition. The many benefits of learning and knowing French in a multicultural hub are apparent. For this reason, there has been a relatively new increase of parents hoping to enroll their children in FI programs. The rise in demand for immersion means that there is inevitably a shortage of skillful French teachers. This raises concerns about the quality of French occurring in these programs. Many teachers that are hired for French teaching positions should not be considered proficient enough to teach it. Alphonso (2017) explains that some school boards in Ontario stated that they are concerned about the qualifications of their French teachers. The increase in demand for French programming means that teachers are taking online courses in French, however, many of them
were not able to converse in French during their initial interview (Alphonso, 2017). The inconsistency between skilled French teachers and those with less expertise does not provide a favourable outcome for every student, which the Ontario education system should be yielding. This conflict should be properly evaluated to determine what steps need to be taken to support Ontario’s current and future FSL teachers to meet the high demands of second-language teaching.

In addition to the lack of teachers who speak native-like French, the Ontario curriculum has been designed with English as the primary language of instruction. The curriculum itself states that French is a ‘second language’. French is secondary. While the Official Languages Act of 1969 aims to recognize the equal status of English and French, it appears that the importance of French fluency has only been an objective of Quebec’s education system. For instance, between 2001 and 2011, Quebec was the only province in which the rate of bilingualism rose steadily (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). For the rest of Canada, the rate of bilingual speakers has been gradually decreasing since 2001, after four decades of steady growth (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). If Ontario wants to see an increase in fluent French-speakers, the ministry must address: 1) the priority of French in the curriculum and 2) who is entrusted to deliver the curriculum. Further research can examine the right course of action to support determined FSL teachers, students and their families with the continuing high demand for French classrooms.

5.2.2 Narrow implications

The findings of this research study have helped me grow as a researcher and educator. Preparing for and carrying out this study allowed me to investigate a topic that I have been curious about for many years. I investigated this topic as an independent researcher, which strengthened my ability to value my inquiry process. Because my entire education took place in
French immersion, I know first-hand that bilingualism is attainable with quality teachers, effective programming and suitable resources. I recognize its abundant value in the GTA and across Ontario and Canada. Exploring French education from the lens of current FSL teachers revealed in depth experiences that I would have otherwise not been exposed to. Furthermore, this investigation allowed me to understand the diligence, effort and commitment that is required to conduct qualitative research. Through the examination of the literature presented in chapter 2 and an analysis of the FSL teacher interviews presented in chapter 4, I have become a more informed practitioner and scholar. I have come to realize that education is a lifelong process and will continue to seek ways to improve my French teaching practice. I plan to inquire into and take part in PD workshops, where I can communicate and share ideas with other teaching professionals regarding the FSL curriculum and second language pedagogy. I also intend to be open to suggestions from other educators and academics that might better my understanding of French language instruction.

5.3 Recommendations

It is important for curriculum implementers and educators to recognize the value of learning French from a young age. Students will especially benefit from being bilingual in the multicultural city of Toronto and surrounding areas. The most beneficial way to ensure that students pursue their French studies is to make French language learning an enjoyable experience for students. FSL educators who are passionate about teaching French should ensure that they are prepared to address the curriculum and to explore other initiatives and PD opportunities to better themselves as effective second-language educators. School administration should also be prepared to assist their French teachers and provide them with helpful resources and programming, which could occur in or outside of the school. In addition, parents must be
willing to fully support their children if they enrol their child in an immersion program. Even if a parent does not speak French, there are many ways to ameliorate the student’s experiences and the result of their French schooling. The findings of the study reveal that when students take pride and pleasure in learning French, they not only learn the language more effectively, but they are also more likely to attempt to be fluent. The adults in the French student’s life make all the difference in directing their journey towards French proficiency.

5.4 Further Research

The literature review and data revealed many new ideas pertaining to the initial questions that drove the research study. There are still questions to be explored and addressed in more detail. One topic that can be further researched concerns CF and FI student perceptions of the FSL program they are enrolled in and the French language learning that occurs. Although gathering information from the interviews provided this study with distinctive experiences of French educators, it did not account for the circumstances of the French students and how the students feel about their program’s strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, the perspectives of parents whose children are enrolled in FSL programs are equally as valuable. For a more extensive and widespread outlook of the merits and drawbacks of the FSL curriculum, the research might also include an extensive quantitative study across Ontario for purposes of comparison.

Another topic that may be further addressed is the need for effective PD opportunities that support the pedagogical demands of French teachers. As the research suggests, the FSL curriculum on its own does not address the measures teachers must take to create a positive experience for students to learn French to their full potential. Educators must continue to utilize the curriculum alongside PD opportunities and supports from school administrators. Information
relayed to language educators outside of the curriculum must be current and culturally relevant for students to realize the benefit of their studies in French.

5.5 Concluding Comments

The purpose of this research study was to determine the ways in which FSL teachers make French language learning a positive experience such that their students pursue French in high school. The data collected in this study addressed the research question, which asked how French teachers create incentive for their students to pursue French after Grade 9. The French educators in the study described their personal experiences learning and teaching French, the methods and strategies they use in the classroom as well as elements of second-language learning that they consider advantageous. The existing research demonstrated the validity of the data collected, however, there is still more research to be conducted on the topic. It is the researcher’s goal that the findings of this study help support current and future FSL educators to examine the ways in which they teach the French curriculum so that it is an enjoyable experience for them and their students.
References


Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date:

Dear ______________________________, 

My Name is Sophia Biro and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. 

My research will focus on student interest in French and will aim to find out ways to improve the instruction of the French language in the Ontario curriculum to benefit both teachers and students, such that Grade 9 students have a clear incentive to continue learning French and recognize the value of their studies in French. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have an interest in the French as a Second Language program as well as experience teaching Core French and/or French Immersion. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic. 

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to
participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Sophia Biro
Phone Number
Email

Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer
Contact Info: rose.fine.meyer@utoronto.ca

Consent Form
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.
I have read the letter provided to me by Sophia Biro and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: _______________________________________

Name: (printed) ____________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol/Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn about student interest in French for the purpose of uncovering ways to improve the instruction of the French language in Ontario to benefit both teachers and students. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on your thoughts and experiences as a French language teacher. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section A: Background Information

1. Were you born in Canada?
   a. If in Canada: what city did you grow up in?
   b. If outside of Canada: what country were you born in?

2. At what age did you begin learning and speaking French? Do you speak any other languages besides English and French?

3. How fluent would you say you are in French, on a scale from 0 to 5? (0 being no proficiency, 5 being bilingual or native proficiency.)

4. What grades do you teach? What subjects do you teach other than French?

5. How many years have you been a teacher in Canada? How many years have you been a French teacher?

6. In addition to your role as a teacher, do you fulfill other positions in the school (e.g. extra curricular activities, clubs, coach, etc.)?

7. Are you able to describe the community in which your school is located (i.e. socioeconomic status, diversity)? How long have you taught at this school?
Section B: Teacher Perspectives on French Language Learning

8. Do you believe that it is important for students growing up in a diverse country such as Canada to learn a second language such as French?

9. Do you remember what kind of program were you enrolled in (i.e. Core, Extended, Immersion) in elementary school?

10. Can you tell me about your experiences as a student learning French as a second language?

11. Do you think your experiences as a student influence your attitude towards French?

12. Did your experiences affect your decision to become a French teacher?

13. Do you believe the experiences of your students are equivalent or different from your experiences as a student? Does this have an impact on your French pedagogy?

Section C: Teacher Experiences and Practices

14. How does being a French teacher in Ontario affect your professional identity?

15. What French teaching practices and strategies do you use in the classroom?
   a. What resources are available to you?
   b. What resources do you use?

16. Do you set French language learning goals with your students? What do the learning goals usually consist of?

17. How do you instruct and assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing in French?

18. Can you tell me how you feel about the quality of French literacy learning that occurs in the (Core, Extended, Immersion) French program you teach?
   a. What are the strengths of the [program] curriculum?
   b. Do you believe that there are weaknesses in the [program] curriculum? If so, what are they?

19. What are your students’ attitudes towards French?
   a. How do their attitudes differ?
   b. Which students have a positive attitude towards French?
   c. Which students seem to be displeased or struggling with French?

20. Do you create an incentive for your students to continue studying French in high school? How do you foster an appreciation of the French language as a Canadian within your students?
Section D: Supports, Challenges and Next Steps

21. What kind of professional development opportunities and resources are available to you as a French teacher?

22. What are the challenges or limitations you have encountered in teaching French?
   a. How do you respond to these challenges?
   b. Do you have a support system and/or assistance to help you respond to these challenges?
   c. How does administration respond to these challenges?

23. How would you improve your French language pedagogy?

24. What needs to be done to create a desire or incentive for students to continue their French studies in high school?

25. As a beginning French teacher entering the profession, what advice or recommendations can you give me?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.